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The Acquisitions Workstation-Collection Development Style

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Against the Grain

"Linking Publishers, Vendors and Librarians"

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The Acquisitions Workstation — Collection Development Style

by **Linda A. Brown** (Collection Development Coordinator, Bowling Green State University, Bowling Green, Ohio 43403) <lbrown@bgnet.bgsu.edu>

We've heard a lot about what's available for the cataloging workstation. At the **1998 Charleston Conference**, **David Nuzzo** and **Suzanne Kiker** outlined ways to use a workstation for acquisitions. Collection development librarians can customize their workstations by building a Web page to cover three aspects of collection development: 1) public service and outreach efforts to our constituencies; 2) links to tools to enable selectors to use the Web and work more efficiently; 3) selection of Web resources.

Collection development Web page as an outreach tool

By viewing the Web as a communication tool, librarians can expand their abilities to share information with the community they serve. There are many possibilities when transforming a collection development statement into a Web document of inter-linked sections. In revising or writing a collection development statement, consider

the Web format and the flexibility in structure it offers. The shift from print to Web can demand a careful examination of the document to gather scattered references to a single topic into one short document. This can then be linked at appropriate points.

For example, as a member of **OhioLINK**, librarians at **Bowling Green State University** frequently referred to the OhioLINK consortium, its resources, policies, services, and so forth at many points throughout the collection development policy. Consequently, all of the OhioLINK related information was pulled together into a single brief document. Links to the OhioLINK information were created where needed. Subject policy statements for related disciplines can be linked; standard information such as definitions of intellectual levels can be stated once and linked where applicable.

Other policies and procedures that could be included are acceptance of gift books, rec-

ommendation of materials for order, electronic order form, library acquisition methods, e.g. approval plans, blanket order plans, firm orders, etc. Many libraries have mounted a directory of bibliographers or subject selectors by name or by subject. Some university libraries include links to the Web pages for each academic department served by the selector. These departmental Web pages often contain information on programs, curricula, faculty research interests, upcoming events, etc. The subject selectors directory can also serve as a link to the individual selector via an email message from the Web page.

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If Rumors Were Horses

News. **Rosann Bazirjian**—Director of the **1999 Charleston Conference**—and an awesome woman—has accepted the position of **Assistant Dean for Technical and Access Services at Penn State**! She starts in June! Congratulations, Rosann!

More Promotions! **Audrey Melkin** is now Vice President, Sales, North America for **CatchWord**! Hooray! Go see her at the **CatchWord booth #237 at ACRL**. <audrey.melkin@catchword.com>

And the ebullient **Bob Schatz** is now the Manager of North American Sales for **Everetts**! <everbob@yahoo.com>

June Garcia has been appointed **Chief Executive Officer of CARL Corporation**.

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New acquisitions lists are also a possibility. These lists might contain brief annotations or provide links to the online catalog records. One library has scanned images of book covers of featured selections of the month.

Some libraries have mounted a journal tables of contents page including a photocopy request from which the library runs a campus-wide document delivery service. An electronic journals Web page could include annotations, indexing and abstracting services for each title with links to those databases, and links to journal sites.

Information about your library for vendors or for publishers could be helpful. One library created pages of links expressly for vendors and for publishers containing information such as office hours, holiday or other closing schedule, and directories of selectors and acquisitions staff.

There are a host of other possibilities for communicating information to our clientele—for example, collection development announcements; collection statistics; library use statistics; local activity within a consortium; high circulation items or popular topics; budget information, the latter often at the

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The Charleston ADVISOR

Critical Reviews of Web Products for Information Professionals

Premiering in 1999, *The Charleston Advisor*, will be the library industry's leading consumer report and review tool for Internet accessible electronic resources. *The Advisor* is targeted to collection development officers, reference librarians, electronic resource coordinators, library directors and publishers. It will provide objective, reliable and critical evaluations.

Reviews will be based upon a standard format, averaging 2-3 pages in length. A rating system will score each product based on four elements: content, searchability, price and contract option/features. A composite score will provide "at a glance" ratings.

