

INSPIRING STORIES

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Guest Editor



he special
issue of
Indiana

Libraries you now hold in your hands represents a celebration for a remarkable project, Inspire. This collection of articles and stories about how people use the services provided through Inspire reflect the various issues surrounding this unique project.

The first article by Matt Hannigan provides a light-hearted yet practical look at how far the use of electronic resources has come in a very short time. Like Matt I, too, remember searching DIALOG via a GE Terminus teletypewriter. I also remember my first interaction with a "real" computer and how long it took me to punch cards so I could "tell" the machine a joke to elicit its preprogrammed response printout...to get to the other side." The other side of Inspire is reflected in the fine article on the inner workings of Inspire by Mary-Elise Haug, technical administrator for INCOLSA.

The core of this special issue is devoted to *Inspiring Stories*. In these short pieces, citizens, students, media specialists, librarians, educators, and Indiana's senior Senator tell how they use INSPIRE to find the information they need and what access to this type of material means to them.

The real story of Inspire involves everyone in the state of Indiana

because everyone is able to access the specialized information that is Inspire. In a first of its kind effort, contracts were written to ensure that anyone, anywhere within Indiana with access to the Inspire website would be able to use the high quality content. Similar efforts in other states allow only those members of a special group, be it a consortium of universities, schools or even public libraries to access the data provided by carefully selected vendors at significant cost.

Via Inspire and its authentication system anyone with Internet access within Indiana's borders can use Inspire from their computer at home, work, school, or their local public library. In this regard Inspire puts Indiana at the forefront of the revolution involving electronic access to information, and at far lower funding levels than less all-encompassing efforts in many other states. Inspire represents a true bargain to the citizens of Indiana. So read on, join the celebration that is Inspire and when you're finished log on to Inspire at www.inspire.net, explore, learn what you need to know today and perhaps consider writing to share your own *Inspiring Story*.