



## Lora Cokolat, M.L.I.S.

Collection Development and Reading Librarian  
Santa Clara County Library District

### GVRL Pleases Patrons, Young and Old, in Santa Clara County Library District

Lora Cokolat is a Collection Development and Reading Librarian for the Santa Clara County Library District, working in the District's Services and Support Center in Campbell, California. Lora purchases e-books, DVDs, book club kits, and e-magazines to support patrons who use the district's seven libraries and two bookmobiles. Part of the District's mission is to provide diverse resources on a wide variety of subjects and viewpoints, and to help people use those resources — a task right up the alley of the *Gale Virtual Reference Library (GVRL)*.

"We are committed to offering a variety of subject areas, topics, and viewpoints," says Lora. "Providing electronic versions of reference sources can be more cost effective than print copies at multiple locations."

#### GVRL SUPPORTS VARIED NEEDS, FROM SMALL BUSINESS QUERIES TO SCHOOL PROJECTS

The district subscribes to three *In Context* databases — *Biography*, *U.S. History*, and *World History*, and Lora says they are used frequently. "These editions have in-depth articles on many topics, including state and local topics as well as obscure topics. I like the topic overviews, which provide context for each subject. There are also other materials such as videos and primary sources. There is a big demand for primary sources now, especially given schools' move to the Common Core standards," she says.

Lora notes that Gale's *National Geographic Virtual Library (NGVL)* is another popular source that's useful for Common Core-related projects (its materials specifically align with and support the pedagogical shifts outlined by the standards). *NGVL* brings together a complete archive of *National Geographic* magazines — every page of every issue — along with a cross-searchable collection of *National Geographic* books, maps, images, and videos.

A commonly researched topic at libraries today is "small businesses," and *GVRL* delivers with a *Small Business Handbook* that includes a business plan template, described by Lora as a "resource for developing business plans." The *GVRL* collection also includes e-books in the sciences, the law, religion, and philosophy to support patrons' research.

#### EASY SEARCHES, FOCUSED RESULTS

*GVRL's* search features make it easy for patrons to find useful information — fast — whether they conduct a basic search or combine multiple criteria in a more advanced search. "*GVRL's* search interface allows our patrons to search by keyword or topic, and to search across different e-books on the same topic. I also like that I can build

#### CHALLENGE

- Libraries continually seek cost-effective ways to serve more patrons and enhance their users' experiences.

#### SOLUTIONS

- Gale Virtual Reference Library
- In Context series
- National Geographic Virtual Library

#### RESULTS

- *GVRL* allows multiple users to access resources at the same time. Patrons have the convenience of being able to access library resources, including *GVRL*, around the clock from their home computers or, with *GVRL's* mobile app, on their mobile devices.
- A friendly interface and powerful, yet easy-to-use search functions allow users to find what they need quickly, searching by keyword or subject across multiple resources, or combining additional criteria in an advanced search.
- Librarians can easily build customized collections for special subjects or user groups with the Subcollection Manager, enhancing patrons' library experience.
- Santa Clara Library District's Collection Librarian finds *GVRL's* price point to be better than that for other available e-book resources; e-resources such as *GVRL* also allow libraries to move away from print references, freeing up storage space for other uses.

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“GVRL has a nice search interface so you can search by keyword or topic. What I like most is that you can search across different e-books on the same topic. I also like that I can build subcollections.”

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Reading Librarian  
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subcollections,” she says. Available at no charge to GVRL customers, the e-book Subcollection Manager tool lets Lora further enhance users’ experience by creating and maintaining customized groups of eBooks on particular subjects, and by offering links to them from various sections of the library website. The library research page is broken down by subject. Materials are also categorized by age groups — there are research pages for adults, teens, and younger children.

According to Lora, some library users are still on a learning curve — they don’t understand the difference between an e-book and a database. “Students are often told not to go online for research, but rather to use print books. We are working to make teachers and students aware that e-books *are* books — but in electronic format.”

Lora sees a trend in her district to move away from print references, which frees up library storage space for non-reference books, and allows greater access to these resources. “Publishers are moving away from print because they can update their resources quickly to ensure currency, and make online resources accessible to more people.” GVRL has been, and continues to be, the standard setter for high-quality electronic reference resources. “It’s beneficial for our reference sources to be so accessible, especially for those who can’t get to the library or need to do research when the library is closed.”

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