Let Them Eat...Everything: Embracing the Patron-Driven Future

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Rick Anderson and Heather Miller, "Let Them Eat...Everything: Embracing the Patron-Driven Future" (2010). *Proceedings of the Charleston Library Conference*.
<http://dx.doi.org/10.5703/1288284314804>

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LET THEM EAT... EVERYTHING: EMBRACING A PATRON-DRIVEN FUTURE

Speaker: Rick Anderson - Associate Director for Scholarly Resources & Collections, University of Utah

Reported by: Heather Miller (HMiller@uamail.albany.edu) - University of Albany

Previously published in Against the Grain, v.23 #1, February 2011

Anderson characterized library practices as “less sane” (ILL, big deals including subscription and approval plans, reference, bibliographic instruction, redundant cataloging and print runs) and “more sane” (document delivery, Wikipedia, shared cataloging, ease of use, print on demand and patron driven acquisitions). Graphical interfaces have made the library’s walls very fuzzy and the library huge. Game changers in the next five years: budget weakness, Google Books, Hathi Trust, patron driven options, and the Espresso Book Machine. Anderson expects Google Books, with its discoverability and availability, and Hathi Trust, due to its size, robustness, trustworthy archiving and effective metadata, to essentially replace the library. He described the Espresso Book Machine, in use at the University of Utah library, as “the coolest thing I have ever seen;” it will drive innovation. Utah has experienced a high demand for self-publishing and for blank books. There are opportunities for the library to publish unique materials and to partner with the university press. Anderson noted that we are not yet where we can go to a completely patron driven acquisitions model, that even for general collections all material is not available electronically, budgeting is difficult in a patron driven model and that this will exclude special collections. Nevertheless, we need a North Star to set our sights on – easy, immediate access to all books and articles. We won’t reach it, but need to stay focused on it.

A CONSORTIUM FOR SHARING PRIMARY MATERIALS

Speaker: Joseph J. Esposito - CEO, GiantChair

Reported by: Heather Miller (HMiller@uamail.albany.edu) - University of Albany

Previously published in Against the Grain, v. 23 #1, February 2011

The proposal: Create a consortium of academic institutions to digitize and share important primary materials, starting with a detailed plan defining goals and issues, carefully delineated governance structure and carefully controlled membership. Esposito proposed starting with five founding institutions, each digitizing a particular collection of importance and scope, all having access to each others’ collections. Primary documents would present fewer problems at first and could provide a test platform for other content types. The consortium would be run by a strong management team, not at the board level. This team would create a business plan, obtain start up grants, set up an advisory committee and develop policies (including setting a membership fee). He foresees such a consortium having enormous leverage with costs remaining steady while value grows. Numerous issues will arise, but he noted that sometimes thinking too big and worrying too much about potential problems gets in the way of getting