1998

Library Profile - Acquisitions Department - State University of New York at Buffalo

David J. Nuzzo
State University of New York at Buffalo, dnuzzo@acsu.buffalo.edu

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Recommended Citation
Nuzzo, David J. (1998) "Library Profile - Acquisitions Department - State University of New York at Buffalo," Against the Grain: Vol. 10: Iss. 5, Article 44.
DOI: http://dx.doi.org/10.7771/2380-176X.3023

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Library Profile — Acquisitions Department — State University of New York at Buffalo

by David J. Nuzzo (Head, Acquisitions Department; State University of New York at Buffalo, Lockwood Library Building, Buffalo, NY 14260-2200; Ph.: 716-645-2305; Fax: 716-645-5955) <dnuzzo@acsu.buffalo.edu>

Column Editor: Barbara Dean (Arlington County Public Library)

Who We Are:
The State University of New York at Buffalo is the largest of the four University Centers in the SUNY system. The University Libraries at the University at Buffalo comprise 10 units or branches, and the Acquisitions Department in Central Technical Services provides services to all of them, with the exception of our Health Sciences and Law Libraries. Along with traditional acquisitions functions, the staff of 19.9 FTEs provide many expanded services, from copy cataloging to government document processing. The materials budget is divided into over 125 separate funds, totaling $4,000,000 annually.

The Acquisitions Department is responsible for adding new bibliographic and holdings records to BISON (the University Libraries' version of NOTIS) for material which is to be ordered or which has been received as the result of a standing or blanket order, approval plan, gift, or through a depository arrangement for US Federal, Canadian Federal, New York State or European Communities documents. The department is responsible for placing all orders and receiving all library materials in all languages and formats, including electronic, and in most disciplines. The department's Periodicals Section is responsible for receiving, recording, processing and delivering current issues of over 8,000 periodicals in all formats and languages subscribed to by the General Libraries, Music and Poetry. It is also the department's responsibility to maintain control over material which is in process and to play a major role in the creation of bibliographic records for retrospective US Federal documents. The Acquisitions Department is also responsible for the Libraries' mail and delivery operation.

The department is staffed by Librarians faculty, professional staff, and classified staff, and contributes significantly toward the Libraries' efforts to support the teaching and research missions of the University. All staff in the department are in contact with staff elsewhere in the University Libraries on a regular basis.

The activities of the Acquisitions Department are fully automated and extensive and ongoing use of sophisticated technology is made by all staff in the department. In particular, the department has been extremely active on two electronic fronts: providing access to electronic journals, newspapers, books, and pamphlets available on the Internet, and the scanning and mounting of selected government documents, making them available on the Internet.

New Initiatives:
In 1991, after our online catalog became live, responsibility for copy cataloging of most materials that have LC copy was shifted to the Acquisitions Department. Approximately 65% of materials processed for the General Libraries fall into this category. By cataloging these materials at the point of receipt, we have cut down on handling delays dramatically. Throughout the year, a box that arrives from a vendor is opened, received, LC copy materials are cataloged, end-processed, and shelf-ready in 24-72 hours. The Receipts Section numbers only 1.5 FTE plus 20 hours student help, and all approval receipts, along with upwards of 15,000 firm orders are handled there. We are blessed with staff members who have handling capabilities, and who are eager to lend a hand in any area; aside from this, two additional factors have contributed to our success.

First, we have been using the LC Resource file at the University at Buffalo for the past seven years. This file, updated monthly, contains current LC cataloging for the past two to three years. Anyone with access to BISON can search this file and instantly derive copy into BISON. No new commands are necessary, and no OCLC access or expertise is required.

Secondly, the Acquisitions Department has made great use of Microsoft QuickBasic and Visual Basic to automate functions that had been time-consuming and tedious. With the press of a button, the clerk can export a record into the system and order or receive. Receipt tickets, binding tickets, spine labels, and many other forms are produced off the system, using programs we have written in the department. QuickBasic has been used very successfully at the point of ordering as well: for example, a matching program captures the screen and checks the ISBN prefix continued on page 30

<http://www.agains-to-th-grain.com>
Profiles

Encouraged

Robin Lent
Head, Collection Development,
University of New Hampshire
Durham, NH
and Director, 1998
Charleston Conference
<rlent@unh.edu>

Early on: I was born in Miami
Beach, Florida and grew up in Pittsburgh
and St. Louis.

Current residence: Durham, NH
Education: BA, Washington University;
MS Columbia University; MA
University of New Hampshire.

