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Random Ramblings -- Introductions

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As I See It!
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It is instructive that this innovation should not emanate from an innovative commercial publisher, but from the publishing division of an international bureaucracy. **OECD** is a treaty-based organization with 30 member states that works on the economic, social and environmental challenges of globalization. Its publishing division disseminates **OECD** research and statistics both online and in print. Its publishing has the same characteristics as many monograph publishers, whether commercial, societies or university presses: small quantities required for specialist readership.

Clearly entrepreneurial publishing development is not the sole province of the commercial sector, much though commercial publishers would like to pretend that it is. **OECD's** own online publishing has been well ahead of the field in providing tools and functionality that enables the reader to download, manipulate and visualize data. As for print, **OECD** itself is quite clear that more **OECD** books will be printed on demand locally, as distribute and print technology develops.

The benefit to the customer is clear. As soon as an order is placed, a book can be produced and supplied. No longer will US customers for books published in Europe or Asia-Pacific have to wait for stock to be shipped across the seas. The further away from the major centers of publishing the customer is — e.g., libraries in Australia, New Zealand — the greater the benefit. Books that today take two to three months to deliver if they are not in stock locally will be available within a day or two — in under three minutes if the customer is on-site.

The implications for publishers are equally striking. Distribute and print replaces the centralized book distribution supply chain, where the publisher holds stock in its warehouse and supplies its local wholesalers, retailers and library vendors, and its overseas distributors. What takes its place is a de-centralized distribution system where digital files are distributed by the publisher, but book production is undertaken locally to meet consumer or library orders as, when and where they arise. Not only does this remove shipping costs, but it also reduces the publisher's inventory — the costs of printing and holding stock — and reduces the amount of money tied up in financing that inventory. It also reduces waste by reducing the number of unsold copies held in stock that eventually have to be written off and pulped.

The financial implications for the publishing industry are huge. Not only are the direct costs of distributing physical stock reduced, but publisher's investment in inventory — the stock they hold in their warehouses waiting to be sold — can be reduced. By reducing inventory, cash is released for investing in new publishing, or reducing the publisher's bank borrowing. At the extreme, the availability of that cash can be the difference between survival and bankruptcy. It also reduces the investment barrier — the amount of money needed — to enter the publishing business, so more publishers with new ideas can enter the market.

In thinking aloud, **Toby Green**, **OECD's** Head of Publishing, forecasts more flexibility in publishing to meet local needs: "So, in the case of Australia we can pull together all the chapters about Australia that have appeared in our books over the past twelve months and offer them as a compilation just in that market. This has not been economically feasible before. So, alongside the launch of *Sustainable Development* we'll be launching *Australia at a Glance*." Slicing and dicing books is not new. It is well established in textbook publishing, where the major publishers all offer "custom publishing," where an instructor can select chapters from a range of different books in the publisher's list to create a book tailored exactly to his/her students' learning requirements. This may not be relevant to monographs as discrete works of scholarship, but may develop in other forms of academic and professional publishing, such as handbooks and some types of reference, as well as in disciplines where local cultures and requirements prevail.

The environmental implications are just as important. The incoming US administration has announced already that it will engage directly with the rest of the world in pursuing an environmental agenda that addresses carbon emissions and global warming. The timing is right for the publishing industry in the US and internationally to put into practice low-emission processes and prove its environmental credentials.

Many publishers, including **Harper Collins**, **Oxford University Press**, **Bloomsbury**, **Macmillan**, **Pearson Education**, etc... — are already using accredited environmentally-friendly paper. Such paper is grown in responsibly managed forests to the standards established by the **Forest Stewardship Council (FSC)** and certified (Chain of Custody certification) that the wood used comes from certified forests. The **FSC** itself was established in 1990 to set standards for responsible forest management. It accredits independent third party organizations who can certify forest managers and forest product producers to **FSC** standards. Its accreditation provides international recognition to organizations that support responsible forest management. **FSC** paper is ethically produced with the least impact on the environment both in terms of its carbon footprint and its impact on the people, plants and wildlife of the forest (see *www.fsc.org*).

