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And They Were There -- Reports of Meetings -- 26th Annual Charleston Conference

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learning process a clear understanding of the issues and problems that require action. This can best be seen in the active planning process undertaken prior to the conference. This process drew focus to the institution’s most pressing needs and suggested conference sessions that could address those needs.

Reflective observation

The second stage of the learning process is reflective observation. At this stage, attention is given to the details of a single topic, with the goal of understanding the meaning of that topic. Impartial observation characterizes this stage, which also involves a high degree of interaction between the individual and the environment. Lectures and question/answer sessions are highly utilized and incredibly helpful (Kolb, 1984, p. 201).

Actions indicative of reflective observation are evident both at the conference and after. While at the conference the author attended sessions and roundtables, including an ERM pre-conference, where information could be gathered in a lecture and question/answer session format. Because relevant sessions were identified prior to the conference based on existing concrete experience, the author was able to attend sessions that might best suit the institution’s needs. Questioning the people met outside of the information sessions also provided the attendee an opportunity for impartial observation of other institutional practices.

Institutional-level reflective observation took place after the conference, when members of faculty and staff engaged in impartial questioning to obtain information related strictly to their areas of responsibility. The notes taken at the conference in the various sessions were solicited, questioned, and discussed with the conference attendee. Questions commonly began with “what did you learn about…” This was done on a basis of each staff member’s interests and areas of responsibility, without involving general theories or broader applications beyond their own duties.

Abstract conceptualization

Following reflective observation in Kolb’s ELM is the abstract conceptualization stage. Kolb describes abstract conceptualization as making use of “logic, ideas, and concepts” and being concerned with “building general theories as opposed to intuitively understanding unique, specific areas” (Kolb, 1984, p. 69). Abstract conceptualization differs from reflective observation in that the latter is concerned only with specific areas.

A number of actions offer evidence of abstract conceptualization at the institutional level. Meetings were held to review the notes taken in the various sessions; during these meetings, connections were made between topics as they applied on a higher level than the individual. Through this process, the conference notes were compiled in order to match the information gathered on the previously identified issues, regardless of the session where those notes were taken. For instance, information on ERM systems was gathered in a number of different sessions and conversations. These notes were collocated and distributed to the ERM planning committee. This helped staff and the conference attendee connect their observations dealing with their area of particular interest to a larger picture of institutional needs.

Active experimentation

The final stage of Kolb’s ELM is active experimentation. This stage is categorized by doing rather than observing. As the opposite of reflective observation, active experimentation is concerned with practical applications, and is the immediate precursor to concrete experience (thus beginning the learning process over again). Performing intentional acts towards short-range goals is characteristic of this stage.

In the context of this exploration, active experimentation is evident in the actions taken after the conference notes were reviewed, compiled, and put into an institutional (rather than individual) framework. Brainstorming sessions were held to determine the best way to utilize the information gathered at the conference. Out of these brainstorming sessions came mandates for new committees and suggestions for new policies and procedures. Actually putting these committees together and implementing new policies and procedures are the most obvious examples of active experimentation. Modifying the ERM planning committee’s focus resulted from this stage. How well these adopted actions address the institution’s needs should lead in turn to the development of concrete experience.

Conclusion

How do we learn at library conferences? The ways that individuals learn are as varied as the individuals themselves. Kolb’s Experiential Learning Model explains different learning styles and how individuals go through the learning process. However, this model can be expanded beyond the individual to look at the learning process undergone at the level of an institution. Understanding how the learning process applies to the institution can help those individuals who make up the institution to prepare for and facilitate the process. How much we learn at library conferences therefore depends on the commitment — both of an institution’s representatives at the conference as well as those who did not attend — to review, analyze, and possibly incorporate the information gathered into institutional activities.

References


And They Were There

Reports of Meetings — 26th Annual Charleston Conference

Issues in Book and Serial Acquisition, “Unintended Consequences,” Francis Marion Hotel and Embassy Suites Historic District, Charleston, SC, November 8-11, 2006

Column Editor: Toni Nix (Assistant to the Editor, Against the Grain; Phone: 843-835-8604; Fax: 843-835-5892) <justwrite@lowcountry.com>

From your Editor: The 2006 Charleston Conference was fabulous! Many thanks to Ramune Kubilius and all her ATG reporters who submitted reports. The entire 2006 Charleston Conference Proceedings will be published by Libraries Unlimited/Greenwood Publishing Group later this year; watch for details in an upcoming ATG issue. — KS

Preconference — Wednesday, November 8, 2006 — Creating Capacity for Change: Transforming Library Workflows and Organizations — Presented by Rick Lugg (R2 Consulting), Ruth Fischer (R2 Consulting)

Report by Ramune Kubilius (Northwestern University, Galter Health Sciences Library) <r-kubilius@northwestern.edu>

Those who signed up for this preconference knew that the “dynamic duo” of Rick Lugg and Ruth Fischer wouldn’t disappoint. The presenters have considerable consulting experience, most currently in the area of change and workflow redesign issues, in libraries, with library vendors, publishers, and service continued on page 61
Session — Thursday, November 9, 2006 — *Unintended Consequences of the Profit Motive: Or Why the Open Access Genie is Out of the Bottle* — Presented by Ray English (Director of Libraries, Oberlin College)

Report by Charlie Rapple (Head of Marketing, Ingenta) <charlie.rapple@ingenta.com>

The inelasticity of demand in the scholarly publishing market has allowed publishers to pursue profit at the expense of research, proclaimed Ray English to the Charleston Conference’s greatest ever number of registrants. The resulting pressure on library budgets reduces grass roots access to journals and has contributed to a decline in monograph publishing. Whilst consortial purchasing has successfully alleviated these problems in some areas, Open Access may represent a broader, longer-term solution.

OA journals have had some successes — Ray noted that the 2,450 listed in the Directory of Open Access Journals constitute 10% of peer-reviewed journals. He acknowledged concerns about the quality/prestige — to which I would add currency — of many of these journals. Whilst over half are not author-pays, Ray noted that alternative funding models such as advertising, endorsement, sponsorship and memberships may not be viable in all disciplines.

Funding agencies and universities are increasingly adopting self-archiving mandates and 15% of peer-reviewed articles are estimated to be openly available as a result. The effect of self-archiving on journal cancellations was evidenced elsewhere at the conference — Ray envisages a “survival of the fittest” outcome, with less costly, higher quality journals least affected. Responding to an audience question about the Unintended Consequences of Open Access itself, Ray conceded that it may further reduce library budgets (by reallocating funds to research departments) and that new funding mechanisms will be needed.
is possible. The data upon which library services are built needs to be portable, but the catalog model is flawed.

