

Carpenter, Mary - CBPL 25th Anniversary Oral History 2023-05-12

Antonia Krupicka-Smith: [00:00:00] Okay, we are recording for our oral history archive. My name is Antonia Krupicka- Smith. That is spelled a n t o n i a k r u p i c k a hyphen s m i t h. And I'm the library director here at the Council Bluff Public Library. And joining me is Mary. Mary. Can you state your full name and what you do here at the library?

Mary Carpenter: Sure. My name is Mary Carpenter and I am the support services manager here at the Council Bluffs Public Library.

Antonia Krupicka-Smith: Great. And we are recording on. May 12th. 12th, 2023. Um, shortly after 2:00 PM here in the boardroom, here at the Council Bluffs Public Library on 400 Willow Avenue. And do I have permission to record this interview, interview with you and make it part of our archive?

Mary Carpenter: Sure.

Antonia Krupicka-Smith: Okay. We appreciate that. So we're gonna get started, um, and we're gonna be talking about the library building itself since we're [00:01:00] coming up on the 25th anniversary. Of this building opening to our community. So first off, you've already told us what your role is here now.

Mary Carpenter: Mm-hmm.

Antonia Krupicka-Smith: Now at the library. But I'm wondering what your role was 25 years ago with the Council Bluffs Public Library.

Mary Carpenter: I was a reference librarian fresh out of library school.

Antonia Krupicka-Smith: Great. And were you from the community?

Mary Carpenter: No. I am originally from Moorhead, Minnesota. And, uh, uh, was working at a library up there and they laid me off and I said, I kind of like this. So I went to grad school in Emporia, Kansas, and this is my first job outta school.

Antonia Krupicka-Smith: First job outta school. I like it. I like it. So now we're gonna get into those memories.

Mary Carpenter: All right

Antonia Krupicka-Smith: And I am just curious to know, um, what, do you have a memory or what can you associate when you were first told, We're moving into a new building, a new library was built. How did [00:02:00] that, what is your memory associated with that?

Mary Carpenter: Well, I always knew because I sort of, I came with the library, so I worked, uh, I had the chance to come early and start work right away, or wait until after the move. And A, I needed the money, so I started right away. And b, I wanted to work in the old building so that I wouldn't get any of this well you should have seen what it was like in the old building.

And I got to experience what it was like in the old Carnegie Library. So I always knew going in that there was gonna be a move. So I was kind of looking forward to it. Um, maybe we were open for a month. So I didn't get a lot of on-hands reference training with the public. So, and then, yeah, that's, I guess, so I knew it was coming, so there was no real, I knew everybody, all the other employees were probably very happy that [00:03:00] I was happy because it was a mess over there.

And being able to come into a new building that was accessible. Just that. Accessible was gonna be a lot of fun. Having everything in shelf order was gonna be a lot of fun. So like things weren't like, well part of it's upstairs and part of it's over here. And even our large, um, oversized books could be in shelf order. The simple things really that got me excited but...

Antonia Krupicka-Smith: The simple things.

Mary Carpenter: The simple things, things in shelf order. Yeah, just. And just space. It's just three times the space. It was just, and we could have used more. I think we learned later, but, so I don't know if that.

Antonia Krupicka-Smith: Yeah, that's, I mean, it's your memory.

Mary Carpenter: I mean, I could, I could go on about it, but the move and everything, so,

Antonia Krupicka-Smith: Yeah. Well, and let's, let's dig into that. So you always knew that, um, you were gonna be moving into a new building, so you didn't really have to think about getting a new building.

Mary Carpenter: Mm-hmm.

Antonia Krupicka-Smith: You [00:04:00] just knew.

Mary Carpenter: Mm-hmm. Mm-hmm.

Antonia Krupicka-Smith: Hey, that there's a new, new building there and I'm hired because I'm needed at this new building.

Mary Carpenter: Yes.

Antonia Krupicka-Smith: Um, so there was none of that. Angst around, why don't I have a new, why are we in this small, small place?

Mary Carpenter: Yeah.

