

June 2005

Adventures in Librarianship -- Vandalism

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Recommended Citation

Kraft, Ned (2005) "Adventures in Librarianship -- Vandalism," *Against the Grain*: Vol. 17: Iss. 3, Article 36.

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.7771/2380-176X.4905>

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equivalent to *BIP* for Chinese-language books,⁹ but some resourceful librarians could probably put together some publishing figures. (The *Bowker Annual* compiles its lists of academic monographs from vendor approval plan lists.) Undoubtedly, work would need to be done in this area (thankfully, though, not by me, since my library collects little foreign-language material).

Inputs and Outputs and Outcomes — Oh My!

As important as collection analysis is, a conspectus project is only one element of seeing how your library is doing. Especially in academia, institutional and departmental success is increasingly measured by examining and externally comparing inputs, outputs, and outcomes. Collection strength is, by-and-large, an input, which the Association of College and Research Libraries defines, vis-à-vis libraries, as “the raw materials of a library program — the money, space, collection, equipment, and staff, out of which a program can arise.” Outputs (which “serve to quantify the work done, i.e. number of books circulated, number of reference questions answered”) and outcomes (“the ways in which library users are changed as a result of their contact with the library’s resources and programs”) are also important,¹⁰ the latter arguably more so. It’s not enough to conclude, however correctly, that a library has an excellent collection. If the information it contains is not finding its way into the brains of its users, the library is failing in a vital respect.

The 5th edition of the *WLN* conspectus manual made a stab in this general direction by urging “client-centered” — i.e., output — measures in addition to the older “collection-centered” — or input — measures. Client-centered quantitative techniques examine user behaviors (e.g., circulation and interlibrary loan figures), whereas the qualitative techniques gauge user and community attitudes and satisfaction, community analysis, and patron needs assessment.¹¹

Future conspectus projects must provide data to help see how collections actually affect client populations, be they college students or the general public. User outcomes then must influence collection development. The people who do the conspectus might not be the same people who examine user outcomes, but the two groups mustn’t compartmentalize their work. Rather, they should create a collaborative “feedback loop” in which subsequent conspectus work examines whether the collection has been properly developed in response to these user outcomes. Your library school collection development professor was right: There’s no “I” in “conspectus.”

Collection Analysis Is No Less Important Today Than Yesterday, and Other Banalities

Budgetary pressures, accreditation re-

quirements, and changes in the format and technology of information all indicate the importance of knowing — and being able to show with data — how your library’s collection is shaping up. Using nothing but anecdotal evidence is cheating — you’ve got to be systematic and objective.

Although the conspectus method has not kept up with changes in the field, there’s no reason it couldn’t. I’m hardly the most innovative sort, yet I managed to adapt the instrument to fit the needs of my library. In the absence of an authoritative update to the *WLN* conspectus manual (did you hear that, *OCLC*?), there’s no reason others more clever than me couldn’t make their own adaptations of the method.

So, as I asked before, how’s your library’s collection? 🌲

Endnotes

1. For a historical overview of the conspectus method, see Mary C. Bushing’s 2001 paper “The Evolution of Conspectus Practice in Libraries: The Beginnings and the Present Applications” at www.caslin.cz:7777/caslin01/sbornik/conspectus.html.
2. My director recently wrote about some of the benefits of our conspectus project: Houbeck, Robert L., Jr. “Linking Students with Collections; or Getting Ready to Meet the Accreditation Train.” *Against the Grain*, v. 16 no. 4, September 2004, pp. 30-34. For more information about UM-Flint’s conspectus, visit lib.umflint.edu/conspectus.
3. “Updating Conspectus for a Digital Age,” *Library Collections, Acquisitions, & Technical Services*, v. 26 no. 3, 2002, pp. 252-258, at 254.
4. Bushing, Mary, Burns Davis, and Nancy Powell, *Using the Conspectus Method: A Collection Assessment Handbook* (Lacey, Washington: WLN, 1997), p. 27.
5. Powell, Nancy and Mary Bushing, *WLN Collection Assessment Manual*, 4th ed. (Lacey, Washington: WLN, 1992), p. 69.
6. *Bowker Annual Library and Book Trade Almanac, 2004* (Medford, New Jersey: Information Today, Inc., 2004), pp. 496-497.
7. Bushing, Davis, Powell, p.103. The Association of College and Research Libraries has also dropped numerical formulas in its 2004 document Standards for Libraries in Higher Education at www.ala.org/ala/acrl/acrlstandards/standardslibraries.htm and its predecessor document Standards for College Libraries 2000 Edition at www.ala.org/ala/acrl/acrlstandards/standardscollegelibraries.htm.
8. Online at www.bibliotecanacional.ad.
9. Thanks to Calvin Hsu, Yunah Sung, and Kenji Niki at the Asia Library at the University of Michigan for helping me address this point.
10. “Standards for Libraries in Higher Education” at www.ala.org/ala/acrl/acrlstandards/standardslibraries.htm.
11. Bushing, Davis, Powell, pp. 74-78.

Adventures in Librarianship — Vandalism

by **Ned Kraft** (Ralph J. Bunche Library, U.S. Department of State) <kraftno@state.gov>

In our last issue, *ATG* reported the sudden dismissal of **Herb Cented**, Acquisitions Librarian for **Detmoor Public**. At that time, senior **Detmoor** officials cited the reason for dismissal as “irreconcilable differences.” However, *ATG* investigative reporters have it from an anonymous source that **Cented** was discovered to have instigated several library pranks and petty vandalisms, and had plans for future shenanigans.

Mr. Cented, a fifty-eight year old librarian, unhappy



that the county had recently raised the retirement age, was found to have been involved in the intentional misplacing of several returned books. His fingerprints were found on an HX book in the Z shelves and a PN book found in the NKs. The HX had, between the title page and the fly, the cryptic message “lost forever.” Fortunately the book was desecrated in pencil, not ink.

