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And They Were There-Reports of Meetings-The Charleston Conference 1996 and the Faxon Institute

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And They Were There

Reports of Meetings

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*ATG encourages reports on meetings. Please contact **Sever Bordeianu** if you are interested in reporting on a meeting or in suggesting a meeting for review by ATG! — KS*

Musings Regarding the "Money Talks" Conference: Charleston 1996

Report by **Janet L. Flowers**
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The Charleston Conference is a rich resource for the continuing education of those working with the scholarly communication processes of publication, distribution, and access. In reflecting upon the meeting this year, I saw the following threads throughout the many presentations: an increased level of cooperation among the players, more consortial arrangements, and a greater awareness (as a result of experience) of the investments technology requires. However, it was the fact that we are now describing the results of collaborative efforts rather than talking about the need to talk that impressed me most about the various reports.

William Snyder, Chancellor of the University of Tennessee, rightly described providing information technology as imperative for those in higher education. As Dr. Snyder so aptly put it, the role of the teacher in the future will be not the "sage on the stage" but the "guide on the side." In addition to noting the need for a solid infrastructure to deliver information to our customers, Dr. Snyder pointed out that we must deal with information overload and the need to move from collecting data to organizing it into information to conceptualizing it into knowledge.

James Stephens, of EBSCO Industries, described the impacts of change upon us all and advised the audience to understand their missions, points of impact from change, and ways of testing the results of change. Both he and Dr. Snyder emphasized the need for an understanding of the customer's needs.

Charles McClure, Professor from Syracuse University, invited the audience to consider the decisions and implications of making the Internet accessible to our users. He offered six models of access and indicated that librarians must decide how they are going to deal with this new resource because it will not go away.

Karen Hunter, of Elsevier, was the

fourth keynote speaker. Her talk, "Things that keep me awake at night," addressed concerns about the time and expense in providing electronic products. She noted various new developments such as more consortial arrangements, the need to define user communities, the lack of clarity regarding the interlibrary loan aspects of the electronic environment, parallel publishing, short-term archival access, long-term archival access, and pricing. On a positive note, she expressed the opinion that publishers have come a long way and learned a lot about electronic publishing within the last 5 years.

Skimming over the other panels, here are a few ideas I gleaned. The CEO panel discussion centered around the concept of partnerships of various agencies with one another. For example, **Dan Halloran**, of Academic Book Center, described three relationships ranging from excellent to poor. The one that he thought was very promising was that of a new SDI service offered by **ABC** and **UnCover** whereby

Academic will notify a customer of the new titles just treated on approval based upon a subject profile. The excellent one is that of the **PromptCat** project whereby the vendors, **OCLC**, and the Library are benefiting from efforts to streamline technical processing. The area he thinks needs greater coordination is that between the library systems vendors and the library materials vendors. He cited the need for the ILS vendors to keep the materials vendors informed about changes in their products affecting the supply and invoicing of materials.

At least two sessions — in what is becoming a regular part of the conference — dealt with legal matters. **William Hannay**, a lawyer with Schiff Hardin & Waite, updated the audience on the latest developments related to fair use and copyright issues. **Marcia Tuttle**, Serials Librarian at UNC-CH, detailed some considerations when dealing with licenses for electronic materials. While not declaring

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Americans rank first in many areas, but per-capita spending on books is not one of them. One study shows that American per-capita spending ranked third. Germans spent the most with Spain second. Following the U.S. was Great Britain, fourth, Japan, fifth, and Italy, sixth.

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that a law degree is essential, she did advocate for librarians to pay much closer attention to the contracts they are signing and to learn legalese.

In the **Hyde Park** session, there was much discussion about how libraries are coping with the inclusion of electronic purchases into their budgets and collections. The idea of using a technology fee from the students attracted a lot of interest. So, also, did the issue of re-visiting the budget allocation approaches of various libraries. Although most libraries did not use an allocation formula for their materials budgets, many noted that they are relaxing the distinctions and divisions among lines in the budget to allow more flexibility and greater responsiveness in meeting funding needs.

Chuck Hamaker's talk about ongoing analysis of the serials collection (access and use) at Louisiana State University generated a large number of questions from the audience. Chuck described the serials cancellation projects there and the new access program though **UnCover**. Using statistics, he illustrated that the journals actually requested by the 6,000 faculty and graduate students who were given access to UnCover often were not those identified by the faculty as the most important ones to own. He attributed this discrepancy to the fact that UnCover had revealed titles about which the faculty had not known and illustrated the significance of interdisciplinary materials in research. He is continuing to gather data and plans to publish an article with the results.

