

Winners of the Oxford Online Library Champion Awards announced

Libraries and librarians from Leicestershire, East Riding, Plymouth, Sheffield and Bristol were yesterday (Thursday 6 December) announced as winners of the new Oxford Online Library Champion Awards at Online Information in London.

The Awards - sponsored by Oxford University Press (OUP) in association with the Museums, Libraries and Archives Partnership (MLA) - honour outstanding achievements by public libraries in promoting access to online resources such as those from Oxford Online.

Following the landmark national licence agreement between OUP and the MLA in March 2006, over 97% of public libraries in England now offer 24x7 access to a range of essential Oxford Online reference resources. Librarians have played an invaluable role in this success story, and the awards were introduced to celebrate their efforts in promoting the availability of Oxford Online resources to the public, to showcase individual achievement, and to inspire best practice.

The winners:

Oxford Online Library Champion of the Year

A unique award designed to honour the exceptional contribution of an individual member of the library community who has successfully championed Oxford Online resources.

Winner: Mukesh Nagar, Leicestershire County Council

'Mukesh has been very active in engaging with ways in which to bring online resources centre stage and to ensure they are embedded as core library services,' says Clare Bebbler, Marketing Manager at OUP. 'The submission details many strands of work including: writing and creating a good variety of publicity materials, staff training, making it easier to get to online resources on the council website, creating excellent help guides for online resources, tying 24/7 services together using a logo throughout, and working with the schools library service. His energy and commitment shines through.'

'I'm deeply honoured to have won this prestigious Oxford Online Library Champion's award,' says Mukesh Nagar. 'I certainly appreciate the recognition that OUP has given to the work that I've done for Leicestershire Library Services.'

Best overall strategy to promote awareness of Oxford Online resources

An award for the public library authority which has carried out the most imaginative and effective range of awareness campaigns to promote the availability of Oxford Online resources to library members and the general public.

Winner: East Riding of Yorkshire Council, submitted by Darren Rhodes, Libraries and Information Service

Susi Woodhouse from MLA says, 'As one of the most rural of England's library authorities, the East Riding of Yorkshire has every incentive to encourage use of online resources, and they have embraced this with great enthusiasm. Their submission is clear and shows a well-thought through approach to raising awareness and promotion of online materials.'

Best website promotion

An award for the public library authority which has used their website most effectively to build awareness of Oxford Online resources.

Joint Winners: Plymouth Libraries and Sheffield Libraries

The *cyberLibrary* website hosted at Plymouth now serves all fifteen public library authorities in the South West. 'We're very happy to win the prize,' says Claire Back of Plymouth Libraries. 'The website as it is today is the result of a few years work building a good relationship with our corporate web team and other partners and it's great for us to know that the work has been worth it. We try to think about the users' needs and aim to make it as easy as possible for anyone to find and access our Oxford products either in a library or from home.'

The judges were also impressed by the number of ways people could find out about the service on the Sheffield Libraries' website. 'The overall aim has been to ensure high visibility of the OUP packages for 24/7 use, to maximize awareness of them at as many entry points on the web pages as possible, to ensure easy access to the packages and maximize their use by as diverse a customer base as possible,' says Karen Wallace of Sheffield Libraries.

Most effective staff training

An award recognizing the public library authority which has best demonstrated its commitment to staff training on Oxford Online resources.

Winner: Bristol Libraries

'What was needed were those staff who would return to their workplace bubbling with enthusiasm – and thus the *e-Champions* initiative was born,' says Andrew Cox of Bristol Libraries. 'We wanted our trainees to be inspired by the exciting possibilities that our online reference collection offers, to recognize the practical applications, learn the basics, and above all go back and tell their colleagues and customers.'

The Awards were judged by Deborah Shorley (Director of Library Services, Imperial College, London), Susi Woodhouse (Digital Futures Manager, MLA) and David Potts (Community Libraries Programme Support Officer/Reference Online Programme Co-ordinator, MLA), and Clare Bebbler (Marketing Manager, OUP) and Robert Faber (Director, ODNB and OED, OUP). The winners were presented with their prizes at a special ceremony at the *Online Information* Show in London yesterday.

In announcing the winners, Robert Faber paid tribute to all who entered for the Awards: 'Each and every one of the many entries showed real enthusiasm, commitment and innovation in promoting online resources to the public,' says Robert. 'Given such a high standard it was very difficult – and in one case impossible – to choose just a single winner for each category. There are good ideas to bring together from all the entries, and we thank all the librarians across England who have worked so tirelessly to inform 48 million residents about the great resources they can access for free, and often from home, through their local library.'

John Dolan, Head of Library Policy at MLA says, 'These awards highlight the creativity of public libraries in widening direct user access to high quality online learning and information. Providing free world class resources is fundamental to the mission of all public libraries and the Online Library Champions are helping to lead the way.'

For more information please visit the Oxford University Press website at www.oxfordonline.com/mla/awards/ or contact Juliet Evans, Oxford University Press, on 01865 353911 or email juliet.evans@oup.com

NOTES TO EDITORS:

Oxford Online Library Champion Awards

The new awards aim to celebrate librarians' efforts in promoting the availability of Oxford Online resources to the public, to showcase individual achievement, and to inspire best practice.

- The winner of Oxford Online Library Champion of the Year Award wins a two-night luxury stay for two people in Oxford, lunch at OUP's Printer's House and an individual tour of the OUP Museum, a tour of the Bodleian Library, and a copy of the new edition of the leatherbound [Shorter Oxford English Dictionary](#).
- All other winners each receive perpetual access to five [Oxford Digital Reference Shelf](#) products of their choice for their library authority, plus a copy of the standard [Shorter Oxford English Dictionary](#) for a nominated individual.

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The **MLA Partnership** is the government's agency for museums, galleries, libraries and archives. We deliver strategic leadership in England and in each of its regions and we collaborate with partners across the UK. Our research identifies good practice, which we use to promote improvement. We offer advice, support and resources to funding bodies and other groups to incentivise innovation. Our aim is to raise professional standards and champion better services for users and readers of all ages and backgrounds, whether residents or visitors. Visit: www.mla.gov.uk

The **MLA/OUP National Agreement** forms part of Reference Online, a new programme managed by the MLA to streamline the procurement process for online resources by negotiating agreements on behalf of English public libraries.

145 out of 149 library authorities in England – from Cornwall to Northumberland – have already signed up to the 2-year OUP/MLA National Agreement. This means that over 48 million English residents can explore Oxford's award-winning online resources free of charge until 31 March 2008 simply by joining their local library:

- Oxford Dictionary of National Biography (www.oxforddnb.com)
- Oxford English Dictionary Online (www.oed.com)
- Oxford Reference Online (www.oxfordreference.com)
- Grove Music Online (www.grovemusic.com)
- Grove Art Online (www.groveart.com)

Access is offered through libraries but also remotely (including from home) using library membership details. Further information about the Agreement can be found at <http://www.oxfordonline/englishpubliclibraries/>