Antonia Krupicka-Smith: Um, so, but let's talk about that move. Let's talk about, um, any memories you have associated with actually opening the facility, whether it be before the doors were open or any, you know, the process of moving into a new building and what that is like.

Or and the process of, you know, you open those doors and it's not exactly what you thought it was going to be in any of those kinds of early day. Well that didn't work out like we thought.

Mary Carpenter: Oh yeah. Um, yeah, it was interesting cuz we hired a company, it was outta Glenwood, so it was a regular moving company and we had a process and I remember a lot of kids like high schoolers, so we must have hired, high schooler kids [00:05:00] or temp workers, but we would have this special way. We had to pack the boxes so that way they were still in shelf order because that was, yeah. And um, we had to take the barcodes. There was another process of taking the barcodes from the inside of the book to putting 'em into the outside of the book because of a new self-check system that we had and checkout systems.

Um, I don't know if we weeded much cuz Ms. Smock always wanted a new library and so she didn't weed and so a lot of stuff came over that I

don't think should ever should have come over. But, um, so once we got all packed up, we had this sort of conveyor belt that went out one of the windows on the first floor into the back of this moving truck and they just, you know, came over two blocks or a block really and just kind of [00:06:00] wheeled it all in. And then we would work in tag teams of putting stuff back in shelf order. You know, we kind of figured out where stuff go and we had to shift a few times, obviously.

Um, I remember before we moved, watching the company put all the, the reference office furniture together. That was, that was interesting because they always seemed to forget a part. So we were waiting for our desks to be done, and then it's like, oh, oh no, we need, we gotta get these screws. And I'm like, isn't there like a little manual that tells you.

Um, one day we were putting the shelving up in the regular um, stacks and there was no air conditioning yet in the building, and this was all happening in July, August. And I ... Mary, are you always that white? I'm like, [00:07:00] well, I am from Fargo, but and I just, yeah, it was the heat, it was getting to us all. So we had to go back to the old building and put a little ice on our necks and stuff like that. And just a lot of packing tape that sound of just like every time now I hear packing tape coming off that little, those little plastic guns. It just takes me right back. Just that... boxes together. But, and we had to go back. We had opportunities to go back to the old building and get stuff because for some reason they brought over these huge manual typewriters, probably from the forties that they still had, why we still had, but, and then they left behind these nice electric typewriters back at the old building. I'm like, I dunno why. But, so we went back and forth, but that was kind of, It was hot, it was dirty, it was dusty. Um, I was thankful for that because I had no money, so therefore I had [00:08:00] no dress clothes to wear. So it fit into my wardrobe, you know, shorts and t-shirts. That's what I wore to grad school, so that's what I could wear to work too.

Um, particular memory is when I moved, when we got, we were moving stuff in and I asked our director, Doris Wanek at the, well, she was not director, but she was the reference manager. And I said I wanted to be in charge of special collections cuz all the other librarians seemed to have little niches they were in. You know, we had, uh, Dave was a cataloger. Katie had, uh, government documents and Maggie kind of was taking care of the reference kinda schedules and everything. And so I said well I'd like to do special collections. She was thrilled. She said fine. And of course all of that stuff that's in special collections had been

kept in a vault in the basement over in the old library, and it was dark and damp. [00:09:00] Which is a great place for, you know, artifacts, right? And pulling out these envelopes and you could see where the silverfish had just kind of eaten around the edge of all these envelopes. And so I'm, that's kind of what I'm dealing with. And plus you had bound volumes of newspaper that were probably stored in the same room where a coal shoot had most likely historically been because there's coal dust, there's still coal dust up there.

Antonia Krupicka-Smith: Mm-hmm.

Mary Carpenter: And so there was coal dust and leather dust and regular dust and probably mouse dust. And yeah, it was just, I'm just head to toe. I have these old ugly shorts on and a t-shirt. And the director, Jim Godsey at the time comes and I say, well, Mary, the, the board would like to meet you. I'm like, what? And he's like, yeah, well, we're having a meeting. They'd just like to meet. And I'm just filthy. I just sort of stick my head in the door and wave. No, well, you could join us. And I'm like, I don't, I dunno. You know, [00:10:00] sweaty and dirty. It's like, no, no, it's all right. I'll go back to work. Thank you.

