People Profile: Barbara Pope

Editor
Other libraries, such as Massachusetts College of Pharmacy, have eliminated some or all print journal holdings. Computer savvy patrons like the convenience of obtaining articles where they are, indicating electronic journals eliminate barriers that existed with print. However, critics fear that electronic resources signal the end of the library and the librarian. Whereas F. W. Lancaster predicted a paperless society, others take a rational approach, emphasizing the need for balance. “The choice is not between ancient and modern, technology and books, [. . .] or any of the other dichotomies that bedevil us. It is, rather, about how to balance these factors and create something that has the best of each” (Gorman, 5). Most academic libraries have both print and electronic journals, providing a balance, but the academic library’s desire to expand access must be tempered with knowledge, not assumptions, of users’ needs. Electronic journals are not for all academic libraries; as with all library resources, they have advantages and disadvantages and, unlike print serials, require the efforts of all staff to make them a successful venture.

Peggy Johnson begins her text with a description of collection development as the “selection of materials in all formats” (2). Traditionally, this involved selection of serials and books in print format, and later, included microforms and media. While print serials collection development requires significant staff time, electronic journals have different demands for staff time. The increased presence of electronic journals has changed the notion of a serials collection and the collection development process, affecting all areas of the academic library and causing the need for changes in procedures, training, budgeting, duties, and need for integration of staff efforts. I have observed changes at Pittsburg State University (PSU), including reallocating Periodicals funds to Databases to keep up with electronic resources costs. Instead of just calculating in-house use, we also downloaded use data from Websites. In addition, we began using an open URL resolver about four years ago and just recently began setting up an ERM. We have also experienced a decreased need for student workers. PSU librarians communicate through email and blogs about electronic journal problems so that they may be resolved. Additionally, I communicate with the systems department about new resources so that implementation goes smoothly.

Due to the increasing amount of information being available electronically, the notion of a library is changing from “the brick-and-mortar library model into a virtual model where patrons have access to material” (ARL Statistics 2004-2005, 23). The effect has trickled down and affected the serials collection. For example, in the pre-digital world, the library was a storage place for journals. Access was limited because patrons had to come to the library to use them or make interlibrary loan requests. While some academic libraries have eliminated print subscriptions and holdings...