And They Were There -- Report of Meetings -- Special Library Association 2005 Annual Conference and 14th Annual North Carolina Serials Conference

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The American Society for Information Science & Technology is sponsoring “DASER: Digital Archives for Science & Engineering Resources” in December 2005. This conference will discuss institutional repositories projects in academic and non-profit organizations, as well as in the commercial and government arenas throughout the world. Recently the Association of Research Libraries published Open Access Bibliography: Liberating Scholarly Literature with E-Prints and Open Access Journals. This is a compilation of more than 1,300 entries of books, conference papers, journal articles and technical reports in a variety of formats. The bibliography traces the development of the open access movement between 1999 and August 2004.

Contributors to library listservs are also active in promoting open access. Listserv posts notice of new journals on the topic and several, such as the STS-L listserve, monitor the release of new open access journal titles and include information on coverage and links to sites.

While open access cannot eliminate all of the problems with the current model of scientific scholarship, nor solve the serials funding crisis in libraries, it offers some hope of improved access to research. Suber maintains open access will solve the permission crisis that creates legal and technological barriers through law and licensing (“Creating”). Most importantly, open access provides librarians with alternative solutions to the problems of scientific publishing and empowers them to oppose publisher price increases. In “Closing in on Open Access,” Lee Van Orvell and Kathleen Born note that librarians refused to accept big deals at Cornell, Harvard, Research Triangle institutions in North Carolina and MIT. Instead, they decided to select subscriptions title by title and year by year, based on value of content and not size of the package. In addition, Regazzi urges librarians to mediate journal costs through a partnership with publishers. This advice is echoed by Ewing, who urges librarians and scholars to stop dealing with high-priced journals and encourage non-profits to publish more papers.

The number of open access journals and institutional and governmental repositories continues to increase, illustrating the support for open access publishing in academic and public sectors. This support is the result of rising journal costs, the increasing availability of information in digital format, the growth of the Internet, improvements in search engines, and the formation of groups demanding free access to government-sponsored research. The open access movement changes the means of access to and delivery of scientific information. It fosters opportunities for librarians in promoting the use and development of open access journals and institutional repositories, and in the publishing of serials. In addition, open access has bolstered the librarian’s power in negotiations with commercial publishers for the purchase of toll access journals.

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### And They Were There

**Reports of Meetings — Special Library Association 2005 Annual Conference and 14th Annual North Carolina Serials Conference**

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The annual SLA Conference, held June 5-8, 2005 in Toronto, Canada, drew 5273 attendees. There were 2,245 SLA members, 1584 industry partner representatives, 440 booths in the Info-Expo (exhibit hall), and more than 600 first-time attendees. The 2005 conference theme was “Putting Knowledge to Work,” which meant that most session topics “fit the bill.” During the conference, with great fanfare, SLA introduced “Click University,” its members-only online learning community for continuing professional education, (http://slablogger.typepad.com/sla_conference_blog/www.clickuniversity.com). The SLA 2005 Conference Blog included photos, notes and comments about the conference, exhibits, and travels around the environs of the popular conference destination. Readers could see reports of receptions or open houses to which they didn’t go...Toronto’s newspaper, Globe and Mail, on June 9th covered the conference with the headline: “Librarians as tech-savvy sleuths.” It’s been a few years since I last attended a SLA Conference, and I was pleasantly surprised to meet a number of pro-active library school students who attended anything and everything, and networked well, too. A number of attendees and exhibitors commented on the light-filled second floor Toronto Metro Convention Center exhibit hall in which they spent their conference days, although a few bloggers complained about the heat. (Toronto was experiencing a heat wave.) Many attendees took advantage of CE courses on Saturday or Sunday morning, but the conference officially began Sunday afternoon with the opening of the Info-Expo hall. A number of bloggers commented on the exhibit hall opening performance by the Finnish choir, named “Huutajat Rajaton” (Shouting Men) and its renditions of “The Star-Spangled Banner” and “O, Canada.” (The choir was in town for the Northern Voices Festival). The exhibit hall featured many of the same vendors seen at other library conferences, but the size of the booths seemed to indicate how much the exhibitors thought SLA attendees were their continued on page 69
primary audience or customer... The national and scientific libraries of the U.S., Canada, and the U.K. were represented.

One thing seems not to have changed at SLA conferences: rooms were often not adequate for the persons interested in the sessions. Maybe SLA has not yet perfected a technique for helping sections and divisions estimate the number of persons who may want to attend a concurrent session. One blogger recommended using some way of recording check-ins on the conference planner Website as a prognosticating indicator. One legal librarian pondered aloud whether members of her SLA division were included in the "head count" of potential attendees of the very interesting session "Who Owns Scientific Knowledge and Who Deserves to: Are Patents an Incentive for Innovation or an Obstacle to Further Development?" That session was co-sponsored by SLA's Biomedical & Life Sciences, and the Science & Technology Divisions.