But so, yeah, it was just kind of dirty, but it all worked out. It was, it was kind of nice. It was just nice. I, I, that's what I enjoyed just because the old building did have an elevator, but you had to go upstairs to get in the building to get in the elevator. So it was just more for getting book carts on the ground.

So that's kinda my initial memories.

Antonia Krupicka-Smith: Yeah. How many days did it take to move?

Mary Carpenter: I dunno. I can I...

Antonia Krupicka-Smith: Do you, do you have an idea of like how long the libraries were closed to the community to facilitate this?

Mary Carpenter: I don't, I don't think it took very long to actually get the materials over, cuz I remember I started in June and we were open for, was it a week or two weeks? I can't remember. Because we, I know we had to have closed in July, [00:11:00] and so I think some of the packing and weeding had gone on. But that's in earnest. I think we just dove right in. And then in August when we had our, beginning of August, we had

our open house. Our cold open. Um, so really it must have only taken a month. And, um, yeah, and then we had like, um, I think we didn't have all the computers yet or something when we first, when we wanted to open in August, but it was not, wasn't until September. So we had that time from, I think, um, August to September that month two to kind of put things away and get, get it all set up. So it was still only taking a couple of weeks. Because really we only had to go a block and if we forgot anything. But yeah, I, that part I can't [00:12:00] remember cuz I was just kinda head down kinda but...

Antonia Krupicka-Smith: Doing it.

Mary Carpenter: Yeah. Concepts of time are...

Antonia Krupicka-Smith: Yeah. And so opening day, do you remember opening day? Do you remember anything about that experience of opening the doors and how it was received by the community and, and, and what you were doing that day? What was your job?

Mary Carpenter: I don't remember specifically, but odds are I was dealing with people on the internet. Um, Yeah, it, it was interesting. I'm most likely, I'm, I'm, I was working the reference desk. We were, I, we were excited, well for me, but the others that had been working in the old building just to have, in the old building, they, I don't think they had off desk time or off desk hours cuz they just didn't have an office. I [00:13:00] think Doris might have had an office downstairs in the basement, but the librarians and the regular staff, we didn't have, like, we had a drawer, you know, and a desk.

Antonia Krupicka-Smith: Mm-hmm.

Mary Carpenter: So that was nice for people to be off desk. But I know when we first opened, I don't think there was really an anticipation of how, well we should have anticipated, how popular the internet access would be. And we had absolutely no, plan, really it was just a signup sheet on a clipboard.

Antonia Krupicka-Smith: Oh.

Mary Carpenter: And we're dealing with the honor system and of having to go and it was just, imagine teenage boys. This is kind of my vision, my, my kind of feelings. Just teenage boys showing up, getting on the

internet. So use your own imagination, cuz teenage boys, no matter if this is 20 years ago or now, but... what, what do teenage boys wanna look at on the internet? [00:14:00] So that was interesting. Um, but yeah, it was just, it was, that was dealing with the internet and if like, people hanging around the reference desk waiting to get on the internet, well, they've been on there for half hour. It's my turn to get on the internet. So there was no timers, no... That's what I remember. But yeah. But I remember too, you know, people, you know, Being able to come into the library. A lot of people expressed they missed the old library, kinda looked at them funny. Like, okay. I said, I can get you an old book to sniff as you browse, but yeah. But yeah, it was, it was busy. It was busy. Um, I don't think it really hit me. I mean, we had that sort of cold open where people could come in and check it out, but, um, Yeah, I don't really remember. I think it was just get to work cuz then I, um, ordered. [00:15:00] I thought that we had, what do we have, like one person ordering for nonfiction right now?

Antonia Krupicka-Smith: Yeah, for adult nonfiction.

Mary Carpenter: For adult nonfiction. We then we had Dave, Katie, there's four of us ordering and four full-time librarians. And we each had sections for ordering for, um, nonfiction.

Antonia Krupicka-Smith: Mm-hmm.

