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And They Were There — Reports of Meetings

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Digital Delivery of Scientific Information to Libraries: Perspectives on Today And Tomorrow — November 1997 — University of California, Irvine

Report by **Julia Gelfand** (University of California, Irvine)
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"Digital Delivery of Scientific Information to Libraries: Perspectives on Today & Tomorrow" was the focus of the Seminar Series hosted by the **Society of Scholarly Publishing** at the **University of California, Irvine** on November 14, 1997. The goal to bring together librarians, publishers, distributors, authors, editors and readers was indeed successful. The program introduced the issues and trends in getting science products to their users by a variety of different channels. Commercial publishing was represented by **Chrysanne Lowe** from **Academic Press** who introduced **Project IDEAL**, a product designed for consortial access offering fulltext access to all 176 of AP's journal list; the Not-for-Profit Publisher was represented by **Dr. Thomas McIlrath** from the **American Physical Society**; **Alec Karnacki** from **Cadmus** spoke on behalf of the **Publishers' Service Bureau**; **Isabel Czech** talked about Secondary Services such as **ISI**; and **Sharon Cline McKay**, from **Blackwell's Navigator**, described the role of the aggregator in this chain. The afternoon session was devoted to a user panel with input from UCI faculty members in Biophysics, Engineering and Chemistry. **Gerald Lowell** offered a very thoughtful and somewhat provocative commentary on the librarian's perspective, suggesting that the socioeconomic realities of today's research libraries do not always lend to an enthusiastic response to such a large menu of diverse choices of costly electronic resources. He identified concerns and challenges facing research libraries as they position themselves to make informed and wise choices. Seminars like this are very good at educating all parties about issues which impact the directions of electronic publishing and delivery. One thing remains for certain—the market is far from stable and there are no easy solutions to the complex problems of stretching resources and offering information in the format of choice with simple answers in how to search, retrieve, save, archive, print and deliver the product in an inexpensive, idiot-proof method to everyone's liking. The conversations and discussions were lively and exciting due to having so many parties in the publishing chain together.

VIII Transborder Library Forum — ForoTransfronterizo de Bibliotecas — Riverside, Calif., March 5-7, 1998

Report by **Elizabeth N. Steinhagen** (Section Head, Ibero American Materials Cataloging, University of New Mexico General Library) <ens1@unm.edu>

Several staff members from the University of New Mexico General Library traveled to Riverside, Calif. in early March, to attend this year's **VIII Transborder Forum**, organized by librarians of the **University of California, Riverside**. Held at the historic Mission Inn in that city, it was, again this year, an exciting and rewarding opportunity to network with over 200 colleagues from both sides of the US-Mexico border, and librarians from Canada.

Foro origins extend to 1989, when librarians from Arizona and Sonora (Mexico) found that there was a great need for better communication between colleagues in both countries. In 1990, Arizonan and Sonoran librarians invited their counterparts from both states and organized the first **Foro**, held in Rio Rico, Arizona. Librarians from Hermosillo, Sonora, hosted the group the following year and the conferences have taken place since then, every year, in alternating Mexican and US communities. From these informal first meetings, attendance has grown to over

300 participants, and those attending the **7th Foro** in Ciudad Juarez in 1997 were treated to presentations by several national association officials from all three countries.

This year in Riverside there was quite a variety of subject-oriented sessions, workshops, panel discussions, presentations, keynote speakers, and tours of local libraries for the attendees to choose from. There were also three evening programs, each with a different focus, highlighting the distinctiveness — and yet the sameness — of California as a member of the border region between the United States and Mexico. The images used throughout the planning process for this Forum reminded participants of their place in this border community. The United States and Mexico share over 2,000 miles of connectivity and most past Foros have met in border states of this region. The next **Foro**, the 9th, to be also held in California, in Mexicali, Baja California, March 4 to 6, 1999, has chosen the theme of "facing a new millennium of information." The **10th Foro**, also beginning and celebrating the new millennium, will commemorate the successful completion of the first decade of these conferences. It will come to New Mexico in early March 2000, to the city of Albuquerque, hosted by the **University of New Mexico**.

Many past **Foros**, as well as the most recent one in Riverside, have shared the same objectives. These were to strengthen linkages among librarians in Mexico and the United States, and Canada; to discuss cooperative opportunities beyond library borders and — indeed — political borders; to provide time for networking among professional colleagues; to provide an environment for sharing of resources; and, to appreciate the distinctive, yet similar, ways of life along our borders.

