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## 590: Local Notes - Underfunded Archives and Frayed External Relations: May be the Signs of a Rare and Serious Budgetary Side Effect.

Steve McKinzie

*Catawba College*, [smckinzi@catawba.edu](mailto:smckinzi@catawba.edu)

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**Barnes & Noble Blackberry** gets you going rather easily. From **B&N** eBook site you send a link to your email account on your **Blackberry**; a few steps and you have a mobile Web connection to **B&N**.

Once there, though, there isn't much to twitter about. **Blackberry's** screen real estate is dear; at most 4cm by 4cm. In such cramped visual space, it's hard to call this reading except if you are a jeweler. The business user, **Blackberry's** core customer, will love the instant access to something. **Kindle** has announced a **Blackberry** application. The **Crackberry Website** reports the free edition of the *Art of War* by **Lao Tzu** tops the download list. Go figure?

After Christmas, we can look forward to **Barnes & Noble's** android powered "Nook." Current shipping date is January 4th. Until then, no one really knows how cool it will be but if it is anything close to "Droid" smart phones, this is going to be — to overwork a word, "huge."

Like night follows day there will be more to these stories. Stay tuned.

Speaking of **Android** — catch the **@Bunning ATG Interview** with **George Machovec** (this issue p.38). **George** fills us in on a close encounter of the Android Kind...

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<http://shortcovers.com/>

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<http://www.barnesandnoble.com/ebooks/download-reader.asp?dltab=blackberry>

**Envisions for 2010**

2010 is the Year of the eBook as technology, sales, and readers (real people) align in a perfect tempest of the word. **Amazon** will lead trade while **Google** crafts the terms of engagement on the long tail. E-textbooks appear on campus and a student will make the news by trying to resell device at end of term.

Privacy's fraternal twin, anonymity, will size up as a significant problem. Lazier "anonyms" remain in the blogosphere and twitter land, carping away in comment. The real entrepreneurs are earning online degrees for others and have gone phishing.

**Google** juggernaut slows — from Mach 4 speed at least. There will be no taking back of astronomical ad revenues, that's more than a train that's left the station, it's a world view. **Mark Cuban** thinks social media like **Twitter** is the **Google** killer app. **Rupert Murdoch** acts as if **Google's** revenue stream can be diverted (see de-index above).

The most likely probable cause: **Google** is aging. Lawsuits, acquisition driven growth, employees cashing in without re-investing in the employer — **Google** looks like **Microsoft** in its heyday. Anecdote: cut the heavy-handed IT approach (IT way or the highway). Take customer calls on those android phones.

**Stephan Colbert** will return to the library crime beat. **Colbert Nation** members recall **Stephan** nailed young **Dominic Philip**, Tandy, PA, for using the near-by local library in Nazareth, PA. Actually, officials of **Nazareth Public Library** came down hard on the young reader when they viewed a local

video in which **Dominic** is leading kids in a parade celebrating reading — at the library. Seems the kid's parents do not pay fees for the young man to check out books, so his library card was cancelled.

Apparently, librarians aren't that mean and wrong. Someone commented at **Colbert Nation** that Mom had given a bogus address and could have paid \$9.00 to get **Dominic** a library card. In any case, the **Nazareth Public Library** Director gave the little story hour guy his card back and **Colbert** mailed a box full of books — like a carton of cigarettes — to cure **Dominic** of his reading habit. The box included a complete set of **Harry Potter** books signed by **Colbert**.

These will be worth something to **Dominic**. The whole story, played over less than eight minutes of television, channeled that curious energy that the **Colbert Report** bestows upon its heroes and villains.

So — this is more of wish than a prediction. We'd love to have **Stephan Colbert's** attention as we figure our way through the next decade of the library. Hey, **Stephan**, you are a book person even though you don't read. Your show introduces us to all those great authors and you challenge them to make sense to you. We'd love to have you meet us at the **Charleston Conference** and help us keep kids like **Dominic Philip** leading the book parade. That's the Word.

