September 1997

And They Were There-Reports of Meetings-The VII Transborder Library Forum, NFAIS, and ALA

Sever Bordeianu
University of New Mexico

Julia Gelfand
University of California, Irvine

Follow this and additional works at: https://docs.lib.purdue.edu/atg

Part of the Library and Information Science Commons

Recommended Citation
Bordeianu, Sever and Gelfand, Julia (1997) "And They Were There-Reports of Meetings-The VII Transborder Library Forum, NFAIS, and ALA," Against the Grain: Vol. 9: Iss. 4, Article 25.
DOI: https://doi.org/10.7771/2380-176X.2227

This document has been made available through Purdue e-Pubs, a service of the Purdue University Libraries. Please contact epubs@purdue.edu for additional information.
And They Were There

Reports of Meetings

Column Editors: Sever Bordeianu (U. of New Mexico)
<sebordeia@unm.edu>
and Julia Gelfand (UC, Irvine)
<jgelfand@orion.oac.uci.edu>

VII Transborder Library Forum = VII Foro Transfronterizo de
Bibliotecas

Report by Ann Massmann and Elizabeth Steinhagen (U. of New Mexico
General Library)

This tri-national library conference, held in Ciudad Juarez (Mexico) February 20-22,
1997, attracted close to 300 participants from Mexico, Canada, and the US. Begun in 1991
in Arizona, with the idea of bringing Mexican and US librarians working in bordering
states closer together to exchange ideas on possible cooperative projects, it has been
held since then in alternating US and Mexican locations. A few years ago, Canadian
librarians were also invited to participate, especially those living close to the US bor-
der, but given the geography of the area, the
majority of the participants have normally
come from the US-Mexican border states.

Appropriately titled "Building information
bridges = Construyendo puentes
informativos," the Seventh Forum was sym-
bolized by a bridge spanning books and computers, representing also the several
bridges that connect the two countries across
the Rio Grande, called Rio Bravo on the
Mexican side. Ciudad Juarez is a sister city
of El Paso, and the population from both
sides of the border make this area the largest
two-nation urban settlement, with nearly 1.5
million inhabitants. The ambitious 3-day pro-
gram, developed by Dr. J. Lau, Chair of the
Organizing Committee and Director of the
Library of Universidad Autonoma de
Ciudad Juarez, included among others,
preconference workshops on Web-page de-
sign, an update on information resources
available on the Internet, on OPAC choices,
and a number of simultaneous sessions of
interest to librarians working in user ser-
dices, user education, with archives, and in
technical services.

There were a number of general sessions
and panels devoted to the overall issues and
problems facing libraries in the global envi-
ronment. Guest and keynote speakers in-
cluded Barbara J. Ford, incoming ALA
President, and her Mexican colleague, Elsa
M. Ramirez, President of the Mexican
Library Association (AMBAC), Phyllis B.
Spies, International Vice-President of
OCLC, Sylvia Piggott, President of SLA,
and Guadalupe Carrion, formerly very
involved in training and education of Mexi-
can librarians and at present Executive of
Information Resources at INFOTEC, a li-

bary consulting firm.

Catalogers on both sides of the border
were very interested in discussions and pre-
sentations having to do with retrospective
and ongoing cataloging and, especially, with
continued on page 66
activities of their archives, including current collecting and access projects. The institutions differ by type (a state, a university, and a religious archive), but all three have a common link through Spanish Colonial archives. In the U.S.-Mexico border region, archives represent a natural area of transborder information sharing. Numerous archives on both sides of the border contain resources which reflect the common Spanish and Mexican governmental and religious structures which once spanned the area that today is divided by an international boundary. In addition to the historical and geographic links, these archival records cross borders for reasons of use as well, since transborder academic and community interest has steadily increased over past decades.

Kinga Perzynska, the Director of the Catholic Archives of Texas in Austin made the first presentation, speaking on the history and holdings of her institution. The archive holds a range of church records, including: a Spanish and Mexican Manuscript Collection, 1519-1890; Ecclesiastic Records, 1703-1881; and Religious Orders in Mexico Records, 1690-1812. Three years ago, the Archives published The Guide to the Spanish and Mexican Manuscript Collection at the Catholic Archives of Texas (Perzynska, and Dedra S. McDonald, compilers, 1994). This guide is the major access tool for researchers and was made possible through federal NHPRC funds.

