From the Director
by Joanne Lerud

CATALYST IS HERE!

In early June, the Colorado School of Mines' new Integrated Library System went live to the world. "Catalyst" has moved the Arthur Lakes Library from a text-based catalog into the realm of the web-based catalogs. No longer are users chained to their keyboards—they are free to roam their computer screen with their mouse. "Catalyst" contains such things as the ability to renew books online, and hyperlinks to other databases and images. Other new options include:

New Search Features in Catalyst
- "Keyword Anywhere" in the record
- Relevance ranking of "Keyword Anywhere" search results
- Browse by author, title, subject or call number
- Build your own search
- "Command" searching using grouped terms and Boolean AND, OR, NOT
- Limiting by date, language, library location, material type, etc.
- "Course Reserves" searching by instructor, department, or course

From the search results list, you can:
- Mark your desired records
- Download your search results
- E-mail results
- Print results on your printer or the Library's network printer ($0.10/page)

New Patron Account Features in Catalyst
Catalyst offers several new features with patron accounts. To use these features, simply logon by entering your full library barcode number [for example, A9/990012345] and your last name. If you have trouble logging on or have questions about your account or requests, contact Library Circulation at x3022.
From the Director
(cont.)

Patron Info Using "Patron Info" in Catalyst, you can verify items charged to you, check due dates and the status of requests, and monitor fines and fees. You can also renew your materials online up to the maximum number of renewals allowed (5 for CSM students, staff and alumni, 3 for other patrons).

Requests The "Request" button in Catalyst allows you to make requests for interlibrary loans of materials or photocopies. Just select the applicable interlibrary loan form and fill it out. "Request" also allows you to suggest materials for purchase by the library by using the "Acquisition Request" form.

Holds and Recalls Now, when you find an item in Catalyst that has been charged (checked out), you can place your own hold or recall on the item. Just click the "Request" button while the item is still on the screen in Catalyst, and select one of the available request options. Hold puts you in line to receive the item when it is returned to the Library. Recall shortens the due date of the item and sends out a message for the patron to return the item for your use.

The Library is offering "How To Use Catalyst" drop-in workshops in the Reference Room at:
- Monday & Wednesday 1:00pm
- Tuesday & Thursday 4:00pm
- Tuesday & Friday 12:00 noon

Or…Contact the Reference Desk at x3694 or e-mail libref@mines.edu to make an appointment or arrange for a workshop at your department or office.

Come in, virtually or physically, and use YOUR Library.

Digital Democracy: E-Government
by Laura Guy

We all know about e-business, e-trading, and e-commerce. This is the age of the DOT-COM revolution. The use of the Internet to deliver information, goods and services has become a worldwide growth industry. It has reshaped the private sector and revolutionized how we do business.

But what about “e-government?” Has there been a parallel revolution in the provision of information and services in the public sector? Has the Internet reshaped the way citizens (like you) interact with their government? The term e-government refers to the delivery of information and services online through the Internet. Governmental units, including federal, state and local governments, have embraced the digital revolution by placing information and a wide range of materials online. These materials include publications, forms, permits, and databases.

But beyond the forms, is e-government taking advantage of the Internet’s potential, especially for outreach? One of the most promising aspects of e-government is the ability to bring us closer to our government through
interactivity. A simple example of such outreach is the existence of an email address that would help citizens express opinions or concerns about a given topic. A more complex example is a message board or a chat room that would enable conversation between citizens and their government. An even more sophisticated method is to make government more accessible to citizens by providing live coverage of hearings, speeches, or other important events.

Louisiana State University Libraries is one of the best of numerous organizations that maintain an online list of Federal Agency websites ("http://www.lib.lsu.edu/gov/fedgovall.html"). The list is impressive, and although e-government is still in its infancy, there are hundreds of federal government web sites developed by agencies and departments that serve crucial functions of government such as transportation, consumer safety, health, human services, taxation, education, corrections, economic development, and natural resources.