It's impossible for one person to adequately cover all the themes, ideas, and breaking news that come up at a conference of this size. Each attendee has his or her own agenda. My personal aim was to attend collection development and biomedical themed sessions, but mix in some general or "lighter" topic sessions as well.

As one might predict, several sessions featured the topic of open access, but one entitled "Open Access in Developing Countries" was cancelled, apparently because two presenters were unable to obtain visas. There was a well-received session, "Open Access: Evaluating Quality and Participation," that featured Marie E. McVeigh of ISJ open access journals and impact factors; George Kendall of PNAS: hybrid decisions made about open access; Peter Suber, Open Access Project Director at Public Knowledge, Senior Researcher at SPARC, and maintainer of the well-known Open Access News Weblog: promoting open access to authors/faculty. Mention was made of the 2005 addition to the SPARC Website of items such as the Author's Addendum (http://www.arl.org/sparc/author/addendum.html).

SLA 2005 conference sessions featured currently popular themes: rss feeds, blogs, digitization projects, institutional repositories. The Biomedical and Life Sciences Division sponsored a contributed paper session called, "Digitization Projects in the Biomedical and Life Sciences," during which speakers highlighted projects undertaken at McGill University, University of Michigan, and Michigan State University (two were on biology historical content: for the Web, one was on local health sciences content for PDAs). One session was entitled "Self-Archiving, Information Repositories, and Knowledge Management: What Can Different Types of Libraries Learn From Each Other," while at the Aademic Librarians' Roundtable breakfast, after a short report by Dana Roth of Cal Tech on some of his journal pricing studies, attendees were divided into groups discussing institutional repositories, virtual reference, and outreach. These were currently "hot" predictable topics, but engendered lively discussions. Other themes are common at SLA Annual conferences: marketing, statistics, outsourcing (and off-shoring) and a few popular whirlwind "tours" of interesting or useful Websites in science, law, and other specialty areas. A number of sessions were ticketed, which usually meant that attendees paid for the meals provided during presentation(s). The Leadership Management and Management Division invited T. Scott Plutchak, Director of the Health Sciences University, University of Alabama, to speak on the theme "Our Revolution is Just Getting Started," about the glorious history of the print culture and the role of the information professional both historically and during this latest information revolution. One of the most popular SLA sessions was "Mary Ellen Armstrong (not counting her CE course), was also on "revolution," entitled "The Next Information Revolution, and Our Role as Revolutionaries."

Although former President, Bill Clinton, had been "recruited" as a keynote speaker, it was said that he had to cancel due to tsunami relief work project commitments. In any case, SLA conference planners recruited three lively keynote speakers (two were Canadians) to start each morning, each with his unique perspective on businesses, information, and technology... Don Tapscott, business strategist and author of The Naked Corporation spoke on transparency, driven by technology, economics, demographics, and socio-politics, as a key in "New Roles for Info Professionals." Bill Buxton spoke about refined technology, and the "information revolution," a raster of noise or a "data explosion," but reminded attendees that new ideas are a commodity and "it's really not about technology," Gary Hamel, Chairman of Strategos, author of Leading the Revolution and other books, indicated that the challenge is to build organizations that are as nimble as change itself. He provided examples of companies that have successfully (or not) strived for renewal, and provided challenges for librarians to raise the "value added" bar as we become mindset engineers, future seeking radar behind decision architects.

SLA Annual conferences usually offer a few "fun" sessions, and this year's conference was no different, featuring sessions such as "The Physics of Hockey" and "Medicine in the Media: How Real Doctors Make ER Real" by a MD former script writer. The Baseball Caucus met. The American Psychological Association sponsored its first update and promotional session at a SLA meeting, a tasty lunch, during which attendees heard about overhaul of existing information products and promises of exciting new outreach products, including online user training guides and Webinars (seminars on the Web). As always at library professional conferences, some lucky attendees got advance invitations from publishers and vendors to after-hour receptions in interesting venues or with interesting themes. Other attendees employed good detective (or networking) skills to find out what was going on where. Many SLA divisions sponsored open houses in division suites and some offered tours interspersed throughout the conference or the day after, to nearby sites that somehow tied in with the divisions' interests, but even non-division members could register. The 2006 SLA Annual Conference will be held June 11-14, 2006 in Baltimore, MD.

continued on page 70
The theme of the 14th annual North Carolina Serials Conference, sponsored by the North Carolina Central University's School of Library and Information Science, was entitled “Serials Services In The Eye Of The Information Storm.” Christie Degner of University of North Carolina Chapel Hill and Robert Ballard of the North Carolina Central University's School of Library and Information Science welcomed the attendees and speakers.

