November 2004

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Recommended Citation

Scott, Ila D. (2004) "Monographic Musings from 53 Degrees North Latitude," *Against the Grain*: Vol. 16: Iss. 5, Article 9.
DOI: <https://doi.org/10.7771/2380-176X.4064>

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Monograph Musings from 53 Degrees North Latitude

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The **University of Alberta (U of A)**, situated in Edmonton, Alberta, Canada, is a full service university comprising fifteen faculties offering degrees that range from the undergraduate to the doctoral level. Professional faculties include medicine and dentistry, engineering, law, pharmacy, nursing, education, rehabilitation medicine and a library school. The **University** has an enrollment of over 32,000 students and approximately 1600 full time professors.¹ It has the second largest library in Canada after the **University of Toronto**.

The **U of A** currently has six major libraries that serve the campus: Humanities and Social Sciences, Science/Technology, Health Sciences, Education, Law and a French collection at the Bibliothèque St. Jean. Administration of the six libraries is divided along STM and Liberal Arts lines. The **Association of Research Libraries (ARL)** records that the **U of A Library** holds in total 5,924,003 volumes.² In addition the **University** subscribes to 18,665 current serials and periodicals, and has 3,083,888 microforms.³ Although Acquisitions is a central department, each library has budgetary rights and responsibilities and is accorded a budget within their own locus of control. Monograph and serials allocations remain separate lines within the individual library budgets. Control is overseen through a system-wide collection development committee which reports to the library senior administrative team for final approval of allocations.

In the past few years, it has been well established that almost every academic library in North America has lamented the stresses and strains on library budgets due to the increasing demands and costs of periodicals. However, at

the **U of A** we feel that we have been very fortunate. Although the **U of A** is under the same pressures as everyone else to provide the necessary and expensive periodicals and "Big Deal" electronic journal packages, we have continued to protect the monograph side of the budget. The library has **not** allocated monograph monies into periodicals budgets simply to fill what sometimes seems like the black hole of serials inflation. Historically, the library has strived for a budget expenditure target system-wide of about 70% periodicals and 30% monographic purchases. The Science/Technology and Health Sciences libraries, of course, favour the purchase of periodicals, while the liberal arts libraries purchase more monographs. When circumstances have pressured the serials budget, the **University** central administration has provided funds to help the collection development committee right the balance again.

The **University's** enlightened administration has also actively helped to protect the total library budget from cuts. Every year for the past several years, the Library has received additional support for collections with significant increases to the base library budget and, when possible, soft dollars. Any cuts made to the library budget ("taxes") have always come from the operating side. Another significant reason that **U of A** has managed so well is the careful fiscal management that has been carried on within the unit libraries themselves. While providing the types of materials that the faculty and students want, i.e., more electronic journals and databases, the Library still manages to do that on the serials side of the budget. Print journals are cancelled where there is a viable electronic option. Not all the print holdings are bound

in order to reduce binding costs and older runs of periodical issues are sent to a remote storage facility to save shelving costs and space in campus libraries.

Careful financial management of resources is imperative, but it is almost impossible to do long range budget planning. The greatest problem for any Canadian university library is the purchasing power of the Canadian dollar. Our dollar has been as low as US \$.64 and as high as US \$.78 in the past few years. Lately, our "loonie" seems to have settled in the US mid-seventy cents range. Since over 90% of the materials purchased for the **U of A Library** are published outside of Canada, the relative strength or weakness of the dollar has a significant impact on the library's budget. The good news is that in the past couple of years with the strengthening of the Canadian dollar we have been able to purchase more materials in relative terms. Every one penny rise in the value of the Canadian dollar results in a net gain of CDN \$65,000 to the library budget's purchasing power.

Many of our serials are published by large European corporations. With the ascendancy of the Euro against the American dollar and concomitantly the Canadian dollar, serial purchases have been challenging to manage. It has been a struggle to satisfy the increasing demands of users. While consortial purchasing of electronic serials packages has really been of benefit, it is clear that economic forces beyond our control have a significant impact on collections budgets.

