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Group Therapy-Have libraries merged their interlibrary loan departments into acquisitions?

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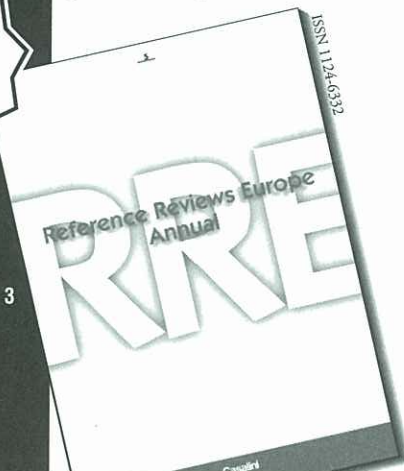
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gested, may not necessarily be so much among the remaining traditional jobbers, but between the forces of full-service mediation and disintermediation, that is, between price-is-the-only-factor internet suppliers and traditional, relationship-based booksellers. This change is largely unprecedented and our successors will be left to learn from our mistakes.

So we are all in this profession awash in oceans of change. What I propose is a sort of transitional triage. We need to identify the purpose of internal change (beyond its use as an antidote to ennui) and we need to control our love of novelty. Two of the most common justifications for change are to reduce work and to save money. I fear that in many cases neither goal is achieved. And I fear that the glamour of the prospect of fiscal savings or work reduction can blind us to objective historical analysis. Libraries and businesses should be as forthcoming about their failures and near misses as their successes. Maybe then we would recognize the dead — and let them rest. 🍀

Endnote

1 Nicholson Baker, 'A Reporter at Large,' *New Yorker*, July 24, 2000, p. 42.

Group Therapy

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GRIPE

(Submitted by **Barbara Weir**, Technical Services Librarian, Swarthmore College)

I'd like to know if there are any libraries that have merged their interlibrary loan departments into acquisitions. If so, what was the reasoning for the change? What have been the benefits? Problems? If a patron requests to borrow a book that is in print, do you purchase it as a rush purchase rather than borrow it on ILL?

RESPONSE

(Submitted by **Suzanne Ward**, Head, Access Services, Purdue University)

The Purdue University Libraries Interlibrary Loan unit proposed a pilot project to purchase patrons' loan requests from Amazon.com, lend them to the patrons, and then add the titles to the collection. Staff analyzed previous monograph loans, developed ordering criteria, implemented the proposal as a pilot project for six months, and evaluated the resulting patron comments, statistics,

and staff perceptions. As a result of enthusiastic patron comments and a review of the project statistics, the program was extended.

Patron response has been overwhelmingly positive. There are preliminary indications that books acquired this way are subsequently used more frequently than similar books purchased through routine collection development. Library staff is pleased to accept recent titles identified by their patrons as works needed for research and study. The process provides a way of quickly responding to patrons' requests for research and scholarly material, rather than the more traditional model of analyzing ILL transactions months after they are completed. The project also demonstrated a successful partnership between the Interlibrary Loan unit in Access Services with the campus libraries and with Technical Services, both reporting to Public Services.

Funds have been provided to continue the ILL Amazon Project through December 2000. Staff is delighted to be able to continue this service to patrons. 🍀