Lively Lunch — Thursday, November 9, 2006 — Weeding a Periodical Collection in the Academic Environment: A Case Study — Presented by Tinker Massey (Serials Librarian, Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University)

Report by Amanda Brewer (MLIS Candidate, University of South Carolina) <mandabrewer@yahoo.com>

Tinker Massey, serials librarian at Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University presented a lively session on weeding a periodicals collection with special attention placed on the possibilities opened through such endeavors. Drawing on experience weeding titles from the Embry-Riddle collection, Tinker shared her observations with an audience of inquisitive academic and corporate librarians.

Citing space constraints and preservation issues as the primary causes for weeding collections, Massey described how these factors warrant the removal of titles. Equally important to weed are titles irrelevant due to changes in academic course offerings. An example of this is evident through the weeding project at Embry-Riddle where Massey found titles that supported courses no longer offered by the university.

The bulk of the presentation focused on the procedures involved in weeding periodical collections. Massey’s prescribed method calls for an initial assessment of the collection to determine if reorganization of the materials is necessary. Further, she advocates reviewing the titles purchased in comparison to actual holdings. She urged participants to think outside of the status quo and to weed according to the needs of the university, its faculty and its students. A concern for updated guides to weeding print collections in the age of electronic access and techniques for handling faculty reactions to removed titles were among the issues raised by participants.

Lively Lunch — Thursday, November 9, 2006 — Future of Publishing in an Age of Uncertainty — Presented by Michael Mabe (STM Association), Tony McSean (Elsevier), Anthony Watkinson (University College London & Blackwell Publishing)

Report by Charlie Rapple (Head of Marketing, Ingenta) <charlie.rapple@ingenta.com>

The spirit of newly-jobless Don Rumsfeld hovered over this lively lunch as it boiled down to the “the known knowns, the known unknowns, and the unknown unknowns.” By 2010, posited Michael Mabe, researchers will be mandated to deposit all articles in repositories (giving readers the option to satisfy with “good-enough” versions of all content), and China and India will be fully onstream with sizeable investment in R&D. Whilst more researchers equals more published papers equals more journals, the Western concept of a journal may change and “author-pays” may be the only feasible means of supporting so many more papers. But until tenure is disengaged from published output, academics (particularly those in STM) will continue to establish precedence, attract future funding and achieve recognition by submitting papers to journals.

Tony McSean stressed that neither libraries nor publishers are impervious to current disintermediation trends; whilst no single killer application has yet materialized, the larger software and search providers are likely candidates. Customer sociology will increasingly drive development of discipline-specific tools, products and markets. Online symposia, blogs and wikis will thrive, and new technologies will emerge — but formal communication channels will remain necessary to disseminate information outside of scholarly communities. Anthony Watkinson encouraged publishers to serve “scholarship not scholars;” Michael Mabe reminded us not to overlook the humdrum but fundamental needs of human users. These compelled the evolution of journals over 300 years ago, and they will ensure the continuation of the journal model for some time to come.

Session — Thursday, November 9, 2006 — Battle for eBook Mindshare: It’s All About the Rights — Presented by Christopher Warnock (CEO/CTO, ebrary), Allen McKiel (Assistant Dean of Libraries, Northwestern State University), Bettina Meyer (Assistant Dean for Resources, Western Michigan University), Michael Martinez (Interim Library Director, Reinhardt College)

Report by Ramune Kubilius (Northwestern University, Galter Health Sciences Library) <r-kubilius@northwestern.edu>

Attendees at this session held in a ballroom were a bit surprised by a fourth person, M. Martinez on the panel, whose name wasn’t listed in the program or corrections/additions. Still, his comments, often amusing and forthright, represented the “small college” perspective that balanced the other two speakers’ larger academic library viewpoints (McKiel and Meyer). Questions posed by moderator (Warnock) kept the framed session on track, requesting answers to questions (not what the session subtitle promised?): where do the libraries stand with electronic books; was there a plan in place or is there one now. The result?: Differing perspectives. WMU, with its many students, strong distance education programs, is served by more than ten eBook vendors. McKiel claimed that his library’s users don’t always know what to do in the eBooks, but the potential is there. Reinhardt claimed that the mostly consortially licensed eBook titles accessible to his users allow his library to fill a need, provide books outside the subject scope of his small institution’s print holdings. He admitted that “electronic is a plus, but you can’t read it in bed or in the bathtub.” WMU makes collection decisions specific to certain disciplines (no plans to replace print and formats (no print computer books). When asked by an audience member to estimate eBook costs, one speaker couldn’t provide a figure, one presented ranges (% of the book, % of the reference budget), and one speaker provided dollar figures (per year, for e-resources vs print).

Session — Thursday, November 9, 2006 — Developing Countries’ Access to Research — Presented by Emily Gillingham (Library Marketing and Communications Manager, Blackwell Publishing)

Report by Michael Twigg (Assistant Head of Acquisitions Services, University Libraries, Ball State University) <mtwigg@bsu.edu>

Emily Gillingham presented an overview and update on collaborative international programs to increase online access in developing countries. The United Nations and World Health Organization are working with libraries and publishers to provide access to health (HINARI), agricultural (AGORA), and environmental (OARE) information in support of the Millennium Development Goals.

The programs currently provide access to over 5,000 journals to researchers and students at over 3,000 institutions worldwide. Institutions with GNI's of less than $1,000 are eligible for free access to the collections. Institutions in countries with GNI's of $1,000 to $3,000 are eligible for access at a cost of $1,000 per institution per year. All proceeds from the project are poured into regional training programs. Training is a key component of the three programs and is aimed at ensuring that each institution can make the most out of the programs.

The programs have secured funding through 2015 and are set to focus on increased training efforts, transitioning countries out of the program, ensuring long-term stability
of the programs, generating political will to support the program, increasing local content, and understanding the long-term impact of the programs.

