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And They Were There-Reports of Meetings-UKSG and The Specialized Scholarly Monograph in Crisis

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And They Were There

Reports of Meetings

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12th Annual Conference of the North American Serials Interest Group (NASIG)

Report by **Frances C. Wilkinson** (U. of New Mexico
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The Twelfth Annual North American Serials Interest Group (NASIG) Conference was held at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor, Michigan, from May 29-June 1, 1997. The theme of this year's conference was "Experimentation and Collaboration: Creating Serials for a New Millennium." This NASIG conference was well attended, packed with information, and enjoyable for everyone!

The goal of NASIG conferences in general is to promote informal communications among librarians, vendors, and publishers alike. The chance to meet and exchange ideas is encouraged at a variety of breaks, evening events, and social mixers. Both the feel and the dress code of the conference are relaxed and casual. NASIG is held each year at a different university campus and attendees stay in dormitories, share facilities, and eat at the student cafeteria, making NASIG affordable and one of the best values for the money anywhere.

While never scrimping on the high quality of NASIG speakers, conference and program planners work hard to balance quality with economy (such as staying in dorm rooms rather than hotels), to provide attendees with the most economical package possible. During the Opening Session, President **Beverly Geer** reminded conference goers that "the dorms are like, well, camp..." She further reminded us during her tongue-in-cheek "Oath of Optimism" ("I solemnly swear that I will not complain about the weather..."), that even the conference planners cannot control the rain. Actually, for some of us from the desert heat, the misty conditions throughout the conference were a pleasant change. With the tone of the conference set, **William Gosling**, Interim Director of the University Library, welcomed us and presented a brief but informative tour of the campus through photographs. The Opening Session was followed by a wonderful dinner, featuring local food favorites, and a hilarious and fun-filled performance by the **Chenille Sisters** that had everyone talking throughout the conference.

This year, as every year, the program was excellent. It began with two Preconferences. "Back to the Basics: The Serials Acquisitions Elements," was presented out of a concern that high-tech topics were edging out acquisitions basics. Three speakers and a moderator covered such topics as preorder processes by **Rita Echt**, serials record keeping by **Marcia Tuttle** (pinch hitting for **Linda Golian** who was unable to attend), and vendor evaluation, selection and interaction by **Phillip Greene**.

"Maximizing the Web for Serialists: New Tools for a New Millennium," began with an overview of SGML and split into four different hands-on session tracts: 1) What's It All About? Integrating the Web into the Serials Chain, 2) Using the Web for the Public, 3) Using the Web in the Back Room, and 4) Current Tools/Emerging Technologies for Advanced Web Authors: CGI, Java, Stylesheets, and More. The conference follows a pattern of offering three Plenary Sessions which are presented by renowned speakers and attended by all participants, a choice of sessions (previously called Concurrent Sessions, but this year called Project

Sessions and Issues Sessions), a choice of four workshops presented in two sets, and a choice of various informal Networking Nodes and Interest Groups.

The topic for Plenary Session I was "Strategies and Challenges for Digital Libraries," presented by **Wendy Lougee** (Assistant Director for Digital Library Initiatives from the University of Michigan). In her entertaining and informative talk, she compared "serials" to "cereals." She stated that an article about strategies in the cereals industry had parallels to strategies in the electronic serials industry. She went on to cover four main issues for cereals: market-niche/share, innovation, product knowledge, and consumer centrism, and by the end of her talk, she had eloquently tied these lessons to serials. She also discussed sweeping changes affecting the library environment and the history of digital library development at the University of Michigan. Plenary Session II, "Scholarship in the 21st Century — Surviving the Next Millennium," featured **Dan Tonkery** (COO of Dawson, N.A.), with **Richard Dougherty** (Professor, U. Michigan) and **Kathy Norton** (Library Director, Woods Hole Oceanographic Institute) serving as a panel of reactors. Tonkery stated that the impact of technology on scholarship is changing the way scholarship is disseminated. More and more people are on the Internet (over 50% of the population is online). Although the current "intellectual infrastructure" is still primarily supporting print materials, the new library will become a virtual collection, serving a remote user population — the library's role will be to "add value," organize knowledge, improve access, and train users. The publisher will exercise quality control and the vendor will maintain inventory control and management support. Many challenges were highlighted. The question of who will survive this transition was raised and answered: end users, content providers, and technology managers. The reactors responded, and raised some additional concerns.

