People Profile: Diane Kovacs

Editor
most younger people come to college with — they give you a sense of case in doing e-mail and Web browsing for serious research. Most of my students had used inter-office email before — but only a couple had ever emailed for non-work and a different domain. Three or four had used Web search engines previously. Oh and average age was about 38 for these two groups. Quite a few were my age and two were older.

ATG: Are you satisfied with the progress libraries have made in creating e-collections? Are librarians and patrons finding such collections useful? What else should be done to increase their relevance to users?

DK: Satisfied? I’m truly impressed. I remember when I was almost shouted off the stage once by people proclaiming that print was all libraries needed to deal with and that the computer resources were like CB Radios and a passing fad. I don’t want to be negative but that incident did almost stop me... but not quite. There were more people quietly telling me in private that they thought it was a marvelous opportunity for libraries to get ahead of a popular culture/information-seeking trend for once...

ATG: What is it that has impressed you? Are there any specific library Websites we should look at to see examples of good e-collecting?

DK: I’m impressed by the number of working consortia — my main experience is with OhioLINK and Illinet Online — OPLIN, Clevnet, etc., that sort of thing. I know there are many others in other states either existing or in development.

ATG: Yes that’s true. Here in South Carolina we have developed a working consortium called PASCAL. But the e-collecting being done is more shared licensing of databases with e-content, like JSTOR, etc. There is no plan to harvest quality Websites to be shared by the member libraries. Are they doing that sort of thing in other consortia?

DK: Some yes. OhioLINK does it a bit as does the Michigan Electronic Library.

ATG: Do you think there is a need for a comprehensive database of core Websites or are services like the Librarians Index to the Internet enough?

DK: There is need for comprehensive databases of core Websites — Librarians’ Index to the Internet http://iii.org/is okay — but it is really not doing a comprehensive collection — it does a core collection with a California focus. The InfoMine http://infomine.ucr.edu/concept is a bit better in terms of core academic resources and the Internet Public Library http://www.ipl.org/is a bit better in terms of core public library resources and Google is my friend. I think that the most important part of your question though is ‘core’ — there are only really a few compared to the many sites available — that are truly useful. Much of what is out there really is ‘brochures,’ “pamphlets,” “personal correspondence,” “sales flyers,” etc.

ATG: We’re not sure what you mean by ‘brochures,’ “pamphlets,” “personal correspondence,” and “sales flyers.” Just how would you define a comprehensive Website?

DK: I mean that they are just sales pitches

continued on page 42