Session — Thursday, November 9, 2006 — Canceling Print Journals for Electronic Only: Developing Guidelines for Decision Making — Presented by Kristen DeVoe (Electronic Resources Librarian, College of Charleston)

Report by Hillary Corbett (Assistant Head, Print Management, Northeastern University Libraries; Phone: 617-373-2352) <h.corbett@neu.edu>

Advances in the technology and delivery of electronic journals, as well as ever-rising costs, have made it very attractive and viable to cancel print journals in favor of electronic versions. DeVoe surveyed about 200 medium-sized libraries in Fall 2005 and again in Fall 2006 to ask about cancelling print journals for electronic-only, and how that decision process is managed. She found that, overwhelmingly, libraries are cancelling print for e-only — 87.6% in 2005 and 84.3% in 2006 replied that they have cancelled print titles when e-only versions were available. However, many libraries responded that their guidelines for making cancellation decisions are informal or under development, and that there is little time to work on further formalization of guidelines. Only 21% of respondents in 2005 and 18.5% in 2006 said they had guidelines in place. DeVoe argued that guidelines provide consistency in decision-making and allow libraries to defend their decisions to patrons, so libraries should make time to formalize their decision-making process. She listed some important points to cover in a set of cancellation guidelines: a statement of intent, archival concerns, content, accessibility issues, licensing restrictions, stability of provider, accreditation, user preference, cost, space consideration, and associated staffing concerns. These guidelines can be included in a library’s collection development policy, or exist as a separate document.

Session — Thursday, November 9, 2006 — Can Cooperative Collection Development Work for Monographs? The Colorado Alliance of Research Libraries Shared Purchase Plan — Presented by Michael Levine-Clark (Collections Librarian, University of Denver), Paul Moeller (Original Serials Cataloger, University of Colorado), Yem Fong (Faculty Director, Collection Development, University of Colorado-Boulder)

Report by Leslie Button (Associate Director for Collection Services, University of Massachusetts/Amherst) <leslie.button@gmail.com>

Last year this group did a presentation on their “not bought” purchase plan. In this session, they reported on an approval plan that is shared by 11 of the 25 Colorado Alliance members. They implemented a shared approval plan to reduce duplication in a way that is logical, respects the integrity of institutional collections, and does not force libraries to purchase materials they would not ordinarily buy. As a preliminary step, they examined overlap in LC classification ranges. They decided to work with two vendors (Blackwell Books and Yankee Book Peddler) to compare service and coverage, focusing on four subject areas: economics, mathematics, political science, and religion. They are putting in $200,000 to support this project. Early in the process they discovered they needed to move all books (undergraduate and graduate) with one vendor. Lessons learned from the plan set-up: it takes more than three months to set up local procedures and staff needs to understand the value of the pilot. If the pilot is successful, they need to find ways to continue shared purchasing by staying with a single vendor for greater economies of scale. The pilot has only been active for a couple of weeks.

The session raised many questions. How do you measure use of collection? It is just circulation data? Doesn’t that inherently under measure usage? Yes, but it is underestimated across the board so it’s probably ok. It’s possible there are some call number ranges that have more browsing. It was a decision of the group to achieve consistency across the group. When students request books directly is that considered ILL? No, they count Prospector requests as a separate category but not as a measurable way except through checkouts. It would help measure whether undergraduates want specific books or not. Why aren’t more Alliance institutions involved in this project? University of Colorado Springs just joined, but initially they did not think the areas were relevant to them. In other cases it is because the bibliographers are not comfortable with the idea.

Session — Thursday, November 9, 2006 — LibQUAL+ in South Africa: A View from the South — Presented by Digby Sales (Manager of Collection Development & Acquisitions, University of Cape Town Libraries)

Report by Ramune Kubilius (Northwestern University, Galter Health Sciences Library) <r-kubilius@northwestern.edu>

This sparsely attended but interesting session drew those interested continued on page 64
If you are interested in leading a discussion, acting as a moderator, coordinating a livelyunch, or would like to make sure we discuss a particular topic, please let us know. The Charleston Conference prides itself on creativity, innovation, flexibility, and informality. If there is something you are interested in doing, please try it out on us. We’ll probably love it...

The Conference Directors for the 2007 Charleston Conference include — Beth Bernhardt, Principal Director (UNC-Greensboro) <beth.bernhardt@uncg.edu>, Glenda Alvin <galvin@tfnstate.edu>, Cris Ferguson (Furman University) <cris.ferguson@furman.edu>, David Goodman <dgoodman@liu.edu>, Chuck Hamaker <cchamake@email.uncc.edu>, Heidi Hoerman <hoerman@sc.edu>, Ramune Kubilius (Northwestern Health Sciences Library) <kubilius@northwestern.edu>, Heather Miller (SUNY-Albany) <hmiller@uamail.albany.edu>, Jack Montgomery (Western Kentucky University) <jack.montgomery@wk.edu>, Audrey Powers (USF Tampa Library) <apowers@lib.usf.edu>, John Perry Smith (Total Information Inc.) <jps@totalinformation.com>, Anthony Watkinson (Consultant) <anthony.watkinson@btoopenworld.com>, Katina Strauch (College of Charleston) <kstrau @comcast.net> or www.katina.info/conference.

Send ideas by June 30, 2007, to any of the Conference Directors listed above.

Or to: Katina Strauch
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http://www.katina.info/conference

This major study was to determine the preferences (worldwide) of librarians toward open access materials. This study showed that librarians would show a preference toward the acquisition of OA materials given reliability, peer review, and currency of the information. This study used a conjoint analysis approach to remove any personal bias. No content type was referred to for addressing preferences. The survey questioned librarian’s preferences for hypothetical and unnamed products. This data was then distributed into a “Share of Preference” model.

The primary components toward articles seen in the study are:
• Materials that have undergone peer-review are preferred.
• Delay in material availability decreases preference.
• Materials made available free of charge are strongly preferred.
• Attitudes toward OA were also examined.
• The great majority of librarians favor OA articles as it challenges more traditional publishers.

2007 Charleston Conference — 27th Annual Issues in Book and Serial Acquisition

Call For Papers, Ideas, Conference Themes, Panels, Debates, Diatribes, Speakers, Poster Sessions, Preconferences, etc. ...

Wednesday, November 7, 2007 — Preconferences and Vendor Showcase
Thursday-Saturday, November 8-10, 2007 — Main Conference
Francis Marion Hotel & Embassy Suites Historic District, Charleston, SC

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in hearing about LibQUAL+ as a survey instrument or those curious in hearing how an American-designed user perception instrument was used internationally. South Africa is still undergoing transformation. An overhaul was made in the laws and the educational system; the new constitution was implemented 10 years ago in 1996. LibQUAL+ was administered in August 2005, thanks to grant funding, in five South African universities, including UCT where the author works. Challenges in administering the survey instrument: time-demanding preparations, diversity problems (the need to translate questions when English was not users’ primary language), some sites’ inability to administer the survey electronically, some sites’ lack of “buy in” by library users, resulting in less than optimal response rates. Still, the libraries felt they improved their credibility and university administrations listened, since international benchmarks were used. Survey analysis provides a map for short-term solutions and long-term planning. At UCT, the library addressed comments about noise levels, began publicizing off-campus resource access, and licensed additional electronic collections and packages sooner than planned. Librarians’ subject expertise at all libraries will be addressed through grant funding, and LibQUAL+ will be administered again. D. Sales expressed pride that the South African academic libraries were willing to expose themselves to the survey after living so long in a political environment of protectionism and separation.