Mary Carpenter: So that was, so that was all very new. And I think for me it was just a learning experience. It wasn't... working in a library, wasn't new, but just kind of this new responsibilities, new roles, you know.

Antonia Krupicka-Smith: Mm-hmm.

Mary Carpenter: Dealing with the public and, you know

Antonia Krupicka-Smith: Mm-hmm.

Mary Carpenter: That, well, that I was sort of used to, but yeah. More, more responsibility. Yeah.

Antonia Krupicka-Smith: Mm-hmm. So, you know, it has been 25 years.

Mary Carpenter: Mm-hmm.

Antonia Krupicka-Smith: What would you think as a memory is like the biggest change or the biggest thing that, well, I'm glad they fixed that because they got that wrong [00:16:00] on the first day.

Mary Carpenter: I think I just answered that question. Oh, is it, oh, was it was the internet. I, I, I think when this. Because you, the timing I think was just in that aspect was probably wrong for the library because it was like, we opened, what, 98 and so they were probably pr... 97, 96. So really when they were planning all this, the internet was just like, oh, this is really cool. This is interesting. And it just, and I think finally getting like internet access and having. Um, patrons being able to sign in themselves so we don't have to police them, you know, at least as timewise goes and, um, printing, um, people would print out reams of paper. It's like, oh, well I, I didn't mean to pay. I don't, you know, so, so now that's all automated, so you could tell people, well, if you print it out, it's gonna cost ya know, 10 cents a page or whatever. So, um, [00:17:00] getting the internet lab, um, I think that finally, um, teen Central.

Antonia Krupicka-Smith: Mm-hmm.

Mary Carpenter: I think that was huge. Cuz that was a, you kind of knew that, opening up that, that was a huge gap.

I mean, they had like a small collection.

Antonia Krupicka-Smith: Mm-hmm.

Mary Carpenter: They had, they had this jukebox, didn't... but no, it's not a, it wasn't an actual jukebox, but there was, um, sort of where fiction starts, kinda that area now where fiction is now and that's where the YA collection was. It was like maybe two ranges. And they had this wooden, it was shaped like a jukebox and it had colored lights on the top of it and a mirror behind it. And it was just supposed to be a display, but that was like supposed to be there hip thing for the kids. Was this

Antonia Krupicka-Smith: in 1998?

Mary Carpenter: [00:18:00] 1998, yeah. Um, that, but that helped a lot too, because I know now for probably having me down in support services is probably a good thing too. Um, I really enjoyed working the

reference desk, but when it comes to some of the teenagers, it's like I can be a, you know, I. But that, yeah, having Teen Central I think was good too because that kind of gave them something to do and a little more structure and it, it, it met a need that just was just a gaping hole.

Antonia Krupicka-Smith: Mm-hmm.

Mary Carpenter: Really, I think as far as our services went, cuz if you're a little kid, great. If you're an adult, great. But, you know, if you're a teenager, oh, just, you know, sit down, be quiet, get out, you know, so...

Antonia Krupicka-Smith: yeah.

Mary Carpenter: Yeah. But, um, I don't know. But those are the two things.

Antonia Krupicka-Smith: Do you have any other memories of this library or your [00:19:00] experience that you wanna share?

Mary Carpenter: Golly, I was kind of thinking about this cuz I knew we were gonna talk and it was always kind of interesting because one of the memories was, um, 9/11 and I worked that day and support services had, um, a TV at that time and I was still working reference. And so I'm down of course with everybody else watching the TV and, but that afternoon was just in, and as we were talking earlier, airplanes go over here all the time.

Well, by that afternoon I'm sitting at the desk. It's just me, few patrons in. And it was, it was a lovely day, sunny day, but it was quiet, deadly quiet. And there was, um, I remember seeing there's a regular patron was just over sitting and reading a [00:20:00] newspaper and, and I'm following the news on the internet and then all of a sudden in the afternoon I heard jets taking off from, uh, Offut.

Antonia Krupicka-Smith: Mm-hmm.