Although serials are getting most of the attention in library circles due to their proliferation and rapacious cost increases, it is perhaps too soon to predict the demise of the book collection. Researchers want and need print monographs as evidenced in the results of a recent British study by the **Research Support Libraries Group (RSLG)**.⁴ Commissioned by the **British Library**, four UK higher education funding bodies, and the national libraries of Scotland and Wales, this group makes recommendations for the provision of information to British researchers. In the **RSLG Final Report 2002** section entitled "What do Researchers Need?", findings strongly support a hybrid mix of journals, both print and electronic, and printed books as essential resources. With regard to the fundamental need for a book collection the researchers state that "Sixty percent of medical and biological science researchers, seventy-seven percent in the physical sciences and engineering regard printed books as an essential resource...Ninety-two percent of researchers in the arts, humanities and social sciences regard printed books as essential resources."⁵

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Books, Bytes and ... from page 32

tempt has been made to coordinate profiles for materials sent under the **Library of Congress Cooperative Acquisitions Program**. In addition, the **UW**, a member of the **Korean Collections Consortium of North America** (<http://www.lib.washington.edu/East-asia/korea/hmcon.html>), has special responsibility for certain areas such as women studies and modern poetry. Other members purchase according to their assignments, enriching the resources available to all.

Being an optimist by nature, my preference is to end this article on the "high" note of cooperation. But, honesty compels me to confess that I do wonder about the days ahead. I look at

our **Health Sciences Library**, so often the bellwether of change for the rest of us, and I see it winning an "adopt a book" program, so drastically has its monograph purchasing been reduced in order to finance the up-to-the-nano-second electronic tools its constituents demand. Is this our future? Must books give way everywhere to bytes? I hope not, but then I am one who is proud that my book-filled home is considered by my daughter to be a "real library."

Endnotes

1. Martha Kyriallidou and Mark Young, ed. *ARL Statistics*, 2001-2003 (Washington, D.C.: Association of Research Libraries, c2003), p.10.
2. Kyriallidou and Young, p. 13.

While scholars at the **U of A** support an increase in electronic and print access to periodical holdings, strong demand remains for the diversity and strength of the monograph collection. Initiatives have been undertaken not merely to maintain, but to increase these holdings. The first initiative is and will remain the protection of the monograph budget. The second initiative is an ambitious donations program which at the **U of A** has historically been termed the "Free and Gift" Program. Pursued under the auspices of **Dr. Merrill Distad**, Associate Director of Libraries for Bibliographic Services and with the support of **Mr. Ernie Ingles**, Associate Vice President and Chief Librarian, this donations program has resulted in accessions of gift materials which equally matched monographic purchases over the past two years. The library has acquired over 60,000 volumes in each year, approximately half are purchased and half are donated. Tax-receipted donations of materials amounted to well over CDN \$3 million dollars during the same time period.

"Free and Gift" is one of the most cost effective methods of building fine retrospective collections and the efforts of **Dr. Distad** and his staff have enabled the **U of A** to acquire several notable donations. These include a huge array of materials in major collections such as the **Sarjeant Collection** (geology, natural history, genre fiction), the **Schloss Collection** (rich in modern literature and history), and the **Bryan-Gruhn Collection** (anthropology, archaeology). Each collection carries an appraised value of over CDN \$1 million. We also have obtained numerous focused collections of special interest such as the **Chapman Collection** of circus materials, and the **Alloway Connoisseurship Collection**, which covers enology (the study of wine) and the history of ceramics. The "Free and Gift" program at the **U of A** does not replace the purchase of new monographs nor is it intended to make up for any shortfall in the monograph budget. It is clear, however, that these donated resources which strengthen and enrich the collection could not have been acquired in any other way.

This has also proven to be a remarkably good time for the pursuit of donations. The aging professoriate as they retire often remembers the library when clearing out their offices. The baby boomers, a generation of book lovers, have also started to donate their collections to the library. Acceptance of donated materials, most of which are books, wins friendships and promotes library relationships in other ways. It soon becomes well known within the wider academic and geographic community that the **U of A Library** is more than willing to accept and tax-receipt gifts-in-kind. The good will that this activity generates often leads later to further bequests of collections or money.

How can such an enormous influx of material be handled during the calendar year? The **Book and Record Depository**, a large off-campus storage facility opened in 1994 and fondly known as the **BARD**, has allowed the **U of A** library system to accept donations that many

against the grain people profile

Ila Scott

BORN & LIVED: Edmonton, Alberta, Canada.

EARLY LIFE: I was raised on a farm near Edmonton and attended a small rural school.

FAMILY: I have a husband, 2 children and a cat.

EDUCATION: Bachelor of Education, Diploma in Education in School Libraries, Master of Library and Information Studies.

FIRST JOB: Elementary school teacher.

IN MY SPARE TIME I LIKE TO: Read, garden, sew, watch movies.