Rachel K. Schenk Memorial Scholarship

This year the fifth Rachel K. Schenk Memorial Scholarship of $1,200 will be awarded to the person who has demonstrated a true love of books. There are three requirements:
1) The applicant must write an essay of no more than 600 words on “my love of books.”
2) The applicant must be a librarian with a library degree.
3) The applicant must be a first-time attendee to the Charleston Conference for 2007.

Please note: The Rachel K. Schenk Memorial Scholarship was to be given for a total of five years with an award of $1,200 per year. This is the final year for this scholarship.
Deadline for application is August 20, 2007. For more information, visit http://www.katina.info/conference/scholarship.html or contact kstrau @comcast.net.

Session — Thursday, November 9, 2006 — Self-Archiving and Journal Subscriptions: Co-existence or Competition? — Presented by Chris Beckett (Scholarly Information Strategies, Ltd.), Simon Inger (Scholarly Information Strategies, Ltd.)

Report by Nancy Loggins (CLIS, University of South Carolina) <loggin sn2@bellsouth.net>

This major study was to determine the preferences (worldwide) of librarians toward open access materials. This study showed that librarians would show a preference toward the acquisition of OA materials given reliability, peer review, and currency of the information. This study used a conjoint analysis approach to remove any personal bias. No content type was referred to for addressing preferences. The survey questioned librarian’s preferences for hypothetical and unnamed products. This data was then distributed into a “Share of Preference” model.

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Who would have imagined that the 2nd Triennial ATG Haiku Contest would bring such genius to the fore? The breadth of talent in our profession is truly staggering.

This years judges included, along with myself, LeMoyne Leeper, winner of the 1971 Buddy Hackett Prize for Poetry, and Sherman Streep, Poet Laureate of Arlington County, Virginia. We had a difficult time, I can tell you, choosing from so many beautiful works.

Katy Bluff, Assistant Director for the Hareless County Library System, submitted what the judges considered the “Most Poignant” poem. Here is her Exasperate. Committee, task force, In whose name we bash large rocks On our willing heads.

The Most practical haiku was sent in by Noam Brusky, a front-desk assistant at the Bourbon College Library. It is entitled Get Away from the Front Desk. It won’t circulate Without a barcode, stupid. Why did we hire you?

The judges especially liked Mr. Brusky’s use of the question ending, leaving readers with a sort-of puzzle; and leading the second two lines with W while the first leads with a seemingly contradictory I.

For “Most Sentimental,” the judges went with Little Bird, by Bertha Schwnk, a volunteer at the Somerset High School Library. I think you’ll agree that Ms. Schwnk captures the essential sentiment in any lost-book tragedy.

Little bird, come here. Lost or missing or withdrawn, Time to check you out.

Finally, our winning haiku for 2007, comes from Dusty Beets, a cataloger with Darkmound University. It is called simply Where?

If I could come back As a book or a journal Where would you class me?

The judges agreed that Dusty’s use of imagery was superb. One could almost picture the book and the journal. It is moving yet subtly still, grandiose yet self-effacing. We hope to see more of Ms. Beets work in the future. Perhaps another submission in 2010?

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- OA articles are generally considered reliable.
- Opinions are split about the future of OA vs. published materials.

Survey respondents to the study were divided by professional positions:

- Acquisitions .................................................. 9%
- Senior management .................................. 35%
- Collection development .......................... 11%
- Reference ......................................................... 13%
- System or technology .................................. 2%
- Electronic resource management .......... 13%
- Other roles .................................................... 17%

Only about 60% of the respondents to the survey gave regional information to the study. Responses by known region are:

- North America ........................................ 41%
- Europe ......................................................... 40%
- Australasia ................................................. 6%
- Asia ............................................................. 6%
- Rest of world .............................................. 7%

Overall, the study shows that librarians are likely to choose OA materials when they are assured of reliability, peer review, and currency of the articles. However, the study also showed that other factors have an important part in influencing the selection of OA articles over journal articles.

Session — Friday, November 9, 2006 — Resources for College Libraries: Up Close and Personal — Presented by Marcus Elmore (Project Editor, Choice), John Krafty (Product Manager, R. R. Bowker)

Report by Colleen M. Conway (Associate Professor and Head of Technical Services, Hope College) <conwayc@hope.edu>

Resources for College Libraries is the successor to the third edition of Books for College Libraries last published in 1988. It is available as a multivolume set of books, each volume of which may be purchased separately; as a Website which can be used by librarians and patrons alike; and as a datafeed which is run against electronic files sent from your catalog. The change in name from books to resources was made in order to reflect the fact that the list was made from scratch and was not just a revision of the 1988 list. There are no video or audio resources in the bibliography but there are CD-ROM databases, Webresources and eBooks. Marcus Elmore, Project editor at “Choice” described the history of the resource. John Krafty, product manager at R. R. Bowker described the functionality.

Where BCL was organized on the LC classification system, RCL is organized “following the contours of an undergraduate curriculum.” Sixty-two subject editors covered 58 subjects and worked with multiple bibliographers within each subject. Andrea Twiss Brooks, science bibliographer at the University of Chicago described the process she followed as a subject editor for geology. More information is available at www.rclinfo.net.

Session — Friday, November 10, 2006 — Open Access — Beyond Declarations: What Steps Towards What Future? — Presented by Anthony Watkinson (University College London and Blackwell Publishing), Mark Patterson (Public Library of Science), Scott Plutchak (University of Alabama at Birmingham), Astrid Wissenberg (UK Economic & Social Research Council)

Report by Charlie Rapple (Head of Marketing, Ingenta) <charlie.rapple@ingenta.com>

Mark Patterson attempted to focus on OA benefits by separating them from OA funding. However, given that his cited examples (link- age between papers; power of text mining; interactivity of content) are all achievable with “traditionally” published literature, the only distinct advantage of OA is that content is free at the point of use. And since free-at-the-point-of-use has to mean paid-for-at-the-point-of-publishing, the funding model cannot be disengaged. That increased access to the literature empowers each of these processes was nonetheless well demonstrated.