The opening keynote address was a “Point-Counterpoint” on Open Access. T. Scott Plutchak, Director of the Lister Hill National Center at the University of Alabama at Birmingham, gave the proponent view of the Open Access movement. Plutchak discussed what Open Access meant and how it has evolved, particularly in the medical publishing world. The Open Access movement has caused publishers to examine their business practices and evaluate all of the costs involved in the process, but remarked that pricing issues should remain separate from the access discussion. He then addressed several concerns such as peer review and copyright. Plutchak reported that one way to deal with these concerns is to make copyright broader. He indicated that the Creative Commons project from SPARC is providing leadership in this area. He then discussed the funding issues involved in research and publishing, and how these costs could shift over time in the Open Access environment. Plutchak noted that the public benefits of the Open Access movement are so strong, and technology makes it so easy, that the challenges of moving forward are insurmountable.

Rick Anderson, Director of Resource Acquisitions, at the University of Nevada, Reno, described himself as an agnostic of the Open Access movement. He has concerns about the practical feasibility of this movement. One of his main concerns is who will pay the bill? Anderson discussed the NIH recommendation to support Open Access, but noted that if the NIH only covers part of the costs the remaining support must come from authors. The issue then is how to benefit authors and what their reaction will be to this funding model. He then discussed the “Green and Gold” journals that allow self archiving and the current status of this effort. Anderson looked up an issue of a “green” journal for the self archived versions of the articles. There were six articles in the issue and he only found four in self archived sites. Anderson noted that most authors express willingness to self archive, but the process of doing it is not easy. The current situation for article publishing is not great, but it is not the worst case scenario. The worst case would be that Open Access would predominate and high quality information would be difficult to find.

Plutchak responded by indicating that currently there is not a NIH mandate for Open Access, but they have requested that the authors deposit their final peer reviewed publication in PubMedCentral. In the current publishing model for not-for-profit publishing, authors already pay charges and typically these charges are funded as part of the grant. The NIH proposal could embrace this concept without changing the way authors currently work. But, the current system of information only being available to those that can afford it, whereas, in the Open Access movement, the access will be universal. Institutional Repositories were discussed as a mechanism for self archiving. Plutchak related the tremendous movement in Institutional Repositories and that the process for establishing them was getting easier and easier.

Anderson responded that the Open Access movement poses real risks for smaller publishers and that they may end up going out of business. He noted that in the current system people who use the information are charged for that use, and this is fair for all concerned. Anderson expressed a concern that the current prices are too high, not that the current publishing model doesn’t work. He noted that, in his opinion, the NIH model does have problems which may work out in time. However, Anderson speculated that author inertia will be a problem. He speculated that, knowing authors, if the publishing process is not easy, they won’t do it.

Round table discussions followed the opening sessions. Archiving in the Digital Leased Environment, led by Selden Lamoureux of University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, discussed what digital archives consist of and the legal issues associated with them. The LOCKSS program and other types of digital archives were discussed. The issues surrounding rights management, technology, selection process and standards are vitally important in an archive and require an investment of time and money. Currently, many universities do not have the infrastructure to establish and maintain a digital archive. Nancy Newsome of Western Carolina University reported on the discussion of Print Serials. The consensus of her group is that they are alive and well. Participants from four academic libraries and one public library discussed how they are still maintaining print serials, even if they have the electronic equivalent, due to archiving concerns. Frieda Rosenberg of the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill led a discussion on CONSER/Serials Cataloging. Their discussion focused on CONSER policies allowing members to improve records and conduct training programs locally. ILS implementations were discussed. It was noted that members with the same ILS discovered that many changes occur with local implementation decisions.

The Staff Issues and Organizational Restructuring round table was led by Audrey Fenner of the University of North Carolina, Greensboro. They discussed how to analyze work and workflow and to evaluate what gives the most gains for the organization. Though it is time consuming to do these types of studies, it was agreed in the group that it was worth it in the long run. Also, they discussed how and when to think about reclassifying positions. It was agreed that not all lists may need to be moved. The restructuring process, so department heads may need to keep reclassifications in mind during the planning process. Beth Bernhardt of University of North Carolina, Greensboro and John Abbott of Appalachian State University led a discussion on “I Have To Sign A License Agreement—Now What Do I Do?” This group reported that the process of dealing with license agreements has improved dramatically in the last couple of years, and that publishers want to find an equitable agreement that works for both sides. They encouraged librarians not to be afraid to say “No”, if agreeable terms cannot be reached. It was generally agreed that the most important factor on both sides is communication. Christie Degner from the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill led the “Hot Topics” discussion group. They discussed how to deal with remote storage service issues for print serials. Another hot topic was how the library catalog can compete with other search tools like Google. Institutional Repositories were also discussed. Concerns were raised over standards, long term costs and access issues.