The conference was preceded by several workshops on such topics as total quality management, library services to children, Web page design and a meeting of participants in the **Foro** interlibrary loan project, which had begun last year and is a tangible outcome of one of the first cooperative projects of these conferences. Simultaneous interpretation was available at all sessions to accommodate participants not fluent in both languages. A vendor recognition reception, to recognize the vendors who had supported the **Foros** since their beginning, was held at the **Riverside Municipal Museum**, amid an extensive collection of artifacts from the region's native people.

A highly interesting keynote address delivered by the dean of the College of Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences of the **University of California, Riverside** opened the program of the first full day. He spoke about the pre-Colombian people living in this area who were continuously migrating north and south across what is today's artificial border between the two countries to exchange needed goods and produce. This led the audience to draw comparisons with today's need for information, which does not recognize boundaries either and which it is the mission of our profession to satisfy. The following sessions of the morning ran the gamut from challenges of local special collections and historical archives, to user training, to new strategies for collection development and paper presentations on accreditation of Mexican libraries and on an academic library that provides services to a predominantly Hispanic rural county in New Mexico.

The afternoon sessions followed with a variety of presentations on the future of the **Foros**, on indexing of electronic journals, on interlibrary loan efforts and on Spanish language publishing. A number of tours were also offered and the day ended on the UCR campus with a "Fiesta Old California" dinner and great entertainment.

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Biz of Acq — Creative Outsourcing

by **Narda Tafuri** (Acquisitions Librarian, Weinberg Memorial Library, U. of Scranton, Scranton, PA 18510) <Tafurini@uofs.edu>

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***Column Editor's Note:** Perhaps no topic receives more attention in the library literature today than outsourcing. Yet many librarians remain unsure about when to turn to outsourcing as a solution and how to implement outsourcing projects in a way that does not undermine the morale of permanent staff. In this column, Narda Tafuri, Acquisitions Librarian at Weinberg Memorial Library, University of Scranton describes an actual, successful outsourcing project in acquisitions. Three aspects of this project seem especially noteworthy — 1) the project was carefully tailored to accomplish a specific goal; 2) it did not involve eliminating permanent staff; 3) permanent staff proved to be indispensable in providing quality control and in solving problems the contractor could not address.*

In this article I hope to present some of the good points and bad points of outsourcing as encountered through personal experience. I think librarians would agree that not all outsourcing is a "bad thing." Issues of collection development aside, anything that can help save the time and effort of staff so that it can be re-directed from mundane tasks to more specialized functions can't be all bad. Outsourcing can be a way to add staff and/or supplies when there is no additional money for either.

What We Did

At Weinberg Memorial Library, University of Scranton, there was a need to "wrap up" a special acquisitions project. The project involved ordering books that the library did not own from lists contained in *Books for College Libraries*, 3rd edition (BCL3). The remaining titles to be ordered to complete this project filled forty-five looseleaf binders which translated into over 4,000 MARC records.

The library was committed to completing the ordering from the original BCL3 selections by the end of the 1996/97 fiscal year. The Acquisitions Department had only three months to pre-order search, import order records into our online system, and place orders for the 4,000 titles. The Department quickly realized that with the current number of staff on hand — one acquisitions librarian and two acquisitions clerks — and the staff's current workload, it would be all but impossible to

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The second day also offered presentations of interest to all types of librarians on broad and more specific topics. These ranged from international exchange opportunities, to library outreach projects, and to the findings of a research project on subject searching in an online catalog with English and Spanish records. There were sessions on different topics for academic, public, school and special librarians, and the conference concluded with a planning session for the next Foro, followed by a festive banquet at the UCR University Club, sponsored by OCLC. Among other sponsors and vendors, there were booths of BIOSIS, Brodart, EBSCO, Information Access Co., Electronic Publishing, the Institute for Scientific Information, Latin American Book Source, Libros Latinos, NewsBank, OVID Technology, the Patent and Trademark Depository Library Program, Bowker, Reforma, SoftLine Information, and Swets Subscription Service.

Overall, participants were happy with the quality and number of programs and praised the efforts of the local organizing committee. Since the Foro has no governing body, no membership or any official structure, the success of every one depends largely on the efforts of those who volunteer to host the event. Indeed, one of the questions on the minds of many was the issue of governance, and whether or not it is time to become a more structured organization. For many, the beauty of past events has been the friendly and highly informal gatherings of the last eight years; however, given that local organizers must face all challenges — from the financial commitment of their institutions, to the contractual ones with hotels and caterers, to arranging programming and local transportation — perhaps the time has come for those involved in past events to decide which direction future Foros should follow. Regardless of what happens, though, the need for more and better communications among our colleagues in the global society will still be there, stronger and more urgent than ever and it is our responsibility to do what we can to broaden our horizons.

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