Plenary Session III was intriguingly entitled "Jam Tomorrow, Jam Yesterday, But Never Jam Today: Some Modest Proposals for Venturing Through the Looking-Glass of Scholarly Communication," and was presented by **Arnold Hirshon** (presently Vice Provost for Information Resources at Lehigh University). The title for Hirshon's presentation was based on an allusion to **Lewis Carroll's Alice in Wonderland**. In Alice's "looking-glass" world everything is backwards, thus "jam tomorrow and jam yesterday." He states that librarians are like Alice in that they want their jam today. He went on to talk about how librarians will cope with today and discussed four change factors, including changes in society, technology, higher education, and scholarly research/publishing. He then went on to consider areas that librarians need to evaluate in order to deal with "jam today." Each Plenary shared a different perspective and gave the audience thought-provoking ideas to ponder or discuss with colleagues.

The Project Sessions on Friday featured six very timely sessions from which each attendee could select one. All the sessions were outstanding and the choice was a difficult one. Topics included: Initiatives in Internet Cataloging, Innovations in Journal Access, Building a National Electronic Collection for Long Term Access, A Method Out of the Madness, New Ways of Working Together, and SGML for Yesterday and Tomorrow. The Issues Sessions on Sunday also featured six intriguing sessions from which each attendee could choose only one. Topics in-

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cluded: CONSER Goes Out on a Limb, Electronic Publishing, Economic Issues in Document Delivery, The Electronic Archive, Strategic Partnerships and the New Subscription Agency, and Understanding License Agreements for Electronic Products.

Twenty-two workshops were offered on a diverse group of topics, from which each attendee could select four. Each workshop had its finger on the pulse of an important issue in the serials community. Workshops offered many topics of interest ranging from management, systems, and partnering, to electronic journals, newspapers, and preservation. Each provided material of direct relevance to serialists. The workshops offered something for everyone to learn and to take back to their organization and implement in a practical way.

A number of NASIG Networking Nodes/Interest Groups were available on Saturday afternoon, including Gearing Up for E-Journal Access, Paraprofessional Concerns, Serials Cataloging, Union Listing, Using the Internet for Serials Work, and Electronic Communications. These gave

participants the opportunity to concentrate on their special areas of interest with like-minded people. Sunday afternoon featured Users Group Meetings, which included **Black-**

well's Electronic Journal Navigator, DRA, Dynix, Endeavor Voyager, Horizon, and Innovative Interfaces.

The University of Michigan campus has a wonderful ambiance of history, tradition and pride. Founded in 1817, it is one of the first public universities in the nation. Its stately buildings and lush green landscaping are located in the heart of Ann Arbor, with no formal boundaries dividing the campus from the community. The conference featured a social event on two nights and one "evening on your own, on the town." The first planned evening "opening night," was described above and the second evening featured a pizza (and pasta) party. The Community High School Jazz Ensemble provided entertainment under a tent, while tours of the North Campus libraries and of the most impressive, progressive Media Union were ongoing during the evening. The "evening on our own" was particularly enjoyable because of the close proximity (easily walkable!) to the downtown area and shopping district which was located just a few blocks away from the campus dorms. The late night socials on Friday and Saturday nights, which are always popular, were even more fun to attend this year because they were located in the main dorm lounge. Everyone seemed to find these social events relaxing, enjoyable, and a good place to visit with old friends or make new ones! The conference planners did a fine job and are to be commended for their efforts.

The next (thirteenth annual) NASIG Conference will be held at the University of Colorado, located in beautiful Boulder, Colorado, from June 18-21, 1998. The theme is "Head in the Clouds, Feet on the Ground: Serials Vision and Common Sense." The conference planners are already hard at work to make this a memorable and valuable conference. The annual event is highly recommended to anyone who works with serials or just wants to know more about them. See you there!