**Your link:**

<http://www.colbertnation.com/the-colbert-report-videos/239944/july-27-2009/nailed--em--library-crime> 🐼

## 590: Local Notes — Underfunded Archives and Frayed External Relations: May be the Signs of a Rare and Serious Budgetary Side Effect.

by **Steve McKinzie** (Library Director, Corriher-Linn-Black Library, Catawba College, Salisbury, NC 28144; Phone: 704-637-4449) <[smckinzi@catawba.edu](mailto:smckinzi@catawba.edu)>

Are there things that an academic library and its staff can do in a financial crisis, in a season of budget tightening? Of course, you can do all sorts of things — none of them painless, few of them enjoyable. You can trim office supplies, charge more for copy paper, eliminate public service inefficiencies, and streamline technical service work flow. You can even fire off angry letters to your institution's chief financial officer — although I wouldn't recommend it.

But more importantly (and here is where the real test of leadership comes) are there things that you shouldn't do — measures that you must avoid (shall we say) at all costs? You are likely thinking of two, for many of us have been down the road of budget trimming before. Don't slash the monographic budgets and don't torpedo your journal subscriptions.

Those are, at least, the two that are apt to come most readily to our minds. Both are key, and important things not to do.

Nevertheless, I suggest there is a third directive or maxim that may be equally as important — maybe even more important than withstanding material budget downsizing. Never cut archives and special collections, underfund its services or weaken its place in the institution. Archives are, in short, vital to the institution's internal functioning, but more importantly they are extremely valuable to your college or university's external relations. Maintaining archives and special collections are a priority. Too often we take them for granted, and we do so to our collective peril.<sup>1</sup>

Of course, maintaining, organizing, staffing, and preserving a college or university archives can and will be costly. I am not about to

suggest otherwise, but the expense of neglecting an institution's history and continuing to underfund archives may be in the long run the far more costly option. Lamentable side effects may follow. Consider two examples of what can happen (the first is factual and the second fictional) — of what can go seriously awry at an institution of higher learning — if you neglect keeping your archives well organized and adequately funded.

Just last year at a college of which I am familiar — an institution that sadly had ignored and underfunded its archives for decades — the descendants of one of the institution's distinguished physics professor contacted the library archives about a telescope, probably of 19th

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century origin, which the professor had lent the college during the 1930s. The heirs of the estate made it clear that they wanted to recover the telescope. It had been a loan. They wanted it back. Everyone at the college was eager to comply with what was a simple request, but they had a problem. They couldn't find the telescope, and no one at the college had even a recollection of ever having seen it. Most importantly, the administration had no records of such a device having ever been given, lent, or received in any matter. As you can imagine, the college's part-time archivist diligently searched what records she had. She connected with current science professors, contacted retired faculty and staff, and checked all relevant histories of the college. She found nothing.

Of course, it is quite possible that she could have located information about the telescope in specific departmental records, faculty letters and trustee files. Nevertheless, because the college seriously ignored archives for so many years, none of these records had been processed or organized to facilitate any sort of systematic search. Some of these records may have indeed been lost to earlier inattentions to record keeping, or they may actually have been left in storage somewhere on campus. In the meantime, the science professor's heirs insisted that the college should be able to find this large and important scientific instrument. They figured that the college should at least know what became of it. It seemed unimaginable for an institution to have lost or misplaced a historically valuable scientific instrument. At press time, the professor's heirs are still waiting for an answer that the college archives currently cannot and may likely never be able to give.

Another institution, a small university which had ignored its institutional records in much the same way, faced a similarly difficult

situation. A local attorney wished to donate a large sum of money to the university's science program in honor of her mother, a graduate of the 1950's. She hoped to link her recently-deceased mother's early interest in science with her undergraduate career at the university — the courses she took, the societies in which she had membership, and her work as a lab assistant (according to family legend) under a distinguished science faculty member. Nevertheless, the university's archives were in such disarray that little could be learned about the woman and almost nothing about her time at the university. The potential donor found this lack of information about her mother so altogether unimaginable and so frustrating that she withdrew her initial proposal. Development personnel attempted to assuage the attorney's misgivings, but the college's lack of an organized archival record made that office's efforts largely ineffectual. Later the university's public relations department learned that the potential donor subsequently gave a significant sum to another institution's chemistry program. Her mother, they discovered, had done graduate work there, and the institution's well-organized archives easily uncovered details of her performance and life as a graduate student.