After the emphasis upon knowledge about other areas such as publishing, electronic pricing models, legal matters, etc., it was useful to have a session for managers dealing with change. **Jack Montgomery's** talk, "Technical Services Reorganization," really was a tutorial for managers on dealing with the rapid changes in the environment around them. He stressed how the manager needs to be aware of the impact of change upon employees and the stages they go through in the change process. One particularly provocative suggestion from Jack was for managers to think about what will change in each position within their department as the result of some change. The manager should think what each person stands to lose as well as to gain. He or she should also think about what is over for everyone as a result of the change. Finally, the manager should develop a vision to share with the staff. Jack's talk was the last one I was able to attend and it brought me back to the day-to-day reality of what it is like being an acquisitions manager these days. While we are absorbing much of the information presented at the conference and learning new skills (especially technological ones), we still have an obligation to our staffs — in whatever type of organization — to serve as change masters.

Editor's note: Please note that reports on the 1996 Charleston Conference have also appeared in the following publications — ACQNET, AALL newsletter, CRIV sheet, Choice, Library Journal, and RQ. — KS

The Faxon Institute: The Colloquium on Scholarly Communications Issues, February 12 & 13, 1997.
Renaissance Mayflower Hotel,
Washington, D.C.

Report by **Tom Leonhardt**
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This colloquium, sponsored by the **Faxon Institute**, was actually its third conference. The second Institute meeting was held in Reston, Virginia in May 1992 and titled "Listening to Users: Case Studies in Building Electronic Communities" a follow up theme from the inaugural conference held the year before. In April 1991, the Faxon Institute for Advanced Studies in Scholarly and Scientific Communication held its first annual conference in Reston, Virginia. The title of the conference was "Creating User Pathways to Electronic Information." As reported in the Conference Program and General Information, "This landmark conference is a key step for the Faxon Institute in defining its mission to improve the quality and effectiveness of scholarly communication."

The keynote speaker was **Michael Schrage** (author of *Shared Minds*, Random House, 1990 and revised as *No More Teams*, Currency Doubleday, 1995) who talked about how electronic tools and technologies were reshaping relationships from communication activities to collaboration processes. The irony of this pep talk about electronic collaboration and communication is that the electronic preconference did not generate the participation that was hoped for. This was through no fault of the organizers whose planning and vision was ahead of the times.

The conference itself, in a peaceful, rural setting, was a success. Schrage's address stimulated debate over the next two days about discovering user needs, electronic libraries, creating new electronic information tools, information services for researchers, shared access options, electronic publishing, and designing the future. This was to be the first of regular annual conferences but after the next year's, the Faxon Institute faded from sight. It did not go away.

Decades later, or so it seems in this swirling world of information technology, the 1997 Faxon Institute resurfaced...

Imagine a delicious meal shared with colleagues from all over the United States. While enjoying coffee and dessert, **Stephen Jay Gould** is introduced as the evening's speaker and well into the night the audience is held spellbound while the Harvard Professor of Geology and Curator of Invertebrate Paleontology, Museum of Comparative Zoology, Cambridge,

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Massachusetts entertains and educates at once.

After being introduced, Gould took off his jacket, rolled up his sleeves, and went to work. He talked about pivotal moments, for example, Lincoln's and Darwin's birthdays. He pointed out that the term cultural revolution is an inappropriate, inaccurate phrase. Evolution does not equal progress. He talked about progressive gradualism, the crux that we are in, and quirky functional shifts. As Gould talked, he showed slides to illustrate the points he was making. Although the talk was about evolution and paleontology, it fit the theme of the conference and made it clear that we sometimes jump to false conclusions as we get caught up in our pet issues, print versus electronic journals, for example. What a perfect start to a conference about a subject that has been discussed, ad nauseam at times, for more than a decade. Perhaps we have been going about it in the wrong way. Perhaps electronic capabilities are not necessarily blessings or progress, merely a quirky, shifting crux.

The next morning, as we finished our breakfast, the Librarian of Congress Emeritus, **Daniel Boorstin**, former Preston and Sterling Morton Distinguished Service Professor at the University of Chicago, spoke to us about the four ages of media: The Age of the Spoken Word; The Age of the Written Word; The Age of the Printed Word; The Age of the Electronic Word. The age of the spoken word gave us the rise of literature — Homeric epics, ritual repetition, communal monuments, and communal pride; the age of the written word when literary works became personal; the age of printing was the age of the market, a vaguely defined market that saw the landmark copyright act of 1709 in England and the U.S. copyright act of 1790. This was also the age that introduced the bestseller fashioned by public opinion; the age of the electronic word is also the age of broadcasting and the increasing dominance or predominance of information and the importance of creating an impression.