FAVORITE BOOKS: I'll read anything: biography, mystery, gardening books, cookbooks.

PHILOSOPHY: Tell the truth, work hard, and enjoy life — it's short!

HOW/WHERE DO I SEE THE INDUSTRY IN

FIVE YEARS: In five years I believe that we will be seeing more of same, more electronic journals and books, faster computing power, more handheld electronic devices, more remote access issues, etc. However, I do not despair of print books disappearing altogether despite what some are predicting. They will continue to live long and prosper as they have done for centuries.

other Canadian academic libraries can only wish for. The **BARD** is a high-density, temperature and humidity controlled storage facility equipped to handle the serious preservation issues that affect many library collections. Most of the materials assigned to the **BARD** are fully accessible and retrievable to patrons upon short notice. Since the items stored at the **BARD** are lesser used, this use of library space and staff effort is quite efficient and cost effective.

So how is the **U of A** library doing? Not too badly, considering the results of the annual survey of universities in Canada done by *Maclean's*, a major Canadian newsmagazine.⁶ Although the survey considers many aspects of the various universities across this country, one significant finding for us is the ranking of the libraries. The most recent survey, done in the fall of 2003, ranked the **U of A Library** second in Canada, between the **University of Toronto** and the **University of British Columbia**. The standings are determined by consideration of the holdings per student, the proportion of the library budget dedicated to the improvement of the library collection, electronic access, and the proportion of the total university budget allocated to the library.

Another important survey is the **ARL** annual statistical ranking where in 2003, the **U of A** ranked 22nd out of the 114 **ARL** libraries, second in Canada to the **University of Toronto** which ranked 4th overall. In volume holdings the **ARL** ranks the **University of Alberta**

Library as 17th.⁷ Rankings reports such as these are extremely important in garnering goodwill and financial support from central university administrations.

What is the need for book collections in our libraries? **Northrop Frye**, the famous Canadian literary critic and philosopher, is quoted in *New Canadian Quotations* as having once said, "The book is the most efficient technological instrument for learning that has ever been devised by the human mind. It stays around and always says the same thing, no matter how often you consult it."⁸

Although technology is constantly presenting new opportunities and new temptations, librarians need confidence that the record of human endeavour will be preserved. To date the technological advances which we have seen have not given the assurance that this can be achieved more effectively by any means other than the printed book. Book collections, for the foreseeable future, will remain an essential scholarly resource not only at the **U of A**, but also in all of the best academic libraries. *Nolens volens*, we face a future of increasing competition between the demands of the electronic versus the print worlds. While eager to provide the best and most current resources for users, permanence and retrievability can still be most effectively and assuredly attained within the pages of the printed codex.

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The Future of the Book

by **Martha Whittaker** (VP Marketing and Sales, Blackwell's Book Services) <Martha.Whittaker@Blackwell.com>

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Considering the future of the book could not have been relevant to **Benjamin Henry Blackwell**, City Librarian of Oxford, when he opened his small bookshop on Broad Street to sell used books to students and faculty. To booksellers, librarians, and information specialists 125 years later, the topic is of great relevance. Such a topic could easily be a controversial one since any discussion concerning the future is always debatable. As **John Seely Brown**, former chief scientist at Xerox and co-author of *The Social Life of Information*¹ wrote when explaining why so many predictions remain predictions, "The way forward is paradoxically to look not ahead, but to look around. Only in this way can one glimpse the future."

As those familiar with **James Joyce** will recall, June 16 is "Bloomsday," that single day in which all events in *Joyce's Ulysses*, one of the most important books of modern time, take place. June 16, 2004 was the 100th anniversary of that day. (In actual fact, **James Joyce** met the love of his life **Nora Barnacle** on June 16, 1904. How's that for romantic?)

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So, the **U of A Libraries** are managing quite well for now, with the beneficence and protection of the **University** central administration, strong faculty support, and prudent fiscal management by the Library's Administration. Still, we recognize that we must adapt to changes in the academy while continuing to build our book collection strengths. Only by so doing can we maintain our place in Canadian academic rankings and attract the kind of scholars that define a world-class university.