Astrid Wissenburg raised the unavoidable issue of corporate rev- enues, which currently comprise 20.3% of the STM market and which continued on page 66

<http://www.against-the-grain.com>
Lively Lunch — Friday, November 10, 2006 — Managing JSTOR Print Backfiles: Individual and Collaborative Approaches — Presented by Rebecca Kemp (Serials Supervisor Librarian, UNC Wilmington), John Kiplinger (Director of Production Services, JSTOR)

Report by Hillary Corbett (Assistant Head, Print Management, Northeastern University Libraries; Phone: 617-373-2352) <h.corbett@neu.edu>

This Lively Lunch offered two separate but related presentations: John Kiplinger focused on JSTOR’s experiences with creating a Paper Repository of digitized materials, and Rebecca Kemp discussed libraries’ individual and collaborative management of their JSTOR print backfiles. In the first presentation, Kiplinger talked about JSTOR’s decision to partner with Harvard and the University of California to create dark or dim print archives of digitized content. He gave us an interesting look at a familiar topic from an “insider” perspective. Most libraries are wondering what to do with their print backfiles of content accessible through JSTOR, and Rebecca Kemp provided some examples of how this is being handled. Some libraries are embarking on cooperative endeavors to preserve their print journals, either at centralized repositories or in a distributed-network model. Availability of storage space is the first concern, and decisions must also be made about which libraries will contribute which titles to the repository. Audience members wondered why all libraries wouldn’t participate in such endeavors, and Kemp responded that some libraries prefer to retain their autonomy, or have accreditation-related concerns about maintaining their print holdings, so they have thus far chosen to keep their backfiles locally. A list of cooperative endeavors can be found on the Conference Moodle for this presentation.

Lively Lunch — Friday, November 10, 2006 — Searching for Clarity Among Many Voices: Collection Development as a Collaborative Endeavor — Presented by Juliet Kerico (Acting Head of Reference/Instruction, Indiana State University), Alberta David Comer (Associate Dean, Indiana State University)

Report by Leslie Button (Associate Director for Collection Services, University of Massachusetts/Amherst) <leslie.button@gmail.com>

Prior to this new model, there were three in technical services staff that made collection decisions: Collection Development Officer (CDO), Serials Librarian and Acquisitions Librarian. Reference had liaisons responsible for collection development, but the collection development officer was responsible for all items with recurring cost. The model was confusing and communication was poor. The new model is called collaborative collection development. It involves liaisons and teaching faculty (librarians) along with acquisitions and represents an opportunity to increase the subject knowledge of liaisons. This is a shift away from subject-specialization to a more service-oriented model. A cooperative collections committee (CCC) comprised of the associate dean, head of cataloging, head of systems, head of reference and head of acquisitions, involves stakeholders in purchase decisions. The teaching faculty is involved. They were asking more of the reference librarians than what they were accustomed to, so they developed a set of core competencies and developed a training program for liaisons to help with new responsibilities. One disadvantage of the new system is an increased workload for liaisons and information overload. However, more voices make for better choices.

Do the serials librarian and collection development officer positions still exist? Yes, serials is still part of acquisitions, but CDO is now subsumed by the CCC. Did anticipated budget constraints fuel restructuring? Did actual budget restructuring at all? Why did they choose to eliminate that CDO and who works with liaisons and monitors their work? Who sets budgets? Budget is divided by CCC. The head of reference evaluates the liaisons work. The AD has taken on the day-to-day CDO role. Sometimes the liaisons do not want to share unpleasant news or represent libraries situation. That’s one of the benefits of having a letter go out from the AD. Have they thought about using Wiki to communicate with faculty? Yes, but they have not moved forward with it. What instruction load do liaisons have? It’s heavier in the fall semester.

Lively Lunch — Friday, November 10, 2006 — Publishing 2.0 – The Next Generation — Presented by Judy Luther (President, Informed Strategies), Barry Bermudez (Marketing Manager, Information Science, Cornell Lab of Ornithology), Robert McNamee (Director & D. Electronic Enlightenment Project, University of Oxford), Martin Marlow (Vice President, Sales & Marketing, Atypyon)

Report by Charlie Rapple (Head of Marketing, Ingenta) <charlie.rapple@ingenta.com>

Judy Luther’s opening words conjured up a future in which collaborative tools will enable us to capture “research in motion” — where journal articles are replaced by conversations between researchers, their witnesses representing subscribers. Martin Marlow took a more prosaic approach, asking how we can engage the user community to create value which can then be leveraged by providers. The lunchtime audience was certainly enlivened by the issues of relevance and privacy associated with one cited example, collaborative filtering. Further concerns, about moderation and vandalism of user-generated content, exposed the current lack of clear answers in this area: the self-governing Wikipedia model could not be relied upon in the smaller user bases to which Martin referred, whilst conversely, some of the proposed solutions (e.g., participation by invitation only) would not scale to larger communities.

On the other hand, Barry Bermudez’ SKEN (Science Knowledge and Education Network) has proved successful in its first incarnation, the Birds of North America digipedia. The ornithological community takes strong ownership of, and pride in, its entries, (ensuring their currency and accuracy) whilst proactive moderation ensures that scientific integrity is retained. The open source content management software has reduced editorial upload time from 30 to 2 days, ensuring new data is quickly disseminated by and within the research community.
Lively Lunch — Friday, November 10, 2006 — Biomedical Self-Archiving During Embargo Periods — Presented by Kristin Antelman (Associate Director for the Digital Library, NC State) Report by Ramune Kubilius (Northwestern University, Galter Health Sciences Library) <r-kubilius@northwestern.edu>

Presenter Antelman was a Charleston Conference presenter who openly admitted “tweaking”, searching for late-breaking developments to the final moment. She was pleasantly surprised, for example, to encounter a paper presented Nov. 6, 2006 at the ASIS&T Conference in Austin, TX (Matsubayashi et al, “The current status of open access in biomedical field: the comparison of countries related to the impact of national policies,” http://www.asis.org/Conferences/AM06/papers/98.html).

This Lively Lunch was a fast-paced session covering the aforementioned, the presenter’s and other studies, comparing and contrasting sample sizes, the reported rates, versions, and possible “best work” nature of self-archiving. Conclusions included: there are higher rates of self-archiving for journals that have impact factors than those that do not; not much self-archiving takes place in the “lab authorship”?/many publications per author biomedical fields. Implications for library collection development? In biomedicine, publishing embargos are currently more pertinent than self archiving.

More than a dozen session attendees and the presenter ended the truly “Lively Lunch” with talk of “sample formulas” (during the embargo period): the cost per article vs of cost of subscription; the merits/down sides of “unlimited” pay per view and agreements that can be made with publishers to “convert to subscription” at a certain point/percent. All of these calculations may not work in the social sciences.