In 2007 the **Book Industry Study Group** and **Green Press** published a calculation that the industry emits 8.8 lbs, or nearly four kg, of carbon for every book published. And we publish 100,000 new titles each year, in quantities ranging from a few hundred to millions of copies of best sellers. Much of this carbon is generated by the removal of trees from the forest (somewhat offset by new tree planting), and to paper production and printing processes. Much is also due to unsold books, which provide no benefit to anybody, but merely consume carbon by being stored in warehouses that use energy for heating and lighting, and eventually release further carbon if and when they are pulped or incinerated. Why do publishers end up with unsold stock? One of the reasons for such wastage is that publishers have to calculate an optimum print run on the basis that the cost of printing a few more copies when the presses are already set up to go is less than that of restarting the process from scratch to reprint if sales are better than expected.

However, the supply chain itself is a significant component of the carbon footprint, dramatically increasing as the distance to the customer increases. **OECD** reckons that each copy sold in distant markets such as Australia using distribute and print will save over 12 lbs, or 5.8kg, in carbon emissions per book sold, simply by producing locally rather than air-freighting from its central warehouse. It makes no sense to print and distribute books with low print runs such as monographs centrally, when technology enables us to save money and help the planet.

So we now have a practical demonstration of a technology that saves the publisher money, improves service to customers, creates local publishing opportunities, reduces the barrier to entry into publishing, and is environmentally friendly. The wonder is why we have had to wait so long!

Random Ramblings — Introductions

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I jumped at the chance to write a column for ***Against the Grain*** when **Katina** asked me. Since I'm a professor of library and information science at **Wayne State University**, I get rewarded for scholarly research. I nonetheless prefer writing shorter, more practical pieces that others will perhaps use in their professional lives. I also don't like the stuffy scholarly style where I have to be "the author" instead of "I" or "me."

For this first column, I'll tell a bit about my background in collection development, my research interests, and general plans for future columns. I had the great misfortune to graduate with a PhD in French literature from **Yale University** in 1971 — the first year of the PhD glut. I decided that I needed to earn some money to tide me over for another year of job searching and took a library assistant position at **Yale's Sterling Memorial Library** in the Catalog Department. I worked in the Science Section, Subject Cataloging Division, Catalog Department. I did copy cataloging, maintained the subject authority list, typed cross references for the public catalog, and filed cards for the

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two hours required of almost all catalog department staff.

Seven months later I was in library school at **Columbia University** since the program at **Southern Connecticut State College** had not yet received **ALA** accreditation. With a two course credit for my advanced degree, I graduated in summer 1973 and took a position as cataloger in the Social Science Section, Subject Cataloging Division. I became the head of this small unit the next year when the group leader left for another job. In 1975, I made one of the most important moves of my career to become Assistant to the Head of the Catalog Department. My boss, **Mildred Dugas**, was an excellent mentor who gave me opportunities to learn about the workings of a large academic research library. My responsibilities included dealing with problems from other library units so that I had my first work contacts with outside units including acquisitions and collection development. My most frequent task was to find in-process books that were listed in a microform one entry list — book hunts as we called them. I also learned more about acquisitions and preservation/conservation from the meetings of the technical services managers.

In 1979, I started looking for a new job with increased responsibilities. I almost didn't apply for a position as Assistant Director of Technical Services at the **University of Utah** because the advertisement stressed qualifications in acquisitions and collection development that I didn't have. Much to my surprise, I not only got an interview but was offered the position. I eagerly accepted and headed out West over the holiday break.

I started on January 2, 1980 and faced the greatest professional challenge of my career. **Margaret Landesman**, then Head of Acquisitions, helped me make it through a difficult transitional year and initiated me into the mysteries of acquisitions and collection development. While I supervised three units (acquisitions, cataloging, and serials), my office was located in acquisitions so that I got to know the people and processes better than I otherwise would have. I liked the business aspects of acquisitions including budgets, meeting with vendors, and accepting and evaluating gifts. With my doctorate, I became the French selector so that I had practical responsibilities in collection development in addition to being the chief collection development officer. While the selectors were mostly in public services, the library director believed in the separation of powers.

Much has changed since then. I don't miss the multiple-part order forms, the great difficulties in finding out-of-print books, and perhaps, most of all, the days before spreadsheets. I remember meeting with **Margaret Landesman** and the head of the accounting unit to check out the state of the acquisitions budget. The process could take several days as we all brought our calculators and adding machines to manipulate the figures until our heads were ready to explode. We each then took away "assignments" for a fresh start early the next morning. Perhaps my greatest accomplishment of this period was getting an agreement that technical services librarians with subject expertise could be assigned collection development responsibilities.

