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And They Were There-Reports of Meetings-NASIG

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And They Were There

Reports of Meetings — NASIG

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14th Annual Conference of the North American Serials Interest Group (NASIG)

Report by **Frances C. Wilkinson** (University of New Mexico General Library)

The Fourteenth Annual North American Serials Interest Group (NASIG) Conference was held at **Carnegie Mellon University** in Pittsburgh, PA, from June 10-13, 1999. The theme of this year's conference was "From Carnegie to Internet2: Forging the Serials Future."

The goal of NASIG conferences in general is to promote informal communications among everyone in the serials chain—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. Held each year at a different university campus, attendees stay in dormitories, share facilities, and eat at the student cafeteria. 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.

President **Steve Oberg** set the tone for a conference to remember at the Opening Session at Carnegie Music Hall. With bagpipes playing, he came on stage to make his welcoming remarks in a kilt! The cocktail/buffet that followed in the Carnegie Music Hall foyer provided a great opportunity to network or just to relax with old friends or new ones. The self-guided tour through the **Carnegie Museum of Natural History**, featuring the Dinosaur Hall, Polar World, and the Hall of the American Indian, was spectacular.

As always, the NASIG Conference program was excellent. It began with two Preconferences. "Metadata for Resource Discovery: the Dublin Core Metadata Initiative" and "Scenario Building: Creating Your Library's Future." Metadata presenters, **Stuart Weibel**, **Jane Greenberg**, and **Robin Wendler**, began with an overview of the World Wide Web, discussed the objectives of Dublin Core Metadata, considered metadata tools and resources, search engines, forces on libraries, and Harvard's metadata projects. Scenario Building presenters **Nancy Rea** and **Stacey Aldrich**, explained that scenarios are simply "stories about possible futures." Scenario building is a planning tool to help organizations establish priorities and goals and then to identify ways to help the organization achieve them. Participants worked through the stages of the process, creating multiple ways to address trends, by engaging in a variety of exercises.

The conference follows a pattern of offering three Plenary Sessions which are presented by renowned speakers and attended by all participants, a choice of two Issues Sessions, a choice of four workshops presented in two sets, and a choice of various informal Networking Nodes and User's Groups.

The topic for Plenary Session I attended was "Moving the Network Revolution in Knowledge Beyond Random Acts of Progress," presented by **William Graves**, President of **COLLEGIS Research Institute**. Graves opened with a topic that was echoed throughout the conference. He spoke of the Internet and its impact on both

human communication and resource sharing. He talked of a "global learning infrastructure" and considered what each of these words mean in terms of the Internet and the classroom environment. He then considered where we are now. Although most institutions have made some progress, it has primarily been "random acts of progress." Instead, institutions need to provide more standardized online courses, universal access to resources for library users, adopt life cycle funding, create academic "Intranets," and improve change management. He concluded with a quote from **Will Rogers**, "You can be on the right track and still be run over." Thus, success for institutions will include finding an "appropriate expression" for their institution on the Internet.

Plenary Session II, "Information Ecologies" was presented by **Vicki O'Day**, coauthor of *Information Ecologies: Using Technology with Heart*, doctoral student in Anthropology at the **University of California at Santa Cruz**, and Industrial Researcher. O'Day considers change from an ecological viewpoint. Examples of ecologies include offices, schools and libraries. Information ecology especially applies to digital libraries, as boundaries for sites and collections blur. Information is becoming ubiquitous, causing us to use some tools differently and adapt others to our changing needs. She discussed the "rhetoric of inevitability" in terms of a continuum from uncritical acceptance to total condemnation. She then presented several metaphors for technology, advising us to be aware of language. She identified five characteristics of an ecology: diversity, locality, keystone species, co-evolution, and boundary crossing. O'Day promotes using the ecology metaphor to point to technical interconnections that shape successful practice.

Plenary Session III was entitled "Shift Happens" and was presented by **Stephen Abram**, Senior Director of Product Management at **IHS Micromedia**. Abram spoke about ten major trends that are affecting information services. He believes that "education is out" and "learning is in." He characterizes this generation as "Text Heads" and the next generation as "Next Heads." This generation relies largely on text, but the upcoming generation has learned from video games to always be looking for "next." A number of Abram's ten major trends relate to change, most dealing with how to deliver information services that are appropriate for the people requiring them. He states that the current pace of change is too slow (even though many people feel that it is too fast) and that change will no longer occur generationally—it will be faster, perhaps only that of "a mouse's life span." Still, he notes that humans can only see change when it visibly exceeds 15%—the "15% Rule." Communities of interest are no longer geographically bound, thus, "virtual" is a place not a format. He discussed several principles for success in the new "knowledge ecology," stating that the information era is a failure and the "information highway" is more like an "information ocean." Instead, he believes that we are entering a "knowledge era" where we need to spend more time on people issues rather than technology issues. He touched upon individual learning styles, with no one best interface—stating that "intuitive" is a word for fools! He concluded by saying that people want to "find" rather than to "search" and that they want usable answers.