Session — Friday, November 10, 2006 — Trends in Scientific Publishing: The Editorial Perspective — Presented by Hillary Sussman (Executive Editor, Genome Research, Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory Press), David E. Brun (Professor of Pathology, Editor of The Clinical Chemist, University of Virginia Medical School) Report by Ramune Kubilius (Northwestern University, Galter Health Sciences Library) <r-kubilius@northwestern.edu>

Almost two dozen attendees came to hear about “behind the scenes” work of STM editors. “Trends” were part of concluding remarks — the first speaker’s about competition, RSS, “raw release”, self-archiving, etc., and the second speaker’s mention of the prophesying priestess Phytia at Delphi. Executive editor Sussman, works full-time for the publisher, while editor Brun works 66% time on the journal and the remainder as faculty and researcher. Sussman referred session attendees to a (tongue-in-cheek) commentary, “How may you help me?,” G. A. Petsko, Genome Biology 6(6):111, 2005. She “rides herd” on six scientific editors and a 60-member editorial board that changes every three years, has many “typical” duties (commissioning reviews, solving problems with the print and online journal) as well as being the lead for advertising and marketing. Sussman presented strong opinions on challenges (open peer review won’t work: reviewers are “swamped” and, essentially: reviewers have to “earn their stripes”). Brun showed a dry sense of humor indicating his society publication will become (fully) openly accessible upon receiving an $8 million dollar grant. His relations with authors are professional, not social, and librarians are his “employers.” His work involves cycles, with associate editors, for each submission — Accept? Review? Reject? Revise? His say in the business aspects is minimal. What is the value added by editors? Per Sussman; quality assurance, standards set for the community. Per Brun: “we need journals and we need editors.” The primary attendee question — how do you find the many reviewers you need?

Session — Friday, November 10, 2006 — Reconfiguring Collection Development for the Future — Presented by Audrey Powers (Associate Librarian for the Natural Sciences, University of South Florida) Report by Leslie Button (Associate Director for Collection Services, University of Massachusetts/Amherst) <leslie.button@gmail.com>

Audrey Powers provided background information on University of South Florida’s creation of a Research Services and Collections Council (RSCC). The RSCC is a new group intended to help shape collections of “national distinction worthy of benchmarking by ARL libraries as well as advancing institutional research and strategic directions.” Two other committees, the Collection Development Advisory Committee and their Electronic Resources Committee, were disbanded as part of this paradigm shift. The RSCC is charged with coordinating collection development activities, developing research services, acting on collection analysis, and advancing strategic directions. This multi-layered approach, focused heavily on the research mission of the university, involves collection development librarians and format coordinators. It was very informative to see which tools they use as part of their collections assessment, as well as a Website created for collection development librarians to use.

Table Talk — Friday, November 10, 2006 — A Recycling Case Study, Odom Library, Valdosta State University — Presented by Jack Fisher (Acquisitions Librarian, Valdosta State University, Valdosta, GA) Report by Nancy Loggins (CLIS, University of South Carolina) <logginsn2@bellsouth.net>

This was a poster session detailing the development and status of a recycling program of Valdosta State University. It began in the acquisitions/serials department of the library.

The program began because of the accumulation of paper and boxes in the library. Previously this material was simply sent to the county landfill. As a result of the program, these materials are now transferred to a private storage facility that then disposes of the materials by recycling, if possible.

Emphasis was placed on the aspect that such programs can begin small and grow as more people become aware of the program. More departments within the library began to participate and more people agreed to help in the program.

Emphasis was also placed on the cost-saving aspects of the program. It incurred no cost to the university. It was the result of public/private partnership formed by the program to dispose of these recyclable materials.

The small group at the table encouraged open discussion in the session. The discourse around the table was a constant flow with discussions of the posters, documents and photographs of the program. Participants who are in recycling programs at the present time offered advice. Advice was also offered to participants who expressed an interest in beginning such a program.

This was an interesting and thought provoking program. It especially emphasized the aspects of the programs that can be used in other recycling programs.

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Table Talk — Friday, November 10, 2006 — Weed with Ease: Tracking Your Collection Review Project — Presented by Bob Kelly (Collection Development Librarian, Eastern Michigan University), Carolyn Adams (Information Resources Assistant Senior, Kresge Business Administration Library at the University of Michigan)

Report by Amanda Brewer (MLIS Candidate, University of South Carolina) <mandabrewer@yahoo.com>

For years, librarians at the Kresge Business Administration Library at the University of Michigan relied on a paper form to notify technical services librarians of changes needing to be made to library materials. Technical services staff would then use the form to take necessary actions in a process that proved to be not only time consuming but devoid of any means to track the status of recommended changes. With the help of Carolyn Adams and Bob Kelly, the FootPrints Ticket tracking software package was implemented to move the paper form to an online form expediting the process and increasing workflow.

To initiate the process, technical services librarians designed and made available an electronic version of the previously used paper form. This form was then linked to the FootPrints Ticket software so that any submissions would become a traceable “ticket” assigned to a Technical Services staff member. This setup allowed all librarians to view the status of the materials to be changed in addition to the name of the employee responsible for processing the changes.


Table Talk — Friday, November 10, 2006 — So, What Happens Next? An Update on Illinois’ Statewide Science Serial Collection Assessment — Presented by Michael Norman (Head of Content Access, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign), Tina E. Chrzasztofski (Chemistry Librarian, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign), Chew Chiat Naun (Associate University Librarian for Collections, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign), Karen Schmidt (Senior Coordinating Cataloger, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign)

Report by Ramune Kubilius (Northwestern University, Galter Health Sciences Library) <rkubilius@northwestern.edu>

Table Talks, in their second year, may well become a Charleston Conference “tradition.” Organizers made efforts to determine topics’ potential interest and table sizes needed. This session’s small size was a plus, since all could view laptop computer projected slides, and presenters Norman and Chrzasztofski could easily field questions. The presenters represented a larger UIUC-based group (members listed in the program) that received Illinois state (CARLI, Consortium of Academic and Research Libraries in Illinois) grant funding to analyze Illinois academic libraries’ science print journal holdings. The group received permission from 75 academic libraries to analyze their data. They built a union list of serials information, assisted through the use of Ulrich’s Serials Analysis System. The data clean-up took about one year, and all participating libraries received reports. Analysis: who held what titles’ last copies (or next to last copies), what titles are most frequently duplicated, what subject strengths and weaknesses are seen, what percent of the titles are available online. 77% of the libraries owned at least one unique title. Completed / future plans: work with Ulrich’s to improve SAS, use SFX data, continue task force meetings of Illinois libraries to examine retention and other questions, share information with other states’ projects, and debate “what it will take to be OhioLink when we grow up.” The group’s project report was accepted in October 2006 by College & Research Libraries (publication date November 2007).