My next move was to become Associate Dean of Libraries at **Wayne State University** in 1988. The broadened responsibilities required learning about public services. While I was technically chief collection development officer, the principal duty was allocating the overall acquisitions budget since operational oversight occurred within the four individual libraries on campus and in acquisitions, a unit of technical services. I also got to do selection for French, the only task that I've continuously performed during my twenty plus years at **WSU**.

As an adjunct, I taught film studies at the **University of Utah** and library management in the Library & Information Science Program at **Wayne State University**. I was still surprised when my boss, **Peter Spyers-Duran**, Dean of Libraries, asked me if I wanted to become a full-time professor. I had a doctorate and a history of publication so that I moved over to the LIS Program in fall 1993. I was even more surprised when I was asked to become Program Director when **Joseph Mika** announced his decision to step down a few months later. I then faced the second greatest challenge of my professional career as I hastened to learn the intricacies of academic management.

Sometime during this period, I taught collection development for the first time. I would need to research the Program's archives to get the exact date. Collection development is not a required course at **WSU** but is the most popular elective with multiple sections offered each semester. I've taught collection development in the classroom, with interactive television, in a mix of classroom/online, and now for the first time this semester totally online. I gave a presentation at the **2008 Charleston Conference** on how I teach this course and plan to talk more about teaching collection development in future columns.

In 1998, my career took another turn when **Dean Patricia Breivik** asked me to return to my former position as Associate Dean. I then became Interim Dean in 1999 when she left for **San Jose State**. When I wasn't chosen as permanent dean, I returned to my faculty position in 2001 for what I believe will be the last position in my professional career. My regular courses include: collection development, library management and administration, academic libraries, and occasionally grant proposal writing. Both management and especially academic libraries include materials related to collection development and to acquisitions.

One of the advantages of being a full professor with tenure is that I can have a broad range of research interests without negatively affecting my career. My current research focuses mostly on collection development. With a research award from *Library Collections, Acquisitions, and Technical Services*, I did a statistical study on changes in the out-of-print book market caused by the wide availability of both in-print and out-of-print books in secondary markets such as **Alibris**, **Amazon**, **Ebay**, and **Half.com**. The study showed high availability (95%) and decreased prices (-45% in constant dollars) from a sample of print materials in *AB Bookman's Weekly*. I have a second major study in process on scholarly materials in the sciences and also plan to write a book on libraries and the out-of-print market during my upcoming sabbatical leave.

I'm also interested in intellectual freedom, popular culture, and cooperative collection development. As second author, I have worked with students to get their papers published. One article dealt with electronic serials in a small specialized collection and another with Africana resources in four major research libraries. I have also written many reviews of books on collection development. Other activities include serving as a peer reviewer for *Collection Building* and several consulting projects.

Within **ALA**, I served four years on the RUSA CODES Materials Reviewing Committee including two years as chair and am now a member of the RUSA CODES Education for Collection Development Committee. I like public speaking and have presented several times, including at the **2006 Charleston Conference**, about my research on the out-of-print book market. At the **2008 ALA Annual Conference**, I helped organize and spoke at a program on "Reviews outside the Mainstream."

With this lengthy introduction out of the way, what do I want to cover in this column? Most likely a little bit of everything. One of my goals will be to remind readers of ***Against the Grain*** that there is more to collection development and acquisitions than what happens in large academic research libraries. I plan to talk about collection development in public, school, and special libraries. Only about 25% of my students in the collection development courses plan to work in academic libraries so that I try to keep aware of developments in all types of libraries. Looking at the broad range of exhibitors at the **ALA Annual Conference** should confirm the economic importance of collection development in other parts of the library market. My "surprise" qualification is that my spouse is a school library media specialist with an acquisitions budget of $17,000 so that I hear quite a bit about the issues in a small, one-librarian library.

I also hope to be a bit controversial at times. I don't know what the future will bring since the changes in the last decade have been profound. I also hope to hear from readers, especially if you disagree with what I have to say, since I love a good debate. I can be reached at <aa3805@wayne.edu>. Au revoir until next time.