Alfonso Vasquez Sotelo, Director of the Instituto Estatal de Documentacion in Saltillo, Coahuila, detailed his state archives and records management agency’s forward-looking projects. They have been particularly active in assisting and training the area’s municipal archives employees as well as state employees in records management and preservation. The Instituto has digitized its holdings of colonial documents and is currently creating a CD-ROM with images and text. Demonstrating the archives’ place in both the digital and the media age, Vasquez also showed a video presentation to profile the archives’ activities.

Walter Brem, Assistant Curator of the Bancroft Collections (Latin Americana), University of California at Berkeley, was the third presenter, giving an overview of the Bancroft Library’s collections. The Bancroft is one of the pre-eminent collections of materials relating to Mexico, Central America, and the U.S. West and Southwest, including both primary and secondary source materials on these areas. Of particular note are the electronic access projects at the Bancroft, including the Berkeley Finding Aid Project, which began in 1993 to develop a prototype standard for encoding archive and library finding aids in the form of an SGML DTD. Since 1995, the developing standard was renamed Encoded Archival Description (EAD) and has been worked on in conjunction with the Library of Congress and the Society of American Archivists. Further information is available from the Bancroft Library’s Website <http://www.lib.berkeley.edu:BANC>

The archival session was chaired by Claudia Rivers, Head of Special Collections at the University of Texas at El Paso Library. She stressed the commonalities of the different institutions relating to acquisitions, preservation and access of their materials. She also expressed the hope that this session would be a step toward more communication and cooperation between Mexican and U.S. archivists.

Some of the discussion groups centered their efforts on professional education and exchange options. At this time, there are six library schools in Mexico, but the total number of graduates comes to about 2,500 since 1945, which in a country as large as Mexico, is obviously not enough to satisfy current needs. At present there is no accreditation process for library schools, since the universities are constitutionally guaranteed absolute autonomy. The graduates of these programs obtain a “licenciatura,” which, according to Prof. Nahum Perez of the Escuela Nacional de Biblioteconomia y Archivonmnia (ENBA), corresponds to somewhere between an American Bachelors’ and Masters’ degrees. Thus there is great interest in continuing education, in exchanges with U.S. librarians, in becoming more knowledgeable about new technologies, and in the use of the English language.

At one of the discussion groups, called “Transborder Cooperation and the FORO,” two librarians (Karen Stabler, of New Mexico State University, and Amelia Chavez, of Centro de Investigacion Cientifica y de Educacion Superior de Ensenada), talked about the exchange projects in which they have been involved. A lively discussion followed the presentations, with participants and the presenters providing suggestions for increased cooperative efforts between librarians in both countries. Educational benefits were mentioned as important for both the exchange librarian and the host institution and several attendees also brought up the need for specific efforts from library and archival organizations. For example, the Texas Library Association now has a Texas-Mexico Re- continued on page 67
For the U.S. libraries tours, participants crossed the international bridge, to the University of Texas at El Paso (UTEP) Library and to the New Mexico State University (NMSU) Library. Librarians on the UTEP tour were especially impressed by the large number of special collection and rare books in Spanish, as well as a large collection of books on Pancho Villa. Buildings on the UTEP campus feature a unique architectural style, adapted to resemble that of the dry, mountainous country of Bhutan, near the Indian-Chinese border region. The library building is one of the newer and most notable examples of this style, modeled after a Buddhist monastery.

Twenty-five Mexican librarians participated in the tour of the NMSU libraries, which showcased a brand new science and technology building, as well as a newly renovated building for the social sciences. The librarians were particularly interested in the full-text Web databases in use by the libraries, as well as a CD-ROM LAN. NMSU also has a new electronic classroom, with 24 Pentium PCs used for online and research instruction.