By reviewing some of these web sites, we can see the progress that has been made and the wide variability in the extent to which e-government is developing. While most sites provide basic phone contact information, address information, and useful links to other web sites, fewer provide a FAQ (frequently asked questions and their answers), a subject index, or a site search capability. Fewer still take into account accessibility issues such as language barriers or users with disabilities.

The USDA (United States Department of Agriculture) web site ("http://www.usda.gov") is an example of a top-notch e-government site. It offers a standardized “look-feel” that helps in navigating the web site and avoiding the confusion and incoherence that can result when a consistent design is not used. The navigation aids are easy to find and precisely labeled. There is a contact email address on the bottom of every page that, when used by this author, resulted in a response within 24 hours. A subject index lets you browse the site by subject category, and a Search/Help page provides you with access to a site search engine, plus a USDA email address identifier and federal telephone directories.

The USDA site is kept up-to-date with fresh content that includes a “daily topic,” and video and audio files of news conferences, speeches and hearings. Special features on recent developments such as the West Nile virus, normalization of trade relations with China, and China’s WTO accession, are available. A clear privacy statement that strictly follows current federal guidelines on personal privacy is obtainable.

To promote outreach, push technology in the form of e-mail subscriptions is used to provide citizens with updates and reports in specific areas of interest. Detailed assistance is available for emergency and disaster aid applications.

Through programs like the Economic Research Service ("http://www.ers.usda.gov/"), the USDA provides access to a wealth of current...
and historical data for research and analysis. These data cover a surprisingly wide range of disciplines from land, water, and conservation data to trade data, and can be downloaded for free or ordered on media.

The U.S. Postal Service web site ("http://www.usps.gov") accommodates Spanish speakers by supplying a second web site in Spanish, and provides a large number of services including address change forms, a postage rate calculator, electronic bill payment assistance, a zip code locator and a Post Office locator. The site provides detailed contact information, a comment form, a site index and a FAQ page. You can buy stamps online and track packages. There’s even an area for stamp collectors.

And, although no one really likes the IRS, their web site ("http://www.irs.ustreas.gov/prod/") is currently perhaps the best of the bunch. Filled to the brim with humor, easy to navigate, and loaded with useful information, it includes a site search engine, a detailed help page, a site map, and loads of services (including tax forms and information about e-filing) that will help you to fill out your tax return.

There’s a frequently updated “What’s Hot” page that includes tax law changes. The IRS tax statistics section provides access to a wealth of information about the financial composition of individuals, business taxpayers, tax-exempt organizations and more. Everywhere you go on the site there is contact information that includes toll-free phone numbers.

On the other end of the spectrum, we see how far some agencies have yet to go. The Federal Judicial Center web site ("http://www.fjc.gov/") has no graphic content, no FAQ, no navigation aids to speak of, and extremely sparse content. It does provide limited contact information and access to some publications, but its sparseness and difficulty of use are quite startling compared to most of the Executive Agency web sites.

Thomas ("http://thomas.loc.gov"), a primary source of Congressional information on the web, is also disappointing. Critically important information for citizens, such as working drafts of legislation, Congressional Research Service reports, members’ financial disclosures, and subcommittee votes are not to be found on Thomas. Nor is there live or canned audio/video broadcast content of Congressional Hearings. While it does provide limited outreach with a feedback form, database access, and a search engine, there is no use of automatic email updates or any type of push technology. Much of the information that Thomas does provide, such as lawmakers’ voting records, is difficult to use. It is an unattractive and unintuitive site that offers little enhanced content, no services, no foreign language access, and no privacy policy. This is extremely unfortunate for a web site that is typically accessed over half a million times per day and an important source of information about our democracy.
In September of this year, the White House announced the creation of FirstGov (http://www.firstgov.gov/), a web site that attempts to provide easy, one-stop access to all federal government on-line information and services. FirstGov is a portal site “that will connect Americans to information and resources from all 27 million federal agency webpages,” according to a White House press release. This is a laudable effort that attempts to address the chaos that has resulted from hundreds of agencies and departments developing their own independent web sites. Organized by topic rather than agency, it provides numerous subject headings, a search engine and a FAQ page that provides links to agency FAQs. Nevertheless, as the private sector portals have shown, being all things to all people is extremely difficult, if not impossible. A search on the term “food stamps” resulted in many hits, but none that provided basic information as to how they might be obtained.

