

Welcome to the November 2009 issue of *C&RL News*. Making the transition from K–12 to higher education can be daunting for many students. Academic librarians are exploring new ways to connect with first-year students and improve their research and information literacy skills.

At Belmont University in Nashville, librarians aren't waiting until students enter college to reach out to them. They are collaborating with area school librarians to open dialogue and improve information literacy skills at the K–12 level. Courtney Fuson and Jenny Rushing describe the program in their article "Climbing out of the 'Ivory Tower.'"

Collecting materials that appeal to today's freshmen, and incorporating them into the classroom, can also help make the academic library experience and research process less daunting. Portland State University recently acquired the archives of Dark Horse Comics and is working to expand the reach of the

school's comic studies program, Michael Bowman, Cristine N. Paschild, and Kimberly Willson-St. Clair tell the story of "How the dark horse came in" and how the collection will impact their institution. You can further explore the world of scholarly comic studies in this month's Internet Resources feature by Derik A. Badman.

As part of the effort to go where students are, instant messaging reference service has become commonplace in many academic libraries. Craig Anderson provides tips on "How to be a person" in virtual reference transactions and provide a better experience for both librarians and patrons.

Make sure to take a look at all of the other great articles and columns, including two new ACRL Standards and Guidelines and the call for proposals for ACRL 2011 in Philadelphia.

Thanks for reading the *News*!

—David Free, editor-in-chief  
dfree@ala.org

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