All reviews will be completed by practicing professionals based on in the field experience. Issues will also include "trends" articles and editorial commentary on the digital marketplace for libraries.

TCA will be published quarterly. Our WEB edition will be continuously updated and will include links to product homepages as well as to selected users of the product. Readers will be able to offer their own opinions in the WEB edition.

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discretion of the library administration. Use your imagination and solicit ideas from other library staff or users.

Other library Web pages are also a good source of ideas. **Louisiana State University's** collection development page (<http://www.lib.lsu.edu/colldev/cdm.html>) has several unique features including links to vendors' sites, links to local information including a staff development schedule, and notes from the previous year's staff development workshops. **Arizona State University's** well-developed page (<http://www.asu.edu/lib/colldev/>) includes, among other things, lots of local information; a sampling of collection development Web pages from other academic libraries; numerous Web tools for bibliographers; a history of Arizona State University libraries and collections. The link to information about donations includes a statement of what is not collected along with suggestions of other area libraries or institutions that might be able to use these materials. The local information provided on **University of Maryland's** page (<http://www.lib.umd.edu/UMCP/CLMD/resources>) includes information about gifts to the University Libraries including policy regarding appraisals and possible tax deductions. **Bowling Green State University Libraries'** page (<http://www.bgsu.edu/colleges/library/infosrv/collman/cmpages/cmpage.htm>) links to directory information, new books lists, collection development policy, and to a page of links to bibliographer's tools.

Web resources for bibliographers

The collection development Web page can be used not only to communicate with clientele, but also to allow librarians to better communicate with the world beyond the desktop. A local page can serve as a gathering point for a customized set of Web resources that are useful bibliographers' tools. Web-based tools for collection development fall into two categories—those you pay for and those that are freely available.

A collection development page could link to services that are subscribed to locally such as **Books in Print**, **ERIC**, **Library Literature**, **Book Review Digest**, **Ulrich's Periodicals Directory**, or **WorldCat**. This not only provides a direct link and saves steps, but also serves as a reminder that these resources are available. The tools page could also include links to online bookstores and book review sources; to professional organizations; guides to Internet resources; and technical services resources.

A number of sites are available free of charge. One can use any of the numerous Web search engines available to identify them—Yahoo, Alta-Vista, or Hot Bot, for example. However, often the best place to start is with

an aggregator site. These sites have selected useful resources and have organized links to them. Many of these sites are not just browseable, but are also searchable, adding to their usefulness.

The producers of **AcqWeb** (<http://www.library.vanderbilt.edu/law/acqs/acqs.html>), based at **Vanderbilt University**, have gathered a plethora of useful acquisitions and collection development tools. It's a virtual one-stop shopping center for all your collection development and acquisitions needs and is international in scope. Among the goodies one can find here are links to:

book review sources

publishers' Web pages

other collection development and acquisitions pages

out-of-print dealers

reference resources

scholarly articles discussing issues of electronic information relating to acquisitions and collection development

a collection of library humor and other fun stuff

Staff at the **University of California at San Diego** have built **T-POT—Technical Processing Online Tools** (<http://tpot.ucsd.edu/>) a site to support all aspects of library technical services. Its primary focus is acquisitions, serials, and cataloging, but it does include links to some sites for collection development. One of the interesting features is a Web page "Top 200 Technical Services Benefits of Home Page Development" (<http://tpot.ucsd.edu/Cataloging/Misc/top200.html>). At last count, this included not two hundred, but nearly seven hundred broadly categorized links to other sites—links to everything from HTML basics, to e-journals in library and information science, to a cliché finder.

The Internet Library for Librarians (<http://www.itcompany.com/inforetriever/index.htm>)—produced by **Infoworks Technology Co.**, is designed to assist library staff in locating Internet

resources and claims to provide links to more than 2,000 sites. Librarians from all types of libraries and all branches of librarianship will find useful information at this site compiled by a staff of librarians and students in MLS programs.

