Managing Our Collections in a Digital Age

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Managing Our Collections in a Digital Age

by Roger C. Schonfeld (Manager of Research, Ithaka S+R; Phone: 212-500-2338) <roger.schonfeld@ithaka.org>

This issue focuses on print collections management in a digital age. While numerous libraries are rethinking print collections as a result of their digital availability, actions at individual libraries aggregate into broad questions about the future need for access to print materials. Even as libraries seek additional flexibility in collections management, this critical concern about access and preservation is faced by all types of libraries, from those that traditionally maintained working collections to those that have made significant investments in preservation.

My objective for this issue is to highlight some key initiatives that collectively provide a broad overview of community directions for print collections management and preservation. Each of the initiatives reviewed is grappling with complexity in an environment of reduced resources for libraries and growing pressure on their print collections in particular. One key common theme is the importance of collaborating across institutions to build sustainable trust networks to ensure that preservation and access to materials are not threatened during this format transition.

Two pieces provide overviews of projects being developed to collectively manage journal collections. Emily Stambaugh of the University of California describes WEST, which is constructing a trust model and sustainability plan across multiple consortia and individual libraries to ensure that print materials are accessible and preserved while vastly increasing flexibility at the local level. Frances Boyle, project manager of the UK Research Reserve, describes this national-level initiative to build a shared research infrastructure for higher education, including assured preservation and access, in partnership with the British Library. The vast differences between the approaches being spearheaded by each, in pursuit of fundamentally the same objective, suggests that choices about the design of trust networks are often contingent on time and place.

But journals are by no means the only content type having their print versions called into question, and many libraries are rethinking print management in a digital age. Steve Sutton, the marvelous, is back at YBP as Senior Manager, Digital Content Sales. You will remember that Steve was at YBP previously as VP of Library Services from October 2008 to February 2010 when he took a detour to be VP Director of University and Library Sales at On Demand Books. I see that Steve is registered for the 2010 Charleston Conference!

And news of another long-time friend and colleague, the energetic Carl Teresa! Carl is now General Manager at Wolper Subscription Services. Carl has lots of experience with our industry. He was general manager of EBSCO’s Tenafly, NJ, office for 13 plus years (Nov. 1997-Jan. 2010) and Vice President, Ballen Booksellers (1975-1997) (22 years!). I remember that Carl and Lenny Schrift at Ballen along with Gary Herald at Ambassador were the first companies to support Against the Grain when we started way back in March 1989! That was the year that Hurricane Hugo hit Charleston.

www.wolper.com/
www.ambassadorbooks.com/

Speaking of Against the Grain — so many people to talk to, to know, to interview and so little time! I will never get to know you all! In this issue we have great interviews with Dave Kochalko (ORCID Director and Vice President, Library and Information Resources at the University of California) and former Superintendent of Documents, reviews some of the challenges faced by Regional Federal Depository Libraries as well as opportunities for collaboration that have been identified by ASERL member institutions. It is noteworthy that both are looking to regional collaborative trust networks for collections management and preservation.

Finally, my colleague Ross Housewright of Ithaka S+R describes the challenges that some libraries face in strategic planning around print collections as a result of their digital availability, actions at individual libraries aggregate into broad questions about the future need for access to print materials. Even as libraries seek additional flexibility in collections management, this critical concern about access and preservation is faced by all types of libraries, from those that traditionally maintained working collections to those that have made significant investments in preservation.

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