Summary of job experience: I have been
in and out of libraries since 1970.
Also worked as a freelance researcher,
helping find an adoption agency, was
managing editor of a scholarly journal,
awarded English composition, am now
Head of Collection Development at the
University of New Hampshire.

Family: Three daughters (Kate, 24
years old, living in Norfolk, Virginia;
Abby, 21 years old, living in Gunnison,
Colorado; Lucy, 9 years old, fourth grade
in Durham) I also have four stepchildren
ranging in age from 18 to 39. My hus-
bond, Don Lent, is a painter who teaches
at Bates College and is running for State
Legislature in New Hampshire this fall.
We consider our three cats—Billy, Fritz,
and Teddy—family members.

Most recent accomplishment: This is
ongoing and daily: negotiating the de-
mands of job, home, being a soccer mom,
and helping my daughter navigate the
taboo of fourth grade.

Biggest goals: Finish my novel.
Climb Mt. Washington.

Two recent fond memories: A three-
day walking tour of Yorkshire that I took
with my husband, my sister, and her hus-
brand to celebrate my 50th birthday.
Coming to Charleston for the first time
and seeing the palm trees at the airport;
the soft air and “southern smell” reminded
me of childhood days in Miami.

Books I’ve enjoyed recently: John
McKee, Story; Roxann Robinson, This
Is My Daughter; Jonathan Harr, A Civil
Action.

Pet peeve about this profession: Lib-
arians who graduated from the Door-
mat School of Library Science.

If I could do anything: I’d like to be
Head of a Foundation that would dis-
pense money to any organization or per-
son that I wanted to support.

Biggest surprise: How surprising
life is.

E-commerce and Information
from page 18

will be more efficient to be able to search
and retrieve an article read several months before
from an online file rather than attempting to
locate the print issue.

The Future

Despite the fact that the proliferation of
computers seems to have merely redistrib-
uted the printing function, there is a unique
opportunity ahead of us. As access to data is
made available anytime from anywhere, the
Web offers the ability to replace local print
titles in various locations with
fewer centralized electronic
files. With an upcoming gen-
eration of employees who
thrive on "Palm Pilots" instead
of "Day Timers," the time is near
when software will evolve to
locally store those files of
interest and bookmark with more
dynamic files to be accessed again at
a later date, knowing they will still be available.

The basic Web ad today resembles a bill-
board which is a passive experience like tele-
vision. Ads of the future will be more cus-
tomized, focused on the users’ interests
and interactive in nature, requiring some action
or involvement on the part of the user.

The Web is about information and
communication. As we make the transition
into the electronic world, our behaviors and hab-
bits will change to take advantage of more
efficient methods of communication and
workflow. Individuals and organizations will
refine the extent to which use determines value
and what is worth saving.

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Library Profile
from page 28

against a list of preferred vendors. Approx-
imately 30% of our requests have vendors
“self-assigned” in this way. We have perhaps
50 different programs such as these in serv-
vice throughout the department.

Encouraged by these successes, we con-
stantly look for ways to improve upon the
services we provide. In the past few years we
have automated some parts of the tedious
government document check-in procedure.
In particular, a program that we scan ship-
ing lists and check the scanned file against
our exclusion list, automatically producing
SUDoc labels as needed, has cut processing
time by 75%. The programs are available at:
http://www.buffalo.edu/libraries/units/cts/acq/gpo/. Another project has involved the scan-
ing of certain government documents, providing
access to them from a “popular docu-
ments” index. Many of the selected
documents are pamphlet-sized or one to four
page works, providing access to electronic
versions not only preserves the content long
after the flimsy paper version has disinte-
grated or disappeared, it also opens up the
world of document information to the library
user who may not be aware of their content.
See the site at: http://publib.buffalo.edu/librar-
ies/urite/cts/acq/docdb.html.

Our mission statement, which we all
agreed upon early in 1997, reflects our desire
to maintain a healthy work environment, an
efficient operation, and to constantly look
forward:

To provide the best quality service we can
to our patrons by doing it right the first time;
To capitalize on our strengths, particularly our
ability to get it in and get it out; To communi-
cate effectively; To listen attentively and un-
derstand others needs requests; To understand
role, responsibility, and authority; To develop
and enjoy mutual respect; To strive to acquire
sufficient resources to achieve our objectives;
To create a nurturing environment for every
individual on our staff; To be aware of the
impact of our environment on our mental and
physical well-being, and to keep it healthy;
To effectively and eagerly respond to our
changing circumstances.

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