University of Waterloo in Ontario, Canada has produced the **Scholarly Societies Project** and created a Web site ([\[www.lib.uwaterloo.ca/society/overview.html\]\(http://www.lib.uwaterloo.ca/society/overview.html\)\) with access to information from more than 1,200 scholarly societies. In addition to being a searchable guide to societies, this site includes society newsletters; links to society pages, with a stability rating for each URL; essays on issues in scholarly publishing; and links to other scholarly societies projects.](http://</p></div><div data-bbox=)

Many book and serial vendors have mounted collection management information on their sites to document pricing and publishing trends, links to other Web sites, policy information, and the vendor's database. Often customized reports for a specific account can be generated online to track your local purchasing patterns. A book vendor's database may be searchable, may allow specific items to be tagged for order, or may allow orders to be placed electronically.

Selection tools for Web resources

In addition to providing tools for collection development of traditional print materials, the Web offers resources for selection of Web materials. Many libraries have begun collecting Web resources—either developing browseable or searchable Web sites of links to these resources or by cataloging them and creating a link from the bibliographic record in the OPAC directly to the information resource. By creating a local collection of Web resources, we can customize that collection to best meet the needs of our community. Links to large aggregator sites may be helpful to some, but local access to specific resources may be more useful to others.

Collecting Web resources is a rather different venture than our traditional collection development. Traditionally, librarians identify gaps in collections, learn of new programs that need support, pinpoint new areas of research, or identify hot topics. Then, with these specifics in mind, the best resources to meet these information needs are located. While this may be possible in some cases with Web resources, one can find oneself on a proverbial fishing trip—casting a net broadly, seeing what comes in, then picking through to collect or catalog only those resources that will support some aspect of teaching and research. This may create for a rather spotty collection of resources, but a collection that can serve as a supplement to existing print materials.

The Scout Internet Project (<http://scout.cs.wisc.edu/>

[scout/](http://scout.cs.wisc.edu/)) produced at **University of Wisconsin at Madison** and funded by the **National Science Foundation** has been around for four years, making it the oldest Web resource selection tool! It reviews a selection of the best scholarly Internet resources with coverage primarily of the sciences and engineering, business and economics, and the social sciences.

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[<http://www.against-the-grain.com>](http://www.against-the-grain.com)

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Librarians and subject experts make selections. Among other things, the site also includes background information for the novice, evaluative descriptions of search engines and subject related sites, and a "Kids Report" of sites designed for children. Reports of new sites are also available via email from the Scout listserv.

BUBL-LINK (<http://bubl.ac.uk/>) is a collection of Internet resources in all disciplines and is both browseable and searchable. This U.K. service includes more international resources than some U.S. sites.

The **ARGUS Clearinghouse for Subject Oriented Internet Resource Guides** provides topical guides to resources (<http://www.clearinghouse.net/>). It includes primarily popular and general interest materials and is both browseable and searchable. Compiled by librarians and MLS students, the Clearinghouse uses a rating system to evaluate five aspects of each site and then calculates an overall site rating.

Subject Web sites

Some of our colleagues have built and mounted subject Websites. These can be useful aids in the selection of Web resources. One example of this is the **InfoMine** from **University of California at Riverside** (<http://lib-www.ucr.edu/>). This site includes a browseable subject index that indicates the number of items associated with each subject term. The **Berkeley Digital Library SunSITE** (<http://sunsite.berkeley.edu/>) is another catalog of Internet resources. Their "Librarians Index to the Internet" provides useful links. **Iowa State University has Cyberstacks** (<http://www.public.iastate.edu/~CYBERSTACKS/homepage.html>)—sites arranged by abridged LC classification or by subject.

These three categories of Web resources—communication with your clientele, bibliographers' tools, and Web resources selection tools—intertwine. To build a collection development page, each library needs to determine the appropriate mix of the three categories. A collection development Web page doesn't need to use all the bells and whistles available. Scanned images flashing logos, lots of frames, may be glitzy and eye-catching, but can be irritating. It's easier to start small and keep it simple. Employ basic principles of graphic design; choose a color scheme with good contrast between text and background, gain some knowledge of HTML and you'll be on your way.