Mary Carpenter: And it was Bush taking off going back to DC

Antonia Krupicka-Smith: Mm-hmm.

Mary Carpenter: That was just like, I don't know cuz it, it just kind of made it all real.

Antonia Krupicka-Smith: Mm-hmm.

Mary Carpenter: And I just remember I can, I can see myself sitting in that same spot, but, um, that's one of the memories. Um, I guess it, it, it's, I talk about the, the building being accessible, but to me thinking about the 25, is the people that I've worked with.

Mm-hmm. Um, Doris, who I've mentioned, um, She was just the sweet, sweetest woman and she was the reference manager and she just, um, unfortunately passed away. You know, just a little while after we opened.

Antonia Krupicka-Smith: Oh.

Mary Carpenter: And, but you know, she, she had cancer and she was suffering, [00:21:00] but she was just always like, maybe gave a little too much, you know what I mean? It's like, sorry. Keep some of that for yourself. Um, uh, there was, uh, Dave Archer, uh, became, he was my predecessor, um, became a good friend and kinda, uh, kind of helped me out. He was my buddy here at work kinda, we watched each other's backs cuz sometimes yeah, you need somebody like that at work.

Antonia Krupicka-Smith: Mm-hmm.

Mary Carpenter: Just to kinda give you a heads up every once in a while if something's going down.

Antonia Krupicka-Smith: Mm-hmm.

Mary Carpenter: Um, and getting to know the history. I, I, I've had a lot of fun doing that over the past 25 years of just discovering little, um, big things little things. Um, I've gotten, I met Steven Ambrose.

Antonia Krupicka-Smith: Mm.

Mary Carpenter: He came to the library. It was nothing like it in the world, I think. Is that book on ap...? Mm-hmm. And we didn't really have anything here for him, but he came and I said, well, here's [00:22:00] what we have. And he just told me that we're doing librarians, we're doing God's work.

Antonia Krupicka-Smith: Oh.

Mary Carpenter: Yeah. So I'm like, I'll take that. Um, What else? Oh, a lot. I mean, yes, I'll keep that one to myself. Um, but yeah, it, it's kind of the people that I've worked with. Good times, bad times, but um, yeah.

Antonia Krupicka-Smith: Yeah.

Mary Carpenter: But, uh,

Antonia Krupicka-Smith: Okay. So share your memories about, um, internet access here at the library.

Mary Carpenter: Internet access. Um, I remember the stampedes in the morning. You would. We would literally have like 10, 15 people outside waiting to get in and they would run up the stairs to get on the internet.

Um, before we had, so once we took care of, there was four, um, internet computers, no, eight that were up on the east side past the reference desk. I'm trying to think what's there now. [00:23:00] Um, I don't think there's anything as the, anyway, towards where the meeting rooms anyway. Um, that was the public access and that didn't last very long.

We, um, then moved it over to where it is now. Um, but it wasn't regulated so there was no time sheets. There was maybe, I think we still had time sheets. Um, but people would get on there and I remember, uh, you know, we'd open at 9:00 and I left at 5:30 and there was one particular guy, he'd be there all day from 9:00 in the morning until 5:30 at night.

And then eventually we had, um, timed software equipment, um, but as I saying, sometimes we would have issues with the internet early on, and in the front of the building there's a [00:24:00] electrical closet. And I think that's where a lot of the, the internet came in. And if we would have issues, if it was something was glitchy or the internet was down, there was a modem.

Just like a modem like you have in your living room now. Modem. And that was service. That was the whole libraries. Internet came through that modem. And so you would unplug it, unplug it back in, just like chipper anyway, um there's that show the it crowd. But anyway, should try... And so eventually we upgraded. Then um, uh, as you know,

internet got faster and faster, you know, we'd kind of improve and improve.

Um, There was got to be a point though. Uh, I could tell. I think this was before fiber optics, I forget Tom would know all this. He's, he'll know the top, but you could tell when school got [00:25:00] out. Because I would be back, you know, ordering away on the internet and all of a sudden, bam, things are taking forever and ever, and ever to load.