Boorstin stated that each age offered new ways of creativity and discovery and that each illustrates three fallacies: the displacement fallacy — new ways of doing things do not necessarily displace the old; the simplistic fallacy whereby we wrongly measure value by size; and the finalistic fallacy whereby we mistakenly predict the finality of something, for example, the end of the book.

The speakers and their topics offered perfect backdrops for the roundtables that followed and the two moderators, keys to the successful discussions, reminded participants of some of the keynotes offered earlier. Even so, librarians and publishers are so close to the subject and have been

discussing it, rationally and hysterically at different times, that it occurred to many, at conference end, that perhaps it was time for others to get involved, scholars and academic administrators who might have a different take on the problem, not necessarily ever defined and certainly not agreed on, and who might be able to find a solution.

An especially effective component of this conference was the inclusion of all participants (press not included) on round tables. The overall quality of the discussions was high, largely due to the skills of top-notch moderators whose job it was to keep on task and subject and to allow all round table members equal opportunity to be heard. The two moderators, **Robert C. Heterick, Jr.** (President of **EDUCOM**) and **Robert Siegel** (host of **National Public Radio's All Things Considered**), alternated and worked with two round tables each. Heterick, of course, knows the issues and has been an influential leader in the information technology arena for many years. Siegel, a true outsider, was especially effective at asking probing questions and getting close to an equal number of responses from each person in his groups, even from some who might have been happier sitting and listening. In fact, having an intelligent, skilled interviewer from outside higher education and publishing proved to be an effective way of moving discussion along in unforced ways that those of us close to the subject would probably not do. Forced to answer the dumb, obvious, or naive question can lead to insights, if we can answer them, that don't necessarily follow from leading questions coming from our own biases and leanings or simply from our own familiarity with the territory.

The four round-table topics were: 1) Creation of Scholarly Information; 2) Distribution of Scholarly Communication; 3) Ownership of Scholarly Communication; and 4) Economics of Scholarly Communication. In discussing the creation of scholarly information, one publisher stated that publishers would not be part of the informal dissemination of information that is already taking place among scholars. Then someone asked what this web of information should be — articles linked to sources? Will publishers, librarians, and scholars have different roles in this web of information. One panelist was sure they would be different.

On ownership, one panelist said that the publisher role of the future would be editorial. Another was not sure what role publishers would play as faculty begin to create their own research and publications. Libraries and publishers will ignore this new development at their own peril.

The discussion about the economics of scholarly information elicited few comments but among them were observations about libraries taking a more business-like attitude and leveraging resources.

*The highest price ever paid
for a printed book was
\$5,390,000 in 1987. It
was for a 1455 Gutenberg
Bible. The buyer was the
Japanese bookseller,
Maruzen Co., Ltd.*

There was note of public policy issues now being discussed on campuses and that within the electronics versus costs issue, models will change and will vary among libraries.

Perhaps it was the late hour or perhaps it was having heard the other three discussions without being able to speak that led to the liveliest discussion of the day — on the distribution of scholarly information. Stating the obvious, one library director reminded the audience that electronic information is just one part of what university libraries do (make that all libraries). Libraries will be more different from each other as we meet unique local needs.

When standards, reliability, and archiving finally came up in discussion, one librarian reminded us of the National Periodicals Center model and the need for backup and standardization.

In each discussion, electronic publication and delivery was a runaway train. No one considered stopping it or even slowing it down. This led to some predictable comments but by the end of the conference there was a hint of something else going on. The moderators, in their probing, created some doubts in our minds about the real issues and solutions. Perhaps we don't have all the answers and perhaps we aren't even asking the right questions.

Gould and Boorstin were prophetic in their remarks. New technologies do not equate with progress but often bring about quirky functional shifts that create the crux we are in. And within our crux we have fallen victim to the fallacies of displacement, the simplistic, and the finalistic.

At the end of the conference it was suggested that some key players were missing — the scholars and creators of knowledge and the university administrators. This is where the power is and without a clear understanding by them of the issues, the real problem will remain, the problem that was touched on but not explicitly stated — we want good journals at reasonable costs and electronic journals that are just as expensive and that create other costly problems, are not the answer. Clearly, more discussion is needed within a broader group and it should begin, in future Faxon Institute colloquia, with no assumptions and no fallacies.