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## Adventures in Librarianship -- A Difficult Birth

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## Analytical Skills for Collection ... from page 36

nearly 700 titles for a total savings of approximately \$145,000. Fortunately, Collection Development did not need to make as many cancellations as were offered, but it was very useful to have that feedback for the future. Faculty also recommended new titles that were suitable for emerging curriculum and research needs.

In general, faculty and liaisons responded positively to the process and were pleased to see title lists. Only one academic department did not respond to our request for recommendations and two departments grew defensive, but eventually came around.

There were many other outcomes beyond the immediate title recommendations. We achieved transparency in reporting and decision-making by producing complete lists of journals that served specific subject areas. We showed how much the titles cost over time and how much they were used. We adjusted internal workflows to produce the information needed to support the decision-making process. Librarians were cross-trained in serials management and most important, we designed a review process that is *repeatable* and that can be conducted for the entire collection or subsets of it at any time.

Another welcome, though unintended, outcome of the process was to prepare the library organizationally (in cross-functional teams) and technically for the serials portion of an Elec-

tronic Resource Management System. By analyzing our serials management functions, we captured technical and decision-support data in our systems in such a way that it could be easily migrated to an ERM system.

### Conclusion

The serials review process could not have been put in place without a team effort across serials management functions, facilitated by a skilled business analyst. In the latest **OCLC Environmental Scan**, **Chuck Henry** aptly summarized this need for collaboration in the future,

"I see a great opportunity in the next five years for a more rigorous and pragmatic partnership between librarians, IT professionals and scholars. While that may sound obvious, it really has not been done."

The collaboration he refers to may not be getting done, in part, because librarians are not equipped with the analytical skills to facilitate such partnerships. A team of librarians skilled in Business Systems, Requirements and Information Systems Analysis, could successfully engage faculty and IT staff to develop any number of strategic goals into workable, repeatable library programs.

### Further Reading

Consider reading the "Functional Requirements" for an Electronic Resource Management System produced by the Digital Library Federation. Who do you need to interview in your

library to prioritize the ERM requirements for your local business functions? Once prioritized, what are the gaps between your current processes and the DLF's processes? Then what? An analyst can help.

Jewell, et al. *Electronic resource management: report of the DLF ERM initiative. Appendix A: Functional Requirements*. Washington, D.C: DLF, 2004. <http://www.diglib.org/pubs/dlfermi0408/> [July 14, 2005].

The following Websites describe analytical skills in more detail. This is not an endorsement of the quality of training or services these organizations offer.

Silicon Beach Training. "Systems Analysis and Design Training." [http://www.siliconbeachtraining.co.uk/systems\\_analysis\\_design\\_training/systems\\_analysis\\_design\\_training.htm](http://www.siliconbeachtraining.co.uk/systems_analysis_design_training/systems_analysis_design_training.htm) [July 14, 2005].

Look at "Business Analysis Essentials." Hathaway & Associates. <http://www.thehathaway.com/BusinessRequirementsGathering.html#A-GI> [July 14, 2005].

Inteq Group, Inc. <http://www.inteqgroup.com/default.aspx> [July 14, 2005].

### Endnotes

1. De Rosa, et. al. *The 2003 OCLC Environmental Scan: Pattern Recognition*. Dublin, OH: OCLC, 2004. p. 62.

## Adventures in Librarianship — A Difficult Birth

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In its ongoing effort to educate younger librarians about the history of their noble profession, *ATG* presents a short narrative of early vocational developments.

The concept of "reference services" as a separate specialty began in 1876 with the publication of **Samuel Grope's** *Personal Relations Between Librarians and Readers*. Other monographs followed, most notably **Horstead's** *Library Intercourse* and **Plank's** *The Satisfied Patron*, but **Grope** is remembered as the Father of Reference Services. "Insofar as the mind is a bucket of milk, do not o'er flow that bucket to the waiting cats with tasks too disparate; rather let those librarians of social standing and a fondness for chatter escort the visitors and advise, while those of surly disposition, unkempt appearance, and bad manners index and calculate and labor unseen in the dark recesses of the library." With that statement, library specialization was born.

What followed was a sudden and irrational enthusiasm for focused librarianship from Victorian middle class patrons. In large city libraries one found such oddities as Chief Phreno-

logical Librarian, Librarian of Mesmerism, and the Anatomical Bibliographer. It is part of the lore of our profession that **Albany Public Library**, in the 1890s, set up an Occultist Reference Desk which, during its short life, served more patrons, both living and deceased, than any other.

Remote reference services began at **Princeton University** in 1888 when a group of young men in Saint Barnabus hired two down-on-their-luck pensioners to constantly tread back and forth from the dormitory to the library with enquiries and answers. The Library eventually hired the two old men, gave them small desks, and agreed to pay for shoe resoling every month. Boston Public expanded the concept by offering "Carriage Reference" to Beacon Hill residents, a savvy political move which led to a doubling of the library's annual budget. Equine delivery of information gave birth to the saying "right from the horse's mouth," still heard today in some circles.

The first instance of ILL actually began as a book theft. In 1897, **Orson Keen**, a charming but indolent **Yale** student, was planning to plagiarize his way through an overdue paper on

the economy of southern Austria. To avoid detection he pulled his source material not from the **Yale Library**, but from Columbia. On his way toward the door, three tomes under his coat, **Keen** was approached by the nearsighted but lovely **Lucrecia Copeswell**, Librarian of Antonyms & Waterfowl. Feeling cornered, **Keen** claimed to be a librarian himself... an "Inter-Library Loan" librarian. Over coffee he explained the concept. Over lunch, the two agreed on procedures. Over dinner, they drafted the official forms to be used. And at the conclusion of the next morning's breakfast, **Miss Keen** agreed to draft a document on the economy of southern Austria. **Yale** officials were baffled when they began receiving ILL forms from Columbia, but eventually they got the gist of it.

By 1910, the specialties of reference services were well established. But what is known today as "Technical Services," was still a backwater. Those laboring "unseen in the dark recesses of the library," had not evolved in the same way. Their tasks were a confusing swirl of purchasing, repairing, indexing, labeling, card writing, floor sweeping and whatnot. Until the second World War, when Technical Services finally began to define itself, many went mad, some fell prey to exotic joint illnesses, a few even began writing library satire.