Session — Friday, November 10, 2006 — Options for Citation Tracking: Google Scholar, Scopus, and Web of Science — Presented by Nisa Bakkalbasi (Electronic Collections Librarian, Yale University), Kathleen Bauer (Usability and Assessment Librarian, Yale University Library), Lei Wang (Instructional Design Librarian, Yale University Library), Janis Glover (Educational Services and Reference Librarian, Yale School of Medicine)

Report by Michael Twigg (Assistant Head of Acquisitions Services, University Libraries, Ball State University) <mtwigg@bsu.edu>

Nisa Bakkalbasi, Kathleen Bauer, and Lei Wang reported on their meticulous and time consuming research to evaluate citation tracking rates between Google Scholar, Scopus, and Web of Science. The study employed sampling methods to select articles from journals in oncology and condensed matter physics. The authors looked at citations from journals published before e-publishing (1993) and after e-publishing (2003) and further selected journals with a variety of impact factors in both subject fields. The study found that the strength of Scopus was increasing for current materials and that ultimately no single source returns every relevant citation.

Audience members were very appreciative of their research and presentation. Discussion focused on the problems of exactly what each services covers (i.e., Google Scholar lacking Elsevier titles) and a desire to see the presenters perform the same high-quality analysis on many other subjects.

Session — Friday, November 10, 2006 — Simplifying Approvals Workflow – a Vendor/Customer Solution — Presented by Carole Kiehl (AUL for Technical Services, University of California, Irvine), John Elliott (Director of Sales, Western U.S., YBP Library Services)

Report by Hillary Corbett (Assistant Head, Print Management, Northeastern University Libraries; Phone: 617-373-2352) <h.corbett@neu.edu>

At the UCI library, it was taking too long for approval and firm-order books to reach the shelf from the time they were received. An analysis of the workflow resulted in changes being made in the way firm-order books were handled and an overall reduction in processing time between receipt date and catalog date, from 59 days in FY03 to 20 days in FY05. However, they were still experiencing delays in their processing of approval books. Although they refined their approvals system to cut out delays, such as no longer rejecting approvals to allow for full processing at receipt, their processing time only decreased from 48 days in FY03 to 34 days in FY05. Why was it still taking so long to process approval books? Part of the problem lay in the way their Innovative system loaded electronic invoices from vendors. Checking for potential duplicates in the system and overlaying bib records individually bogged down the workflow. Working with YBP, Kiehl transitioned to a “virtual” approval plan. YBP stopped sending approval shipments and instead sent a list of titles that matched their approval profile each week. Kiehl’s staff could then order these titles as if they were firm orders, thus eliminating the lengthy processing of approval invoices and the need to overlay records continued on page 69
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one-by-one. Through this new plan, the average processing time for all approval books has been reduced to 17 days, and for YBP approval books the time has been reduced to 7 days!

Session — Friday, November 10, 2006 — How Digital Library Services Contribute to Undergraduate Learning — Presented by Derek Rodriguez (Systems Librarian Davidson College)

Report by Patti Burns (USC CLIS Student)
<patti.burns@htgc.edu>

Derek Rodriguez, Systems Librarian at Davidson College, presented “How Digital Library Services Contribute to Undergraduate Learning.” Rodriguez presented a pilot program developed and implemented at Davidson College to show how library services connect to institution goals, as well as help library staff understand how they make a difference to students.

This new program not only surveyed students via email, but also included personal interviews with students. The students were willing to discuss papers, lab reports, and other assignments, in addition to obstacles in completing assignments. Students were asked how they used the library, how often they visited the library, and similar types of questions. The answers were then prioritized in charts within the study for analysis.

Faculty members were asked to describe courses taught, assignments, and learning objectives of assignments. The answers were placed in charts for analysis in the same way as the student answers.

Rodriguez hopes to improve his program and repeat the study in other undergraduate colleges. When implemented college-wide, this study will be a tool for demonstrating library learning outcomes for accreditations.

Beasty Breakfast — Saturday, November 11, 2006 — Selling Unwanted Books on the Internet — Presented by Lynda Hartel (Collection Development & Resource Management Librarian, Prior health Sciences Library, Ohio State University), Robert P. Holley (Professor, Library & Information Science, Wayne State University), Patrick Kindregan (Associate Director, Better World Books)

Report by Ramune Kubilius (Northwestern University, Galter Health Sciences Library) <rkubilius@northwestern.edu>

Similar to Table Talks, the older Beastly Breakfast tradition offers presenters and attendees an opportunity to informally interact. This session’s L. Hartel and P. Kindregan reprised salient points from the Friday Lively Lunch session (with the title “Managing Unwanted Gift Book Donations”) in which they had presented, and Prof. Holley shared his experience as an independent “small operations” online bookseller. One specific company, Better World Books (a for-profit social company similar to Newman’s Own) was discussed in depth, since Kindregan works there and Hartel’s library uses its services. Holley added lively comments about his experiences with various online book sites (half.com, abebooks.com, alibris.com, bookfinder.com), both as a buyer and a seller. He did not recommend online auction sites (such as E-Bay).

Library gift book options? Put the lowest level staff to checking library availability, offer through a book sale, and after the sale or even immediately upon gift receipt inform gift givers that the library will send books to Better World Books. For gifts or weeded books sent there, the library can choose payment for sold books or choose a charity/literacy program, in the U.S. or abroad. Interestingly, of its 120 or so em-
ployees, Better World Books does not currently employ any librarians, but does employ a rare book dealer in its warehouse.

Beasty Breakfast — Saturday, November 11, 2006 — Canceling Print for E-Only — Presented by Kristen DeVoe (Electronic Resources Librarian, College of Charleston)

Report by Amanda Brewer (MLIS Candidate, University of South Carolina) <mandabrewer@yahoo.com>

Continuing the discussion from her afternoon session on Friday, Kristen DeVoe spoke further about the results from the survey of 180 librarians to determine if libraries are opting to cancel print subscriptions for electronic-only versions of serials and if they have adopted policies to aid such decision making activities. Survey results indicate 18% of libraries did not have guidelines for decision making. 40% claimed to be developing guidelines, and 12% reported no plans to develop such guidelines. The 40% of libraries with guidelines said the policies justified purchases and cancellations while also providing clarity in collection development decision-making.

When asked to describe the elements necessary to make an effective policy for the purchase of electronic-only subscriptions, the libraries in the survey sample listed the following as important: statement of intent, challenges and issues, funding sources, content criteria, accessibility, and technical stability. Libraries with guidelines named improved decision making, consistency, and eased faculty tensions as benefits of developing policies to guide electronic resource collections. The only drawbacks mentioned were in lack of print materials for student shelving clerks to process and time needed to create the guidelines.