These two examples point to the enormous importance that archives can play in ongoing relations with alumni and potential donors. My scenarios delineate the drawbacks, of course, of neglecting and funding archives — the potential money that could be lost and the opportunities missed. But imagine the positive dimensions that could emerge from a library archives that did the opposite — of an archival and special collections staff that aggressively pursued good relations with its alumni and community. At the **University of Central Florida** the university archives did precisely that. They implemented a concentrated outreach program in concert with the alumni and development office that created,

what they called, "lasting relationships with their donors." Their efforts proved that creative archival staff and their collection could not only help an institution avoid losing money; they could actually reach donors and alumni in ways that few could have imagined.<sup>2</sup>

Of course, there are other important advantages to maintaining archives — issues besides alumni and donor relations. Archives undergird institutional research, and they document the institution's past, giving the college or university a collective sense of where it has been and where it is going.<sup>3</sup>

Even so, none of these additional archival roles equal the value of the good will and positive public relations that come from a well-run and assiduously-organized archival collection. Archives may have huge significance for an institution internally, but externally the benefits are virtually incalculable.

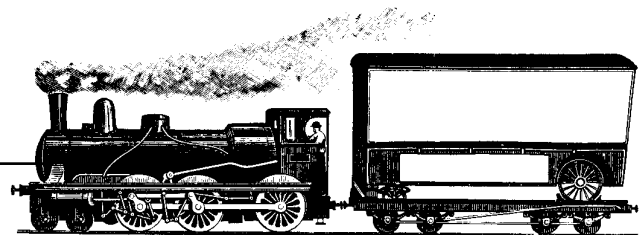
So when those budget cuts come — and come they will — downsize where you will and how you must. But maintain and fund archives and special collections, lest you suffer that rare and dangerous budgetary side effect of frayed and deteriorating alumni relations. 🐻

#### Endnotes

1. Some institutions, of course, have wisely digitized some of their rare book collections and parts of their archives, but our concern here is with a larger issue, the temptation to neglect institutional records in their totality.
2. **Konzak, Elizabeth and Teague, P. Dwain.** "Reconnect with your Alumni and Connect to Donors," *Technical Services Quarterly*, Vol. 26, no 3, 2009, pp. 217-225.
3. **Maier, William.** *The Management of College and University Archives.* **Methen, N. J.:** Scarecrow Press and *Society of American Archivists*, 1992, pp. 9-10.

## I Hear the Train A Comin' — A Postcard from Charleston

Column Editor: **Greg Tananbaum** (Founder and CEO, Anianet)  
<greg@anianet.com> [www.anianet.com](http://www.anianet.com)



This November, I had the pleasure of hosting the live version of this column that **Katina** has been gracious enough to incorporate into the annual **Charleston Conference**. The goals of the column are also the goals of the session — to take a look around the bend, into the future of scholarly communication. In print and in the flesh, the hope is to get a sense of a future intuited but as yet unseen. At the 2009 conference, it was a distinct pleasure to give **Douglas Armato**, Director of the **University of Minnesota Press**, and **Kevin Guthrie**, President of **Ithaka**, a forum to opine about what is coming next in our space. **Kevin** and **Doug** took aim at a common theme

— how to effectively serve multiple masters in a rapidly changing environment.

**Doug** tackled this issue from a local/institutional perspective, specifically the collision of structural interests and opportunities currently shaping one of the bedrock relationships of the scholcom space — the partnership between libraries and universities presses. These two entities have enjoyed a strategic pairing for years. Librarians and press employees have long advanced each others' interests and worked together to promote a deeper understanding of the scholarly communication terrain. However, this relationship is at a crossroads,

with one possible path heading toward further convergence and the other toward dissolution of the partnership.

There are a number of forces, from **Doug's** perspective, that are pushing the university press and the library toward divergence. Some factors are political, such as disagreement over which units of the institution are best equipped to run point on new publishing initiatives. Some factors are economic, as different emerging scholarly communication models impact the budgets and fortunes of the press and the library differently. Some factors are technological, as new forms of hardware

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