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People Profile: Linda Di Biase

Editor

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it represents over twenty percent of our expenditures (even more when the **Health Sciences Library** is taken into account). The impact of electronic resources on all aspects of library activities and service is tremendous, but not always obvious.

Take, for instance, the categories of monograph and serial expenditures. Undeniably, expenditures for these two formats are important for budget planning in that they presumably separate one-time from recurring expenses; higher inflating segments of the budget from those that are less volatile. These categories, however, have even less to say about the **nature** of our collections than ever before. What do our statistics on the changing ratios of monographs and serials reveal when "monographs" may include hugely expensive electronic serial backfiles and "serials" may comprise, as they do at our library, the **OCLC** transaction charges for interlibrary lending of books?

We must go behind such statistics — or devise new statistical measures — to grasp the magnitude of the changes that are underway. At the **UW**, for example, there's been no systematic attempt to answer the question, How much of this electronic information do we actually own as opposed to merely lease? From the end user's standpoint, of course, the answer is irrelevant: the important thing is that the information is there the instant it is needed. But, it is a question I believe we must ask and answer in the interest of user service. For as users have found to their dismay, it is possible for a valued resource to be here one day and gone the next while the library decides whether it can continue to pay for access or if the information aggregator loses rights to a given title in its package. Then, too, there are the host of issues relating to long-term archiving of and access to information in electronic formats.

In their introduction to the *ARL Statistics*, 2001-02, **Martha Kyrillidou** and **Mark Young** decry the decline of "the intellectual capital purchased by libraries" due not only to reduced purchasing power but also due to the degree of content duplication among electronic and print formats.² This should be a matter of great concern, even as we recognize that this issue will eventually diminish in importance as more and more information is "born digital." For me, the more compelling question is ownership of the information that makes its way to our users. At the **UW** we are committed to providing the broadest array of information resources possible to our clientele. As a research library, we cannot think only of the present, but also must keep in mind future generations of knowledge seekers. In our own small way, we are striving to maintain that "yeasty fermentation" of ideas that I alluded to at the beginning of this piece. By continuing to allocate significant funding to area studies collections, for instance, we are not only building on historic institutional strengths, but also helping to maintain access to a diversity of views that is a hallmark of free societies. In this day and age of explosive information growth in all formats, the continuing consolidation of

against the grain people profile

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Linda Di Biase

BORN & LIVED: Pasadena, Calif. — lived in So. Cal until 1983, since then in the Seattle area.

EARLY LIFE: Happy!

FAMILY: Two daughters, ages 19 and 21.

EDUCATION: A.B., history - **Univ. of Southern Calif.**; M.L.S. - **Univ. of Southern Calif.**; M.A., history - **California State Univ., LA.**

FIRST JOB: First library job was at an *African Studies* library at **Caltech** (amazing but true!) while I attended college.

PROFESSIONAL CAREER AND ACTIVITIES: I started out in a public library in the 1970s, then moved to academic libraries. Took time out in the mid-80s to start a family, during which time I worked part-time as a corporate archivist. I have worked in collection development at the **Univ. of Washington** since 1987. Currently I coordinate collection development activities in the library and have selection/liason responsibilities for Canadian Studies, Latin American Studies, and Comparative Religion.

IN MY SPARE TIME I LIKE TO: Too many things to list! ... read, hike, sew, write (am co-authoring a book on the spirituality of friendship).

FAVORITE BOOKS: Here's just a few ... **Ronald Rolheiser's** *The Holy Longing*; **A.S. Byatt's** *Possession*; anything by **Willa Cather**.

PET PEEVES/WHAT MAKES ME MAD: Rudeness in any form, e.g., people carrying on cellphone conversations as they're being waited on at the supermarket or in restaurants.

PHILOSOPHY: As Catherine of Siena put it, "God does not ask a perfect work but unlimited desire."

MOST MEANINGFUL CAREER ACHIEVEMENT: Becoming the first librarian to head a bi-national international studies academic consortium, the **Pacific Northwest Canadian Studies Consortium**, of which I was Executive Director for 5 years in the late 1990s.

GOAL I HOPE TO ACHIEVE FIVE YEARS FROM NOW: Publish the book referenced above, and be writing another.

HOW/WHERE DO I SEE THE INDUSTRY IN FIVE YEARS: More flexible and creative packaging of electronic resources to allow libraries to craft their own collections of book chapters, journal articles, digitized images, data sets, etc., to meet needs of their constituents.



the commercial publishing sector, the decline in library purchasing power and other challenges familiar to *ATG* readers, no institution can hope to make a difference by acting alone. The **UW** is involved in various consortial endeavors to enhance the range of information resources we can provide.

We collaborate, for instance, as part of the **Orbis-Cascade Alliance**, a consortium comprising more than thirty academic libraries in the Pacific Northwest (<http://libweb.uoregon.edu/orbis/>). Formed in 2003 from the merger of Oregon-based **Orbis** and a consortium of Washington public baccalaureate institutions, the **Alliance** has a joint catalog called *Summit* with a well-developed interlibrary lending sys-

tem which facilitates the sharing of 22 million books and other information resources in the region. While in recent years the focus of academic library collaboration within Washington State has been in securing favorable terms for electronic resources, the **Alliance** is also considering other forms of cooperative collection development and management, including coordinated approval plans and a shared storage facility.

Area studies is another locus of **UW** cooperative activity. Through our participation in the **South Asia Consortium-West** (<http://www.lib.washington.edu/Southasia/sacwest/SACWestagreement00-05.htm>), an initial at-

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