Those around the table applauded the survey and the necessity of policy development. Candid discussion of personal experiences and suggestions flowed freely around the table with each participant contributing advice. Those interested in viewing a sample electronic-only subscription policy may view the College of Charleston’s at http://www.coif.edu/library.

Session — Saturday, November 11, 2006 — Genius at Work — Presented by Anthony W. Ferguson (University Librarian, University of Hong Kong, SAR, China)

Report by Ramune Kubilius (Northwestern University, Galter Health Sciences Library) <rkubilius@northwestern.edu>

Anthony Ferguson (with unusual PowerPoint font slides) shared insights from CC 2006 that impressed him, along with his possible responses. Monographic publishing rates have dropped but eBooks helped publishers recover. Institutional repositories are in hard times. The journals world is complicated. Embargoes help publishers recover. Institutional repositories are in hard times. Will publishers to sponsor scholarly research journal publication fees? Ideas (not to A. Ferguson himself) from various sessions: 1) IRs in Hong Kong should merge. Unity with the China OA movement will open research journal access to scholars and the public. 2) Hand held devices aren’t dead and content should be ported to them. 3) Web 2-0 “ize” existing online services. Take advantage of interactivity. 4) Get library “stuff” in students’ paths (students often discount the relevancy of library-provided information). 5) Re-design the library’s Web page. 6) Develop a rights management database. 7) Port content to course management systems (Hong Kong’s are less standardized than U.S.). 8) Develop a rights management database. 7) Port content to course management systems (Hong Kong’s are less standardized than U.S.). Libraries should pressure ILS vendors. 8) Don’t forget the importance of books: eBooks and paper books have different purposes. Buy both if you can afford them. 9) Data sets are important — recruit or reassign existing staff. 10) Get publishers to sponsor scholarly brain tunes (a la iTunes). Integrate the “library thing”.

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The End of Books and the Death of Libraries
by Matthew J. Bruccoli (President, Bruccoli Clark Layman; Phone: 803-771-4642; Fax: 803-799-6593)

Samuel Johnson rightly decreed that “The chief glory of every people arises from its authors.” It follows that the chief glory of every people is perpetuated in its books, which are to be found in libraries.

I was trained during the Fifties by John Cook Wyllie, the Curator of Rare Books at the University of Virginia’s Alderman Library and subsequently head of the library. He was the best librarian and the best bookman I have ever known. Everything I believe about libraries; everything I know about books; everything I have accomplished as a bibliographer, publisher, editor, biographer, and book collector, I owe to Mr. Wyllie’s tutelage. Accordingly, I reasonably require librarians at research institutions to emulate his standards and values. I have worked for two men who qualified: Hyman Kritzer — the head of the Kent State University Libraries, who was a courageous acquisitions librarian and research-collection builder — and George Terry — Dean of Libraries at the University of South Carolina, who had a vision of what a research library should be and do. The party ended when I lost George.

It is appropriate for me to note my respect for two librarians I did not work for: Charles Mann, the Curator of Rare Books at Penn State, and William Cagle, head of the Lilly Library at Indiana University. My bookman heroes include Charles Feinberg, the great Walt Whitman scholar-collector (“Without books my life would have been a desert.”) and my partner, Frazer Clark, who pauperized himself collecting Nathaniel Hawthorne. Neither Charlie nor Frazer was a librarian or an academician; but their monumental collections are now in libraries.

I have declared my allegiances and acknowledged my obligations to prepare for my statement that books — books for study, books for research, books for reference — are imperiled. Even books for reading pleasure — which is where it all starts — are under threat of superannuation, or worse. Nicholson Baker’s “The Author vs. the Library” (The New Yorker, 14 October 1996), which deals with the pillaging of the San Francisco Public Library, ought to be mandatory reading for library users.

Books consist of bound printed pages. Books are not images on a screen. Therefore libraries — buildings full of common books, uncommon books, rare and precious books, worthless books, and people using them — are endangered. Without books, libraries will perish because they have no reason to exist without books. They will become buildings full of television screens and expensive electronic junk — and that attraction is diminishing as potential library patrons find it unnecessary to set foot in them. Fred Kilgour, a god of libraniership, wrote, “Not having to go to a library is a very important improvement in providing library service.” He was not joking. There is now a population of college students who never enter their college libraries. To encourage students’ non-dependence on libraries is to betray them. The book is the most useful and usable learning instrument ever invented. If Johann Gutenberg were to produce the first book printed from movable type next week, it would be hailed as a miracle; and Microsoft would become a division of Gutenberg, Inc.

I once felt secure in the conviction that libraries would last. I was certain that the book-haters and book-dopes would be prevented from destroying the books and the libraries. Now I’m not sure: I fear that they will destroy or discard the books before they go to librarian paradise where they will never have to see a book. I was amused the first time I heard a librarian or information specialist or whatever she called herself, cheerfully — maybe triumphantly — speak the phrase “virtual library.” I should have wept. The virtual librarians have embraced virtual books. Those electronic things on a screen are not books. They don’t work the way books work. They aren’t as good as books. On-screen matter does not allow for sustained reading. The universal virtual library will destroy reading techniques. Reading will become an anti-social act, as Ray Bradbury predicted in Fahrenheit 451. Public libraries — real libraries with real books — will be replaced by bookeasies, where readers go to read books in secret.

A virtual library is just that. Without real libraries and real books, there will be a lot of unemployed librarians — er, information specialists. I do not know why librarians are eager to collaborate in the destruction of their profession by means of their ecstatic participation in the destruction of that irreplaceable research instrument, the card catalogue, and their orgiastic discarding of books and newspaper runs. A newspaper on screen is not a newspaper: it doesn’t work the same way; it is not read the same way. The make-up and the page lay-out are missing. Moreover, the newspapers microfilms are breaking down — and then there will be nothing. See Nicholson Baker’s noble Double Fold (NY: Random House, 2001).

Nothing can be more important than a book. Nothing can replace a real library. Nothing can duplicate or substitute for the excitement and intellectual stimulation of being in a building full of books. Nothing can replicate the experience of walking the stacks and seeing the books and touching the books and listening to them: “Me, me! Read me!” Here is young Thomas Wolfe in the stacks of Harvard’s Widener Library:

Now he would prowl the stacks of the library at night, pulling books out of a thousand shelves and reading in them like a madman.

The thought of these vast stacks of books would drive him mad: the more he

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