

# Laurie Paulson, *librarian*



Image source: <http://nicolamcnee.edublogs.org/files/2010/06/Nicola-the-Librarian.jpg>

“*I want to show students that conducting excellent research is easy for everyone to do.*”

**Hometown:** Terre Haute, IN

**Age:** 48

**Gender:** Female

**Education:** MLS from the University of Maryland

**Occupation:** Electronic Resources Librarian at North Carolina State University

**Marital Status:** Married

## overview

Laurie is a librarian specializing in electronic resources. She has been married for 25 years to Bruce, an architect, and has one son, Tyler, who is in his sophomore year of college at Wake Forest University. Laurie is an avid reader, and a member of two book clubs, one of which is with a group of fellow librarians around the country and conducted via the Internet. She got an iPad for Christmas in 2010, and has enjoyed using it to read books using the Google Books app, as well as read the New York Times, especially the crossword puzzles. In her spare time, Laurie volunteers at the Wake County Historical Society, helping to scan and electronically index historical documents.

Laurie has been working at NCSU for 14 years, assisting students and researchers with their searches for electronic resources. She often goes to classes to demonstrate for students how they can utilize the university's library resources to get better research done for their projects and papers. She works several shifts per week at the reference desk within the university's library, where she helps students locate resources for their various academic pursuits

## knowledge and skills

- Knowledgeable user of both PC's and Macs.
- Owns an Apple iPad, so knows her way around one pretty well.
- Excellent at conducting searches for research.

## challenges

- Motivating students to locate primary sources for research, rather than resorting to sites like Wikipedia.

## needs

- Quick and easy access to comprehensive document repositories that can be easily taught to non-librarians
- The ability to easily locate hard copies of resources within NCSU's library or those of other universities within the region.

# Scenario

Laurie is working a Monday evening shift at the reference desk of the undergraduate library at North Carolina State University. At around 7:30 p.m., Antonia Lopez, a sophomore Women's and Gender Studies major, rushes up to the desk. Antonia explains that she has a paper due for her Gender and Politics in the United States class tomorrow, and she has to have at least three primary resources to cite. Laurie notes that Antonia is clearly extremely anxious about getting such a late start on the paper.

Laurie asks Antonia what the topic of her paper is, and is informed that Antonia's been assigned to an analysis of the abortion debate in the United States in the past 20 years. Laurie assures Antonia that there are a number of excellent resources out there that she can access electronically, and gets up to find a computer in the lab to search on. Unfortunately, all of the computers in the lab are being used by other students. Laurie assures Antonia that this is no problem, as the library has recently acquired some tablets for students to check out.

Using the tablet, Laurie pulls up the HathiTrust's mobile site. She prefers to use this with students because of its simpler interface, which makes it easier for her to instruct students on its use. Just to get a feel for what is out there on the topic, Laurie types "abortion" in as a query. She hits search, and 122 results are returned. Laurie notes that the results should be filtered to only include those from the 1990's onward, so she goes to the menu to filter results, and selects "1990-1999", which shows that there are 24 results from that timeframe, and also selects the subject "Abortion law and legislation United States" to narrow the results down to an even more manageable 7 results.

She shows Antonia what she is doing every step of the way, and selects a transcript of a House hearing on the Freedom of Choice Act of 1991 to view in full, to show Antonia that she can search within the document to find relevant terminology so that she doesn't have to read the entire thing with her impending deadline. She has Antonia log in to the site, and shows her that she can flag and create a collection of relevant documents that she can either continue to review using the library's tablet, or access on a computer, either her own or one of the lab's. Antonia thanks her profusely, and turns to the tablet to continue searching. Laurie heads back to the reference desk to finish out her shift, feeling good that she was able to assist a student in crisis.