And there was a couple of days I just said, you know what, I'm gonna go home and finish up my day because the kids are sucking up all the bandwidth. There was just like no bandwidth to go around. And I believe Barbara Peterson, a director at the time, we had at one time there was what is now, the server room was the internet lab for not very long because it, there was no ventilation in there and it just smelled like an old locker room after a while it smelled like junior high in there. It was not good. Um, but that's kind of where we were storing our, our old computer equipment stuff that we couldn't use anymore. And so the city was looking for a place for their, all their servers and um, Barbara said, well, [00:26:00] oh, we'd really like to help you out, but you know, we got all this stuff here and it needs to be recycled and you know, if you guys could help us as well.

The city had to then become our recycler and took on all of our old equipment, and then that's became the server room and our internet comes faster. All of a sudden we have fiber optics coming in, and so it's now, I can't imagine cuz you throw in wifi. I don't, can't imagine the bandwidth that's being used.

It's just getting bigger and bigger and bigger and streaming and downloading and, um, yeah, that was, and just, yeah, the very slow. But I, I especially love that memory of unplugging, plugging back in the, and then, um, but yeah, and we used to have, the privacy screens. I don't know if they still had those. I think we replaced those before you came and you would, [00:27:00] this was our way around of if somebody was looking at something inappropriate and you would look down. There was like a piece of smoke glass, if you will, like set in the tabletop and the computer monitor was underneath there, so you had to look hunched over instead, look up at a screen. You would look through it, the table, into your screen and then the monitor and everything was there, but it worked a a bit. But yeah,

I don't know how far you wanna get, but yeah, that's one thing I don't miss about working the reference desk. But anyway, and then eventually it just happened. What we now, monitors and stuff. So for a long time we didn't have monitors and it was like...

Antonia Krupicka-Smith: so you just saw desktops.

Mary Carpenter: You just saw desktops.

Antonia Krupicka-Smith: Tables.

Mary Carpenter: And tables and stuff like that. And so then...

Antonia Krupicka-Smith: But that's not how it was when we opened.

Mary Carpenter: No. And the very first day, no. [00:28:00] It was like, you remember...? Well, maybe you don't remember the computers from the eighties or the nineties. You know this big, huge. You know, there's probably, you know, two gigs of, well, maybe by then there was four gigs of memory.

Yeah. I had my computer I bought in 97 had two gigabytes of memory and the hard drive, two gig, hard drive. That was hot stuff back then. So yeah, your big old, you know, monitors, monitors and stuff like that. And, uh, so there was eight of them. And yeah, like I said, we just sign up sheets and then we kind of expanded, expanded. So, but I think now as people have their computers in their hands with their little phones and tablets and laptops, it's...

Antonia Krupicka-Smith: So there was eight computers in total?

Mary Carpenter: Yeah.

Antonia Krupicka-Smith: When we opened the building?

Mary Carpenter: Yes.

Antonia Krupicka-Smith: Oh.

Mary Carpenter: For public internet access.

Antonia Krupicka-Smith: Wow.

Mary Carpenter: Yeah. That's what I said. It was a very good plan.
[00:29:00] I don't think they had an idea.

I don't really don't think they had a clue of what, they just had no idea. And I'm like, this isn't gonna work guys. Cuz I come, from grad school I ran the internet lab. I was one of the monitors. I was teaching assistant and we had, you know, much... I think maybe we had about 10 computers, but that was just for schoolwork. But still, it's like everybody had a computer. I said this isn't gonna...

Antonia Krupicka-Smith: For a community.

Mary Carpenter: For a community, yeah. I think it must not have lasted very long cuz I think we revolted. Um, we, um, had a board meeting and I remember it was me and Maggie Baker, another reference librarian, and we just said, look, you're paying us a lot of money to be, um, you know, internet monitors. You, if you just want me to sit here with this clipboard all day, [00:30:00] you know. Watching teenage boys on the internet. That's, but I don't think that's why you hired us. So, uh, yeah. Then they kind of thought about it, okay, yeah. This isn't sustainable, the way it was. And...

Antonia Krupicka-Smith: And there wasn't like kids' computers and teen computers?