While raiding **Herb Cented**’s apartment, investigators found hun-

dreds of surreptitiously-taken photographs of book spines, along with step-by-step outlines for future atrocities. One, labeled “Lay the Devils low,” called for using the library’s circulation records to send fake announcement that **Jackie Collins** would be reading the salacious bits of her recent novel during Saturday morning’s Children’s Hour. The announcement suggested reserving one’s spot by calling the mayor’s office. When contacted, the mayor responded to the averted threat by saying that his office would certainly have caught the hoax because they were all avid **Jackie Collins** readers.


Another of **Mr. Cented**’s plans was to reset

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the default circulation period to thirty minutes, effectively generating overdue notices as patrons were driving away.

Library officials were most relieved to have prevented **Cented's** plan to infect the library's Webpac with what he called the "Herb Virus." Monographs published before 1971 would show the note "Shelved in the Director's office," while serial check-in records would all say "hasn't

been received in a long, long time. What's up with that?"

Mr. Cented referred all questions to his lawyer who would neither confirm nor deny the existence of the "prank plans." He did say, however, that his client suffered from a dissociative disorder common among acquisitions librarians. "**Mr. Cented**, after years of professional exposure to electronic resource vendors, has a difficult time telling right from wrong and has a somewhat twisted sense of the cost-to-value ratio of his actions." 

Electronic Resource Management Systems, Part II: Offerings from Serial Vendors and Serial Data Vendors

by **Ellen Finnie Duranceau** (Digital Resources Acquisitions Librarian, MIT Libraries) <efinnie@MIT.edu>

Introduction

In the September 2004 issue, I reported on the **Electronic Resource Management (ERM)** offerings of the major ILS vendors, and promised to follow with a second article covering the **ERM** tools offered by other kinds of companies, primarily serials vendors or serial data vendors. This is the promised part two. Together, the articles attempt to provide an overview of the **ERM** market, describing what products and services are currently available to libraries seeking systems and tools to help them manage electronic resources.

Libraries who want support for the full life cycle of electronic resource management from selection through purchase, access, license management, and renewal or cancellation, have had the option of building their own systems, as many (such as **Boston College** and **Harvard University**, just in the last year) continue to do. Other libraries have purchased the Innovative Interfaces **ERM** system which has been on the market for more than a year, or have signed on to be beta testers of one of the new ILS-provider offerings, such as **ExLibris' Verde**, which is expected to be available for sale in the summer of 2005.¹ Still other libraries are working with data and support services offered by their serial vendors or other companies, such as **SerialsSolutions** (recently acquired by **Proquest**). It is this segment of the market that is focused on here.

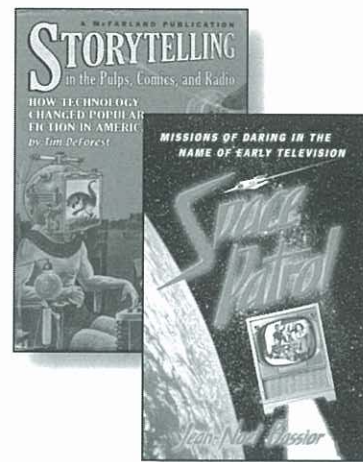
For the purposes of this overview, **ERM** is defined as it is by the **Digital Library Federation's Electronic Resource Management Initiative (DLF ERMI)**: "tools for managing the license agreements, related administrative information, and internal processes associated with collections of licensed electronic resources," including ability to present terms of use at the point of access to an eresource.² In order to keep the scope defined and manageable, this article does not attempt to explicitly address link resolver, metasearch, or standard subscription management for ejournals (such as

initial registration and activation) unless such a service is clustered with, and relevant to, other **ERM** services offered.

The table below collates major aspects of the various **ERM** offerings, and was created based on responses to a common set of questions sent to each company.³ The companies include those who tend to be identified as serial vendors (**Harrassowitz, Swets**); those who tend to be identified as electronic/serial data vendors or providers of ejournal management systems (**SerialsSolutions**); and those who are a hybrid of the two or whose partnerships make them a hybrid of the two (**EBSCO**, which acts as a serial vendor but also has divisions that offer many electronic publishing and aggregation services, and **TDNet**, which offers a range of ejournal support and access services but has a partner company that is a serial vendor). The questions submitted to the companies were for the most part the same as those used in the September 2004 article on ILS vendor offerings. Some common themes emerge from the responses:

- All of the companies included here sell both software and data. (This distinction did not turn out to be as significant as for the ILS providers' **ERM** systems.)
- All of the companies offer hosted web-based services, and those who are out of the planning stages offer an integrated knowledgebase as the place to maintain data.
- All of the companies have made an effort to follow and use the **DLF ERMI** guidelines, although the guidelines' detailed coverage of license metadata does not appear to be as fully applied in these offerings as in the ILS-provider based systems.
- All of the companies have a means of integrating print and electronic holdings information for staff use (except **Swets**, whose plans are still in development); however, there is wide variation with respect to what can be displayed to the public end-user.

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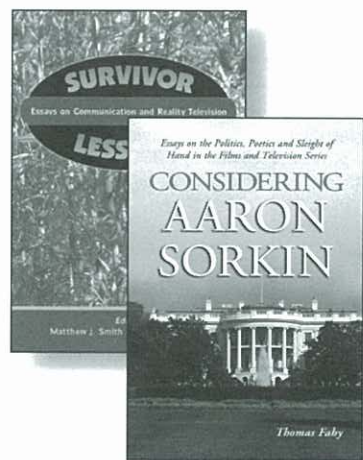


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