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Of the twelve Issues Sessions offered, conferencees could select two. All the sessions were outstanding and choosing was difficult. Issues 1, #6, "Looking Back" featured **Donna K. Cohen**, Associate Professor and Head of Acquisitions at **Rollins College**, and **Karen A. Schmidt**, Director of Collections and Assessment at the **University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign**. Cohen presented a brief biography of **Andrew Carnegie** and discussed his role in establishing public libraries in communities and academic libraries for educational institutions. Over his lifetime, he gave about \$400 million to this cause. Then Schmidt took the audience on a lively tour of serials librarianship since its beginning, highlighting the changes in technologies for serials work. The first recognized serials textbook was written in 1930; the 1930s ushered in serials issues in their own right. She lead us on a stroll down Memory Lane with tales of serials check-in ledgers, which gave way to 3x5 cards, then the Kardex, and finally automated serials records. The presentation concluded by showing that as much as things change, some stay the same.

Schmidt showed a picture of a 1960s microfilm reader that looked like the ones we use today!

Issues 2, #2, "... And I'll Have that Order with a License on the Side, Please" featured **John Blosser**, Projects Librarian in Serials and Acquisitions Services at **Northwestern University**; **Eileen Lawrence**, Vice President of Sales for **Chadwyck-Healey, Inc.**; and **Jan Peterson**, Vice President of Publisher Relations and Content Development for **Dawson/Faxon Information Services Group**. Blosser began by making a statement that most librarians who have to deal with site licenses would applaud: when subscription agents consider which value-added services to provide, assistance with site license agreements should be a major consideration for them. Specifically, subscription agents could assist libraries by serving as a central source for archiving license information, IP addresses, etc. He pointed out that standardization of license format and terms is needed. Lawrence began her presentation by stating that license agreements are "fear-inducing documents." Publishers fear that one subscription might be shared with many others and so the license agreement is intended to ensure that libraries

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will take reasonable care to protect the data from being abused. She pointed out that Chadwyck-Healey tries to simplify its license agreements. She expressed doubt that an all-purpose licensing agreement can be developed because individual library needs and requirements vary. Peterson reminded us that we are in a transitional period with a movement toward access from ownership. She outlined major concerns and made suggestions about options for dealing with them.

Twenty-two workshops were presented on a diverse group of topics, from which each attendee could select four. The workshops were very popular because they provided material of direct relevance to serialists; each had its finger on the pulse of an important issue in the serials community. The workshops were offered on a variety of topics so there was something for everyone.

"The Pricing Implications of Site and Consortia Licensing into the Next Millennium," was presented by **Simon Inger**, Managing Director of **CatchWord**; **Taissa Kusma**, Director of Electronic Product Development for **Academic Press**; and **Barbara McFadden Allen**, Director of **CIC Center for Library Initiatives** and Assistant Director of the **CIC Committee on Institutional Cooperation**. Each presenter shared thoughts and opinions about pricing implications for site and consortia licensing. Inger began the workshop with comments about production costs and pricing. Kusma gave a talk entitled "Licensing and Pricing Models: The Publisher's Perspective." She believes that we are in a transitional phase and that more library input is needed. She outlined various pricing models now in use. An advantage to consortial licensing is that it can be less costly, but there are also fewer options for customization. McFadden Allen shared "A Personal View." She sees little difference between individual and consortial pricing. Instead, the benefits to libraries are safety and influence in numbers. The workshop concluded with a pointed question and answer

period with no consensus being reached.

"Dear Abby/Dear Abbott Revisited 'Let's Talk Electronics!'" featured **Tina Feick**, Vice President of **Blackwell's Information Services** as the panel Moderator, with the following panelists: **Keith Courtney**, Director of **Taylor and Francis Ltd.**; **Karen Cargille**, Head of the Acquisitions Department at the **University of California at San Diego**; and **Mike Markwith**, Chief Executive Officer, **Swets & Zeitlinger Inc.** The workshop began with Tina Feick establishing several ground rules which included "no bashing of any kind." Cargille surveyed the room and found that more than half in attendance were librarians, with the rest constituting a mix of vendors and publishers. Discussion between the panelists and audience flowed freely, mostly concentrating on e-journals and other technology-centered issues.