Although we are still a ways from the “get online and out of line” ideal, it is clear that e-government is evolving towards making it more convenient and more cost effective for citizens to interact with their government. Contact information and access to important services are often available. The future will hopefully bring improved outreach and perhaps site personalization. We are stretching by calling it a “revolution”, but as organization and navigation improve, contact information and methods become more pervasive, and accessibility and interactivity are enhanced and expanded, e-government will certainly move closer towards achieving its full potential.

These books are located on the lobby shelves across from the Circulation Desk.

The Girl in the Picture: The Story of Kim Phuc, the Photograph, and the Vietnam War, by Chong, Denise.

June 8, 1972, transformed Phan Thi Kim Phuc from a little girl into an icon. On the third day of battle against a group of Viet Cong in the village of Trang Bang, 30 miles from Saigon, a South Vietnamese pilot dropped napalm bombs on a group of fleeing villagers. AP photographer Nick Ut snapped one of the most famous photographs ever taken, of crying children and soldiers running down the road away from a wall of smoke, with a naked little girl in the middle of the pack. [Ut then took her to a hospital in Cu Chi.] This is the biography of Kim Phuc, “the girl in the picture,” who was permanently injured physically as the result of the bombing and who has lived since then with recurring physical and emotional pain. After 13 months in the hospital, Kim [the name she uses today] returned to village life, but the end of the war brought deprivation to her family as the victorious Communists imposed their policies on the South. When the Communists learned about the accident that had injured Kim, she became a propaganda tool for the state; her education was permanently disrupted until she was allowed to study in Cuba. She and her husband were granted asylum in Canada in 1992. The most impressive part of Kim’s story is how her resilience, happiness, and character come
through on every page. But in addition to giving us the life of a remarkable person and her effect on the people and world around her, author Chong provides a rare opportunity to learn what life was like in Vietnam from the time of the Tet Offensive to the early 1990s from the perspective of ordinary people—one of whom just happened to become extraordinary.

*The Burning of Bridget Cleary: A True Story,* by Bourke, Angela.

This splendid little book is far more than a simple account of how Michael Cleary came to murder his wife, Bridget Cleary, in Ballyvadlea, Co. Tipperary, in 1895. The 19th century was a difficult time for Ireland, as the Irish contended with absentee English landlords [as described in Maria Edgeworth’s excellent novel *Castle Rackrent*], the Famine with its mass emigrations, land riots in the 1870s, and the issue of Home Rule. The end of the century also brought pressures and conflicts between Ireland’s rural culture with its oral traditions and the increasingly modern social structures of the late Victorian period, such as universal education and an organized, state-supported constabulary. This book is microhistory—an examination of a specific event within its historical and cultural context—and land issues, Home Rule, and the new, powerful forces acting on rural culture all play a role of one kind or another in Bridget Cleary’s death and the subsequent trial of her husband and six of her relatives, including her father and aunt, for murder. Bourke’s question is “Why?” The answer of her killers was that Bridget Cleary had been taken by the fairies, but Bourke’s analysis of this response is a fascinating account of the complexity of the social and cultural situation in Ireland in 1895 and the tensions that that change brought. It is NOT an account of benighted peasants who believed unquestioningly in the supernatural, but a story (in part, at least) of how certain types of communication provide their own shorthand for dealing with uncomfortable issues within a community, and an account of how cultural change can stir up forces of fatal power.

**STACI MORLEY** has joined the staff in the Government Publications and Maps Sections. Staci graduated from Metropolitan State College of Denver. She previously worked at the Denver University and Aurora Public Libraries.