All three institutions (UACJ, UTEP and NMSU) played an important role in the success of FORO VII. They also counted on assistance from the El Paso Community College Learning Resource Center and the three area library associations: the Border Regional Library Association (El Paso, Juarez, and Las Cruces libraries); the Texas Library Association, District 6; and the El Paso Chapter of Reforma (National Association to Promote Library Services to the Spanish Speaking).

NFAIS — National Federation of Abstracting and Information Services

Report by Judy Luther
jluther@earthlink.net

The NFAIS (National Federation of Abstracting and Information Services) annual conference was held in Philadelphia on February 23-26 in the Park Hyatt at the Bellevue with the theme “Publishing in the New Millennium II: Managing the Transition; Product Development and Marketing on the Wide Web. Dick Kaser, Executive Director of NFAIS, noted that this year’s conference had a practical focus compared to last year’s visionary approach.

Bob Massie, Director of Chemical Abstracts Service, in his keynote address titled “The Future is Now,” presented data on the rapid growth of the Web pointing out that 25% of the 828,000 domains were (.com) commercial hosts. Bob noted that the Web has impacted our business in four ways.

continued on page 68
And They Were There
from page 67

Disintermediation occurs when Web interfaces are used to provide access to information, rather than rely on traditional content providers who are now on the Web. Although there are lower barriers to entry for companies with powerful search engines, content providers are often the only source of backfiles of high quality data. The Web offers customers the opportunity to aggregate information from a variety of sources, and content providers are countering with value-added services such as combining corporate data with data from the content provider. Increased customer expectations for speed, utility, and features, are prompting rapid development schedules and new pricing policies.

A Panel titled “Seeing is Believing: Using the Web for Publishing Initiatives to create Circular A-130 addressing federal information, noted the two areas needing more development: the collection of data from the states, such as birth/death records, and the need for records management, such as rules regarding the destruction of tapes and diskettes by the White House.

David Lipman, from the National Center for Biotechnology Information described the capability in PubMed to search by protein sequences and structures and then link to related sequences and articles. Don Johnson, from the National Technical Information Service (NTIS) presented creative arrangements that have developed to extend the availability and enhance the utility of federal publications. Jane Bortnick Griffith from the Congressional Information Service identified new information issues on the hill. Joe Ebersole, an attorney and David Mirchin from SilverPlatter spoke to copyright and the Internet.

Wednesday morning focused on dealing with the issues raised by library consortia. Julia Blixrud from the Association of Research Libraries set the stage by pointing out that there is no clear definition of consortia, so publishers are confronted with diverse groups wanting to load data centrally, be billed collectively or simply have a discounted price for all member institutions. Ann Okerson from Yale University noted that half of the 30 consortia who meet collectively in St. Louis, fund projects from existing budgets.

Mike Johnson, Director of CHEST (U.K.’s Combined Higher Education Software Team) gave a humorous comparison of negotiations in the U.S. vs. the U.K. concluding that although there are the same vendors, interests and problems, the beer in the U.K. is definitely better. Tom Sanville, Executive Director of OhioLink, offered a checklist for publishers including: content, quality of the data, nature of the interface, and the ability to integrate the database with other activities. Libraries want to own, not rent, data and access to archival copies is necessary.

Ken Metzner, from Academic Press spoke about their experiences in site licensing the PDF full text files of 175 journals. Pricing under the subscription model does not address usage and there are a host of questions about how to use the data collected in determining future pricing models. Marcia Kaufman from Engineering Information offered a good summary of publisher concerns, noting that publishers are interested in more deals. Jay Trolley from the Institute for Scientific Information noted the transition from print to electronic in the last nine years reached 74% of sales at ISI. Libraries want flexible and consistent licensing policies.

Clifford Lynch, from the University of California, offered his perspectives in con-

continued on page 69
San Francisco — ALA Annual Conference, report on “post-outourcing”

Report by Elizabeth N. Steinhagen (U. of New Mexico)

At the recent ALA Annual Conference, held in San Francisco June 27 to July 2, 1997, outsourcing was no longer the hot issue it had been during the two previous years. However, and although some librarians appear to have accepted the situation, or at least have learned to adapt to it, it is still an important and controversial topic. Several programs had been planned for the conference discussing the pros and cons as well as the results of some major outsourcing plans, such as the Hawaii fiasco.