Mary Carpenter: Nope. Nope.

Antonia Krupicka-Smith: There was just eight computers.

Mary Carpenter: I think there was just eight computers. I can't remember if there was any in the youth department. Maybe one or two. I think eventually there was like two, they had two down there. Um, but no, there was, and then there was no Teen Central or anything, so no, it was just eight. So just eight. And they had several, they had, um, I think a couple of computers for databases. So if like you were,

Antonia Krupicka-Smith: Like searching.

Mary Carpenter: For searching databases, you know, we had news bank or something like that.

Antonia Krupicka-Smith: Mm-hmm.

Mary Carpenter: And so we could say, no, no, no, those are, but still they had to get on those.

Antonia Krupicka-Smith: Yeah.

Mary Carpenter: You know, we'd kick 'em off. But yeah, [00:31:00] it's just, it, you know, what was there to look at in 98? I don't know what we were, I dunno.

Antonia Krupicka-Smith: The worldwide web.

Mary Carpenter: The worldwide web web. But um, Yeah. And then at that time I, I knew something about computers, but I don't anymore.

Antonia Krupicka-Smith: Yeah.

Mary Carpenter: I think, um, can I tell you, should I tell you how we discovered the online catalog?

Antonia Krupicka-Smith: Yeah. Great memory.

Mary Carpenter: I don't, I don't know how much to tell about Tom's predecessor, if I should tell that story or not.

Antonia Krupicka-Smith: Well, it was before the building, right? So...

Mary Carpenter: No, it was during the building.

Antonia Krupicka-Smith: Okay.

Mary Carpenter: Well, it's. I'll tell it anyway. We had a gal that was hired to be our IT person who was, uh, pawning, um, uh, our computers. She had a gambling addiction. [00:32:00] And so, uh, finally that was revealed. That she had been pawning computers and other equipment. So she lost her job. And, um, during that point, of course she had been distracted. So a lot of things, and we kept asking her like, well, we don't have an online catalog yet. When are we gonna get an like catalog?

Oh, yeah, yeah, yeah. It's coming, it's coming. And um, I just thought, well, that's strange, but okay, whatever. And then Tom Ryan was hired and, um, and Tom's like, you know, and so at that point I kind of knew stuff. I, I still knew DOS, which was, which was useful to Tom on a few occasions cuz if he needed to get into the, the hard drive of something and our, we were on Innovative, it was all character based. We had, um, it was very early. We wouldn't quite, yeah, it was just a Telnet [00:33:00] it was like, uh, very character based, uh, checkout and cataloging all that, but, Tom came to me one day, he said, Mary, I'm going through this documentation. He says, I think, I think we have an online catalog. I'm like, what? Yeah, but I don't know how, I don't, I can't figure out how, how do we get to it? And so then a little light bulb goes over my head, and so I go into this Telnet version and there's a little IP address that we use to log in to it.

Antonia Krupicka-Smith: Mm-hmm.

Mary Carpenter: So I take that little IP address and I just plug it into a web browser. Boom. There's our online catalog. Fully function, you'd type in, we search and stuff. We just sort of, we just sort of looked at each other like, oh, and then we went to the director who was not tech savvy. He, Jim was not real tech savvy and um, I think he was still using Word perfect anyway. Um, and we showed him the online catalog and he just sort of had this like dazed look on his face.

It's like, That's, [00:34:00] and that's how I became in charge of the online catalog.

Antonia Krupicka-Smith: Because you discovered it?

Mary Carpenter: Because I discovered it and then I went through, I'm like, oh, okay. And so I just taught myself how to make changes. Like, okay, let's get a different background. This is kind of boring cuz it was just gray, you know, blue lines. And it's like, well how do we make the display better? Well, what if we wanna add this? Or what if we gonna add that? So...

Antonia Krupicka-Smith: I love that.

Mary Carpenter: I became in charge of the online catalog and the website for a very short time.

Antonia Krupicka-Smith: Well, thank you for sharing.

Mary Carpenter: You're welcome.

Mary Carpenter: Yeah.