



ALA 2012 Midwinter Conference Tips

Enjoy the conference offerings and Dallas attractions!

The Basics

- Wear your nametag to meetings, social events, and on the conference shuttles but not on the street. Bring business cards with you. Carry snacks and drinks.
- Use the maps provided in the conference program to locate conference hotels and to navigate the convention center and exhibit floor.
- Take advantage of the free conference shuttles to travel between events.
- Explore your interests and learn something new. Take notes during or just after sessions while the content is still fresh in your mind.
- Meet people. Avoid listening to music, texting, etc., when you could be networking.
- For last minute schedule changes and social events check *Cognotes*, the daily conference newspaper; ALA Connect: <http://connect.ala.org/>; Facebook (<http://www.facebook.com/event.php?eid=221581731235566>) and/or Twitter (<http://twitter.com/#!/alamw>).
- Conferences require a lot of walking. Wear comfortable shoes! If you are physically challenged, you may contact Special Needs and reserve a scooter. This information, along with the name and email address of a contact person, can be found in the conference program.
- Bring a light sweater. Even though it may be warm outside, the convention center will be air-conditioned.

Design Your Conference

- Use the program guide to design your own conference experience. Find the programs, poster sessions, discussion groups, speaker series, parties, etc. that match your interests and expertise, and/or topics key to your position responsibilities and organization's initiatives.
- Schedule your days to fit the time and place of events, including travel time. Have alternate events in mind in case you don't have time to travel or the program you intended to go to is overflowing, not what you expected, or cancelled. Don't be afraid to arrive late or leave early!
- Allocate time for the Exhibits (i.e., "The Stacks"); don't try to see them all at once. If you pick up too much vendor swag to carry home, remember that there is a postal center available on the Exhibits floor.

Network & Get Involved

- You are not alone. Ask questions and learn from the thousands of librarians and related professionals from myriad backgrounds attending the conference with you. These individuals may face the same challenges as you or have developed solutions you need; they may have a similar position as you or one that you want; or they may be a potential employer, collaborator, or mentor.



- Talk to people. Introduce yourself and exchange business cards or contact information.
- If you want to get involved in the association, a specific division, round table, and/or committee, attend meetings and introduce yourself to the chairperson, director, etc. Note that it's normal to arrive late or to leave early from events, including committee meetings.

Stay Connected, Apply, & Share the Wealth

- Keep connections! Make a note on the back of business cards you receive to trigger your memory of the exchange. Send follow-up email messages to the contacts and presenters you meet.
- Apply your experiences. Take time to review the notes and materials you collect and to plan how you can use the information in your position and at your library.
- Share and discuss the new ideas you learned via blogs and/or tweets and with your co-workers.

***Reacquaint yourself and reflect on why you are,
and what makes you glad to be, a librarian!***

Text based on: the District of Columbia Library Association's 2010 "Making the Most of Your ALA Conference Experience" discussion and online document (<http://bit.ly/cqkBRd>), "Tips for a Successful Annual" on the Annual 2009 conference wiki (<http://wikis.ala.org/annual2009/>), and "Washington, D.C. Conference to Feature More Sessions, Opportunity than Ever Before" published in the 2010 Preview E-dition of *Cognotes*. Revised November 30, 2011.