The second day began with a presentation from Nancy Gibbs of Duke University, and Tim Bucknall of the University of North Carolina, Greensboro on the topic of “Walking Away from the ‘Big Deal.’” Gibbs discussed the walking away perspective. In December 2003, Duke University and the other institutions in their consortia made a decision to walk away from two big electronic journal packages because the inflexibility of the no cancellation policies. Instead, they used document delivery, which proved more cost effective. Gibbs noted that although gloom and doom were predicted by some, they have not had problems due to these cancellations. Bucknall discussed not walking away from the “Big Deal.” He noted that each deal: the good, the bad and the ugly, none of them are perfect. Bucknall reported that none of his big deals had the cancellation requirements, so he was able to add and subtract titles within certain constraints.

Concurrent sessions followed the “Big Deal” presentations. Rebecca Day of EBSCO and Robert Boissy of Springer discussed “Can Agents Really Deliver on Their Digital Promises?” This session was moderated by Adam Chesler of the American Chemical Society. Chesler opened the program with a thought that we must look at this issue from all sides. He noted that you need to understand what is valuable to you and what are you looking for from your partners in this arena. Boissy discussed continued on page 71.
Issues in Vendor/Library Relations — Janus

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How many collection development librarians does it take to change a paradigm? It didn’t used to take many, according to former Cornell University librarian Hendrik Edelman, now of the Palmer School of Library and Information Science, Long Island University. Edelman was among the organizers of a 1971 conference that drew seven attendees out to shape a new field called “collection development.” In that era, when faculty or library directors selected the books, collections were idiosyncratic, haphazard, and understudied, one cause of “dwindling” interest in academic libraries. A second conference drew twenty-five, including some directors “who wanted to know what was going on,” recalled Edelman. By 1977 enough had gone to that an ALA pre-conference in Detroit on collection development was a landmark that defined the field for a generation.

How many collection development officers would it take to change today’s paradigm? Last October, Edelman was among the speakers at the Janus Conference on Research Library Collections, a meeting held at Cornell. Over seventy-five collection librarians and directors from most of the largest research libraries in the United States and Canada attended this high-energy event and spent the better part of three days on the Ithaca, New York campus discussing what the next generation of collection development—if there was to be one—should look like.

At the heart of the collection development model Edelman and his cohort created was the subject bibliographer, librarians who worked tirelessly and expertly to build great book collections. Today, with the book under siege from all directions, bibliographers performing title-at-a-time selection on one campus after another seems, to many critics, as archaic a notion as a network of monks and scribes. While much of the work in today’s research libraries would be entirely recognizable to any bibliographer from Edelman’s era, in fact everyone knows that everything has changed for collections librarians. But, no common idea of collection development in research libraries as yet replaced the vision that coalesced decades ago in Detroit.

“Is it time to relegate collection development to the dustbin of history?” asked the Janus prospects. How entrenched are the values and traditions established by Edelman’s generation? Edelman himself, at Janus, was at once a delegate from the past and a living example of rupture with the past. Can today’s research librarians take their own turn as revolutionaries?

Clearly that was the hope of the conference organizers. Each Janus attendee received a list for discussion and action of “Six Key Challenges for Collection Development.”

1. For every research library to transfer annually ten percent of its materials budget into a central fund for mass digitization projects overseen by a national committee.
2. To all but stop buying print by 2008.
3. To end the redundant local work of building core collections and instead to identify core materials centrally, again by committee, and then simplify buy them.
4. To define fair price ceilings and refuse to buy anything above them.
5. To send print material published between 1830 and 1960 to regional repositories, and to establish an electronic repository for permanent storage of all digital materials.
6. To each research library to give highest priority in its budget to a local open access repository focused on a single subject; and so as a group creates a new channel for scholarly communication, under library control.

The draftsmanship was partly tactical, a way to find out how far collections librarians might go in an attempt to revamp today’s system of scholarly communication. How hard could a point be pushed? In flushing out opinions on these questions, the statements were an unqualified success. Janus, a symbol of cities, was the right deity to preside over this conference, continued on page 72

Against the Grain / December 2005 - January 2006 <http://www.against-the-grain.com> 71