Please note that a version of this paper was delivered at the 1998 Charleston Conference.—KS

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can continually be refined, as is good communication with library system suppliers, so that system developments are provided to support the process.

We needed to implement centralised classification at Huddersfield before we could begin to contemplate shelf-ready books. So we set up a working party to evaluate the new method of acquiring classmarks from catalogue records and measure against the traditional method. In analysing the scatter produced by central agency numbers, we matched a sample of 120 of these against those provided by a subject librarian. A scattergraph plotted the result, showing there was some degree of scatter around the median. Despite this, we decided that an acceptable amount were similar numbers. Subject indexing was also measured and the number of matches encouraging enough to suppose the majority of library patrons would be able to trace materials. However, subject indexing becomes very important for those titles, like the title of this paper, for which title keyword is not an adequate retrieval tool.

Time was measured using a control of 200 titles processed conventionally and 200 titles processed using the new system. Classification by a subject librarian took 2.87 minutes and subject indexing 4.25 minutes, a total of 7.12 minutes, yet it took on average 9.99 days for them to get around to doing it! Using the new method saved 10 days, as accepting a number from a catalogue record takes seconds. An hourly rate was applied to measure the cost of the traditional process added \$4 to the cost of a book, the new method only \$2.45. A saving of \$1.65!

Of course, the library management liked these results and so we began to implement centralised classification, but there were a number of problems, not least managing change. Staff worries were enormous because of the complete change of culture. Some subject librarians felt that classification had been their life's work and they preferred to adhere to a logical shelf order. They were unsure of their new role and what was involved in being proactive towards students. Technical services staff felt outsourcing to be so threatening that they were afraid they would lose their jobs. Lots of communication promoting the benefits was needed, as was reassurance that jobs would change, rather than be lost.

The loss of shelf browsing placed greater emphasis on the competence of student retrieval skills and so more library exercises were needed to foster student independence in using the library catalogue to find materials. The importance of subject indexing in successfully fulfilling subject requests via the catalogue is given more emphasis in this environment. There were worries staffing lev-

els were sufficient for this to be maintained and that the terminology of Library of Congress subject headings was not suitable for a UK university library. Machine options, for example, keyword access to table of contents, were possible alternatives.

Quality control was initially undertaken by subject librarians and in the first three months 30% of items were sent back for reprocessing. This became the most hated job in technical services. Further negotiation, refinement, and acceptance of the classification policy were needed. It did improve once the benefits in terms of speed and freed up time became more obvious and scatter became more acceptable. There is a need to centralise validation in Technical Services so that errors only are reprocessed rather than slight differences of opinion in classification.

Once the centralised classification policy had become established, shelf-ready books systems could be used. Again we decided to evaluate the process and a working party was set up to measure throughput and errors. The **Horizon** management information software **Reportsmith** was used to analyse data in the system. Reports were generated comparing time from order to receipt, receipt to shelf and time from order to shelf for books ordered conventionally and those ordered via a shelf-ready books service. A throughput of 3-5 days was found to be possible within Technical Services (receipt to shelf) and an order to shelf time for the shelf-ready book service better than that for all other vendors.

Errors were logged in a manual file indicating the source of reprocessing. Once the classification policy had settled down, we found only a small percentage needed reprocessing, 3.7% but a further 4.7% needed reprocessing due to supplier error. A total of 8.4% of items to be reprocessed is rather counter-productive and demoralising to staff. In order to improve efficiency further, the working party report recommended merging the acquisitions and cataloguing working practices. This has yet to be implemented.

One very positive result of using a shelf-ready books system for acquiring catalogue records is that the hit rate becomes 100%, as the vendor provides records via an agency for those not available on databases. The quantity of material requiring professional cataloguing in the department was therefore much reduced. It had been 14% in 1996 and was 9% in 1998, a reduction of about one third. Further reduction should be possible when outsourcing in this way is extended. As a result, we have reduced the professional cataloguing staff, by moving one cataloguer to manage journals, particularly electronic formats and extending the senior cataloguer's role to include access to electronic texts.

The evaluation positively encouraged the adoption of shelf-ready book systems, but

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