In "Taming the Octopus: Coming to Grips with Electronic Resources" **Nancy Markle Stanley**, Head of Acquisitions Services, and **Angelina F. Holden**, Member of Acquisitions Services, both of **Penn State University Libraries**, presented an overview of **ERLIC (Electronic Resources Licensing Information Center)**. ERLIC is Penn State's customized database, which uses Microsoft ACCESS, to track license, order, funding, supplier, content, and maintenance data for their electronic resources. The system provides forms, reports, and hyperlinks to information. Workshop participants were given an online demonstration of ERLIC and a brochure featuring its major features and sample screens from the product.

A number of **NASIG** Networking Nodes were available on Saturday afternoon, including Cataloging, Document Delivery Services, Management of Electronic Journals, Preservation Issues, Preserving the Journal Archive, Public Libraries, Reference/Public Services Librarians, Standards, Union Listing, and Revisiting the Virtual Library. These gave participants the opportunity to concentrate on their special areas of interest with like-minded people. The Preservation Issues Networking Node met with six participants in attendance, mostly serials librarians, some new to pres-

ervation responsibilities. **Fran Wilkinson** and **Jane Hedburg** (who filled in for **Marilyn Fletcher** who could not attend this year's conference) introduced themselves, shared a little about their backgrounds and asked attendees to do the same and to identify their interests. Topics of interest included bindery interfacing with ILSSs, commercial binders, disaster preparedness planning, book repair, brittle books, digitization, preservation photocopying, and getting support from the administration for preservation activities. The small but enthusiastic group shared their concerns and knowledge on these issues and gave each other tips on where they have found helpful print and Web resources. Everyone is still anticipating the long-awaited **Library Binding Institute Standard for Library Binding**, 9th edition. How to select a commercial binder, whether or not to use the request for proposal process to select one, and the advantages of touring the binder's facility when possible were discussed. The importance of properly educating the library's administration, especially the development officer, regarding raising funds for preservation activities including the processing of special manuscript collections was stressed.

Users Group Meetings, scheduled for early Sunday afternoon, included **CARL**, **DRA**, **Endeavor**, **Innovative Interfaces**, and **SIRSI**. The conference featured a social event on each of the first two nights of the conference and offered a "free night" on the third night where conference goers could attend one of several planned events or go out and explore Pittsburgh on their own. The first evening "opening night," was described above. The second evening offered a dinner/dance cruise aboard the Gateway Clipper, "Majestic." Everyone had a wonderful time visiting, eating, dancing, and enjoying the beautiful views from the ship as it cruised down the Allegheny, Monongahela, and the Ohio rivers. The sunset was breathtaking! On the third night, if attendees did not want to forage out on their own, they could choose from seeing a Pirates baseball game, playing at the Keeneywood Amusement Park, attending a production of the "West Side Story" at the Civic Light Opera house, or taking in the sites at the Three Rivers Arts Festival in downtown Pittsburgh. Each night a late night social (from 10 p.m. to midnight) allowed NASIG night owls to visit, play cards, have a cool drink, and relax.

The next (fifteenth annual) **NASIG** Conference will be held at the **University of California at San Diego, CA**, from June 22-25, 2000. The theme is "Making Waves: New Serials Landscapes in a Sea of Change." **Karen Cargille**, conference planning chair, is 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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than relationship based. While that may be the more efficient way to get things accomplished, such efficiency may come at a subtle, yet significant cost. Even when I don't land a sale, one of the things I value most in my "new" line of work is meeting so many new people. Taken as a whole, librarians are great folks: very hard-working, welcoming, open-minded. Sometimes librarians are not the best business-people in the world. They don't always buy from

me, or share my view of what's important. Somehow, because of Peter's email to me, I'm a little less concerned about that than I used to be. While I hope I can talk at least some of you into buying my wares, I think I'll try to keep my focus directed just a little longer on building bridges between us as people. In the long-run, that may be more important.

Sometimes a roller coaster is an amusement, sometimes it's a metaphor for life's ups and downs, and sometimes it is a too-grim reminder never to take your interactions with others for granted.