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Reference Reviews Europe Annual

Casalini Libri takes great pleasure in presenting **Reference Reviews Europe Annual**, now in its third year.

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**The Specialized Scholarly
Monograph in Crisis or How Can I
Get Tenure If You Won't
Publish My Book?**
September 11-12, 1997,
Washington, D.C.

Report by **Katina Strauch**
(College of Charleston Libraries)

This meeting, attended by some 140 publishers and librarians and a few vendors, was sponsored by the **American Council of Learned Societies**, the **American Association of University Presses**, and the **Association for Research Libraries**. It was funded by **ACLS**, **YBP** and **OCLC**. Here are some of the many questions that were posed. What is a monograph? What is the fate of the small market book? Why do editors turn down good books? If print runs get much smaller (than 250 copies) why publish the book at all? Are we losing important content because books aren't getting published? How can we build a new model to support the scholarly refereeing process? Will tenure survive? Is the crisis of the scholarly monograph the crisis of academe? How much does the readership value the kind of value that publishers add? What is happening to the book versus the journal -- are the lines between the two blurring in the electronic environment? Are libraries canceling the same journals? Will the e-monograph be the salvation of the specialized scholarly monograph?

The library market has in the past been the primary market for the specialized scholarly monograph. As we all know, sales of books to libraries are going down. This conference focused, therefore, on the scholarship that can no longer be distributed in an economically viable (book) format. Books which used to be published are no longer getting published. Is this bad or good? Is this an opportunity or a crisis?

There was a lot of very qualified leaders who came together in Washington to grapple with these questions and more. Some of them included — **Kate Torrey** (Director, UNC Press), **Stanley Chodorow** (Provost, U. of Pennsylvania), **Stephen Humphreys** (Professor, U. of California, Santa Barbara), **Joanna Hitchcock** (Director, U. of Texas Press), **Robert**

Wedgeworth (University Librarian and Professor, U. of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign), **Marlie Wasserman** (Director, Rutgers U. Press), **Colin Day** (Director, U. of Michigan Press), **Scott Bennett** (U. Librarian, Yale University), **Duane Webster** (Executive Director, ARL), **Anna Perrault** (U. of South Florida), **Sanford Thatcher** (Director, Pennsylvania State U. Press), **Kate Wittenberg** (Editor-in-Chief, Columbia U. Press), **Michael Jensen** (Electronic Publisher, Johns Hopkins U. Press), **Carol Mandel** (Deputy U. Librarian, Columbia University), **Mary Case** (Director, Office of Scholarly Communication, ARL), **Sheila Creth** (U. Librarian, U. of Iowa), and **Clifford Lynch** (Executive Director, Coalition for Networked Information).

When I look back on this stimulating, though-provoking conference, I am struck by the contrast between two methods of information delivery — the “thump” versus the “click.” The “thump” is the book as it used to be, the paper-encased tome that you can take to bed with you or put on your bookshelf. There is something satisfying and soothing about both activities. The “click,” of course, involves the computer and electronic delivery of information. It's just a “click” away from your desktop. The “click” seems to an old-timer like me more frenetic and less satisfying. But times, they are a-changing. The melancholy for the old gives way to the optimism for the opportunity of the new. Print versus online isn't an either/or situation.

We are in a transition phase. We are witnessing a small press revolution and the growth of the micro university press — the press that exists in a professor's office and isn't burdened by huge overhead. The press that is staffed by a faculty member who does what she does not for the money she

makes, but for the “psychic dollars” that accrue from the satisfaction of helping colleagues and advancing a discipline. The sort of papers and discussion that took place in Washington in September will continue throughout our lifetimes and even beyond.

NB: Many of the papers which were delivered at this conference can be accessed via the **ARL Web site** at <http://www.arl.org>

Please note that there are several related paper in this issue that deal with this topic. See, for example, “Op— Ed — Opinions and Editorials, The Crisis of the Scholarly Monograph Conference” by Thomas Bacher, (p.22) and “Interview with David Lee Rubin,” (p.28).

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