One of these post-outsourcing sessions, titled “Vendor Supplied Cataloging: The Pros and Cons” was held June 30, 1997. A panel consisting of three technical services librarians and a vendor explored some of the benefits and disadvantages of contract cataloging by an outside vendor. Cynthia Whitacre, manager of OCLC’s Technical Processing Department, talked about the various services available from the utility to help libraries deal with new acquisitions or backlogs. PromptCat, a batch cataloging service for mostly new titles will have a new release in September of 1997. OCLC is now working with eight vendors and about 40 libraries to provide MARC records with their new, mostly approval plan books. Later in the fall, through phase 2, they will be able to supply files of label sets, with copy and or volume information, location data, and alternate call numbers, if required. TechPro is a customized contract cataloging service for all formats and is used by libraries mainly for special projects, including serials cataloging or conversion. In addition, other services available are retrocon, bibliographic records, and authority control.

Next, Dawn Bastian and John Blosser, of Northwestern University talked about a workflow study conducted at their library to compare the costs of searching OCLC and cataloging in-house to the cost of PromptCat MARC record services. They examined and priced out four approval book workflows in-house to make this comparison. As part of the study’s overview, they considered changes in the current in-house workflow which may yield better cost efficiency than any gained with outsourcing part of the workload.

After analyzing the results of the various workflows, they discovered that more cost savings are likely to be gained through refining the workflows than by adopting PromptCat at this time. While the cheapest workflow calls for OCLC searching and cataloging to be done at point of receiving by lower staff level, they may still adopt the most efficient — but not cheapest — workflow, which calls for searching and cataloging to be done at point of receipt by only one staff person, but at a higher classification. Through consultation with other libraries, the authors have concluded that using PromptCat has made the most positive impact in smaller academic libraries where turn-around times have been reduced with significant cost savings through outsourcing.

To learn more, check out Faxon’s newly-designed web page at www.faxon.com

Call Faxon today at 1-800-766-0039, ext. 503 or e-mail: sales@faxon.com

continued on page 93
**ADVERTISERS’ INDEX**

43 ACADEMIC PRESS
29 ACCENTS
95 ALFRED JAEGGER
65 AMBASSADOR
13 AM INSTITUTE OF PHYSICS
39 AMIGO
41 ANNUAL REVIEWS
87 ASHGALE
5 ATG
61 AUX AMATEURS DE LIVRES
7 BAKER & TAYLOR
3 BLACKWELL'S
75 BLACKWELL'S
77 BOOK HOUSE
85 BOWKER
78 BROADWATER
31 BROADART
15 CARL CORP.
81 CASALINI
91 COGNIZANT COMMUNICATIONS
89 COLUMIA U. PRESS
67 COUTTS
63 DE Gruyter

25 DICTIONARY OF ART
35 EASTERN BOOK
47 EBSCO INFORMATION SERVICES
69 FAXON
45 GREENWICH
11 INFORMATION QUEST
51 INSTITUTE OF PHYSICS
2 JAEGGER GLOBAL ENTERPRISES
73 MAJORS
19 McGRAW HILL
94 MIDWEST LIBRARY
33 READMORE
53 RICH, LLOYD
57 SCHONHOF FOREIGN BOOKS
27 STOCKTON
21 SWETS
37 UMI
71 WESTVIEW PRESS
9 WILEY
17 WILEY
23 WILEY
59 YBP

*Back Talk*

from page 94

and identified my favorites. I invite you to send me <ferguson@columbia.edu> your suggestions on any other alternatives that occur to you, or ideas on which of the listed alternatives you think should be adopted. I will collect them and feature them in a future column. I fear that unless we develop more innovative solutions to the STM journal pricing problem, we will have a lot in common with the frog in the warming water. By the time we discover it’s not a Jacuzzi tub, it will be too late. 😞

<http://www.against-the-grain.com>