Profile: Jennifer Richard
Information Maven (as coined by M. Gladwell),
Acadia University

How long have you been working in libraries?

I have worked in libraries for the last 21 years, though I was a member of the the library club at St. Anthony Daniel Elementary School in the early 80s.

What was your first job?

My first job was as a sales clerk at the Smart Shop on Charlotte St. in Sydney, NS. When I was very little my grandmother, mother and aunts would go shopping there and I would tag along. Verna, the head of the sales team, told me when I was five that when I turned 16 she'd give me a job -- and she did. Nepotism/patronage at its finest.

Describe your first library job.

My first library job was as a science cataloguer at the Killam Library at Dalhousie University. This job got me out of room service at the Sheraton and back into "school" where I've always felt most comfortable. I started in October 1990. One day in the Spring of 1992, Sylvia Fullerton, the Head of the Science Library at the time, grabbed my arm as I was walking by her and asked me if I had ever considered becoming a librarian, I laughed and said no. She said too bad,
because I think you’d be a great one. I graduated from Dal SLIS in 1994. Thanks Sylvia!

**If you weren't a librarian/library worker, what would you be and why?**

Caterer, party or conference organizer. I love the excitement of planning and then executing the perfect event. Putting out fires and troubleshooting throughout the process and pulling off that great event that everyone talks about for a week (kind of like Monica Geller from the tv show "Friends"). I love staying calm and in control when others are freaking out.

**What do you like best about your current job?**

The variety! I love being an academic librarian because of the possibilities and the fast changing nature of the profession. I get to be involved in grant writing, being an editor, sitting on or chairing university committees, research, digital projects, collection development, teaching, one on one consultation with students, complexities of copyright, creation of online tools and I could go on and on.

**Describe your favorite conference experience.**

Oh my, there are so many, APLA and Access are probably my favorite conferences.

Sentimentally, sitting outside of the banquet/dance chatting with two of my favorite library people ever -- Dr. Norman Horrocks and Larry Moore during the APLA/CLA 2007 in Newfoundland. I remember discussing the idea of having a selective and optimistic memory when it comes to conference planning.

From a planning perspective, ACCESS 2002 in Halifax, when I arrived back in my room at around 1am after the pub crawl, there was a voice message from Clifford Lynch telling me that he was fogged in in Boston and would not arrive in time for his address in 8 hours. Not distraught, (did I mentioned I arrived back from the pub crawl), I headed down to the "hospitality suite" to seek some advice. When I told the group my predicament, Roy Tennant said "No worries, I'll do it" and poured himself another glass of wine.

**What do you do for fun?**

Stuff with my boys -- Spencer 10, Carter 8, and Brad (husband, age undisclosed). Basketball, snowshoeing, camping, hiking, travelling, and lots of beach activities in the summer. I love reading out loud to the boys in the car on long trips or at bedtime.

Without the boys, spa days are nice. Oh cooking/baking and cake decorating too.
Name one person you admire, and explain why you admire them.

It sounds really corny, but it would have to be my parents. I got my compassion, ethics and outlook on life from them. With a severely disable child to care for all their lives, their example showed me perseverance, tolerance, and kindness.

If you could say one thing to someone who is interested in a career in libraries, what would it be?

Do it, but only if you are adaptable, flexible, tolerant, open minded, and sometimes a little brave.

If you were stranded at the airport, what would you want to have with you to read, and why?

Something new, a book I haven't read before. I don't really like re-reading books because there's too much out there to revisit stuff you've already read. I like fiction. I haven't read "The Help" by Kathryn Stockett, so I'd probably pick that one up at the airport bookstore.