Endnotes

1. *World of Learning*. (2004). [Electronic version]. Retrieved, July 21, 2004, from <http://www.worldoflearning.com>.
2. Association of Research Libraries (2003). *Rankings of Institutions*. [Electronic version]. Retrieved June 28, 2004, from <http://fisher.lib.virginia.edu/cgi-local/arlibin/arlib.cgi>.
3. Op cit., *World of Learning*.
4. Research Support Libraries Group (2003) *Final Report*. [Electronic version]. Retrieved, June 29, 2004, from <http://www.rslg.ac.uk/final/final.pdf>.
5. Ibid., p.16.
6. Johnston, Ann Dowsett, *Maclean's Guide to Canadian Universities*, (Toronto: Maclean, 2004).
7. Association of Research Libraries (2003).
8. Columbo, John Robert, *New Canadian Quotations*, (Edmonton, AB: Hurtig, 1987), p.37.

We were preparing this paper on what future there is for books just when this year's celebration for "Bloomsday" took place in Dublin. The timing seems ironic because **Joyce** would have been helped enormously by computers in the editing process (he wrote *Ulysses* by hand in school copy books, rewriting the entire text of a chapter whenever he revised). No doubt, the concept of reading *Ulysses* in digital form would have seemed to **Joyce** to be ludicrous, at best.

Returning to **Brown's** notion of seeing the future by looking around, we will focus much of our discussion on what we see happening around us — within **Blackwell's** and the market we serve. As many of you are aware, **Blackwell's Book Services** is an academic library bookseller. While we still sell a few "festschrifts" now and then, the dynamics of our business and the library market are changing. Like libraries, we've been making books our business for a long time and will continue that tenure regardless of whether the definition of a book changes to include not only a print edition but also an edition in electronic format.

When **Blackwell's** first started discussing eBooks at library conferences, the most common questions we were asked were "Where are your eBooks? Can I look at one?" People equated eBooks with an appliance, an eBook reader, and seemed confused when we pointed to the computer saying that we can show one online. There is now another generation of readers out there. They are entering institutions of higher learning able not only to play "Lord of the Rings" on their GameBoys, but willing, you can bet, to read it on their Pocket PC's.

So, what is an eBook? What better way in this world of the "worldwide Web" to get an answer to that question than to do an online search. One search resulted in this definition: "An eBook is a book published in electronic form, similar to a word document, which can be delivered to any computer that is connected to the Internet from anywhere in the world." Another Web search defined an eBook as an electronic book to be read digitally on a computer, laptop screen or on devices called eBook readers. Other searches came up with similar definitions.

The online search led to the conclusion that most of us, at this point, are now on the same page of the definition of an eBook; that most of us have moved away from the misperception of an eBook as the appliance itself. We are adding to our vocabulary eBook terms and products

such as electronic resources, digital reference, and online journals. These latter two terms have definitions similar to eBook: a digital reference or online journal incorporating already existing accredited, fact-filled print material, making it available online for easier access and researching ability. Print is no longer the only reliable vehicle for acquiring information. We need to embrace what lies around us and welcome the unfolding of the future. "Both books on paper and electronic books exhibit distinguishing characteristics. No matter how popular electronic books become, they will not replace books on paper. The two media will coexist — each settling into its own niche."²

In a 1994 symposium on the future of the book, **Umberto Eco**, author and historian, relating the fears of an ever changing world in which it is believed that new technology makes the "old ways" obsolete, stated "The idea that something will kill something else is a very ancient one."³ ("Ceci tuera cela!" "This will kill that!") **Eco** believes these fears are overblown, as we at **Blackwell's** do. We believe that the expansion of the definition of a book to include eBooks, digital reference, and online journals will not make the need for or the use of printed material obsolete. The print book still has a large role in providing access to the discourse of the field. A book is still the medium best suited to reading in long segments, if not actually read from front to back.

The first time one reads *Ulysses* (notice we said the *first* time), one reads it from start to finish. That, at least, was **Joyce's** intent — read from page one to the last page (circa 700). If you are a true **Joyce** devotee, you have, undoubtedly, read *Ulysses* at least once from start to finish to really get a sense of the changing narrative over a single day in time. **Joyce** wrote his novel for the medium of print, a book in print. It's safe to say, that very few people would be happy sitting down to read *Ulysses* from start to finish using a PDA.

One of the most studied novels of or time, *Ulysses* almost needs to be read with a concordance in hand. The value gained by a researcher — sophisticated searching to discover complex relationships and references — would make the study of *Ulysses*, not easy, but easier. Here is where reference materials in electronic format aid the scholar.

Reference materials, such as concordances, are designed to pick up pieces of information from larger texts, such as a print book. This is where the expansion of print into electronic for-

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