2004

Charleston Conference Future Dates

Editor

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freed staff time to take on other projects such as the Historical Documents Cataloging Project (more project information available at: http://www.access.gpo.gov/su_docs/fdp/pubs/proceedings/00pro6.html) and the implementation of Marcive's Documents Without Shelves service. While most records received from Marcive go into the catalog untouched, duplicate records are flagged and examined (again through dividing up SuDoc ranges) in order to preserve local information and reduce patron confusion. Perhaps one of the most valuable indirect benefits of the development of cooperative cataloging procedures has been the development of a level of comfort with a system for division of labor, which the group has been able to apply to multiple projects.

War of the Rebellion & Serial Set Inventories

One of the goals of cooperative collection development is to consolidate collections. For instance, do we really need four sets of Congressional Serial Sets among the four CONSORT schools? Are there duplicate volumes? If there are, will they be able to fill in the gaps of the schools that have missing volumes? What is the condition of each Serial Set volume? To find the answers to these questions, we decided to conduct inventories of our Serial Set collections.

Ellen Conrad, former coordinator of the Original and Historical Cataloging Project of the Five Colleges of Ohio, first started the War of Rebellion inventory as a test case. She created a spreadsheet that lists all the War of the Rebellion volumes. She indicated holdings of each school by a condition number, from 1 to 4. One indicates that the volume is in excellent condition and is like new, while 4 means that the item is in poor condition, and has loose or damaged binding, as well as damaged text. The inventory revealed that the duplicate sets at Denison and Kenyon were able to supply volumes missing at Ohio Wesleyan and Wooster, thus creating 4 full sets in CONSORT.

The War of the Rebellion inventory worked out very well and served as a test case of how to proceed with the Serial Set inventory. At our first Collection Development Taskforce meeting held on November 27, 2001, we decided to complete our inventory of the Serial Set from 1789 through the 104th Congress. We used the same numbering system developed for the War of the Rebellion project to determine the condition of each volume in the Serial Set. Spreadsheets were sent to each school to record their holdings. When the inventory is complete, the spreadsheets will be converted into HTML files and posted on the Web, and the group is investigating contributing results to the national survey.

Establishing a Remotely Stored Consortial Collection of Record

The consortium, in 2000, established a storage facility in the old Public Library building in Newark, Ohio. In 2002 the Subcommittee began a project whose ultimate goal was to establish a “collection of record” for little-used documents to be housed at this facility. Each school in the consortium would assess its collection in the area under scrutiny, utilizing the condition criteria developed for the War of the Rebellion and the Serial Set projects. The best copy of each item would be sent to the Newark facility. Creation of such a collection would have several benefits. It would allow participating schools to weed local collections and free up much needed shelf space while ensuring ongoing access, and it would also create a single collection that could become the focus of preservation efforts, a much more efficient use of preservation time and dollars.

The Subcommittee decided to use the publications of the Federal Security Agency as a test to assess the process itself as well as outcomes. This agency was established in 1939, dissolved in 1933, and its components transferred to the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare.

The process decided upon for this project was very similar to the one used for the Serial Set inventory: each school would add holdings and condition statements to a master file which would work its way around the schools. The project is still in this assessment phase: at least one school has discovered that a good number of its holdings in this area were at one point integrated into the general collection: identifying them is proving to be time consuming. However, the Subcommittee remains optimistic that this approach, while not a quick fix, will provide over time a consortial collection that is in better condition, more complete and more accessible than could be managed on an individual basis.

Cooperative Agreements

In addition to these projects the four CONSORT schools entered into three significant agreements regarding the collection and retention of materials:

Kenyon will keep NOAA weather charts; Denison will keep NASA Magellan CDs.

Denison maintains the archives of the Five Colleges Government Documents Sub-Committee.

Denison agreed to be the map library of record for CONSORT.

Access

A final tool that assists with collection development and access is the OhioLINK courier system that transports not only patron-requested library materials, but also other documents among the CONSORT schools. The system can be used for quick and easy delivery directly to a staff member of fragile materials whose use needs to be mediated and in-house, or another library’s copy of materials that have been lost locally and which can then be duplicated as a replacement for that local collection as allowed by copyright laws. The courier system allows patrons and staff to receive materials from the consortial storage facility, creating part of the support structure for efforts such as the best agency copy project.

Concluding Thoughts

The relatively modest inter-library collection development cooperation that began in 1993 has evolved into a robustly based set of programs. As consortial cooperation has matured, attention has turned to the future. It has been several years since the initial zero based item review, and the evolution of the Federal Depository Library Program is creating a very different collection development universe for government documents. The move to a more electronic program brings up fundamental collection development questions for depositories: what is the electronic item? What role does a library catalog play in the electronic age? What should be selected in paper, providing local long-term access, or in electronic format, over which libraries have considerably less local control? Additionally, in a consortium with a high level of cooperation and access to member collections, what items should each library select? Over the next several years the Government Documents Subcommittee of the Five Colleges of Ohio will build on our history of cooperation, our developed experience, and our tools to work through these questions together and as a group complete another zero based item review. As we look to the future it is our goal to keep refining our tools and methods, and to instill a consortial expectation that government documents collection development is a fluid enterprise that requires regular attention.

Future Dates for Charleston Conferences

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