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Library Collections: Will They Still Need Us When Everything is Online and Findable by the Major Search Engines?

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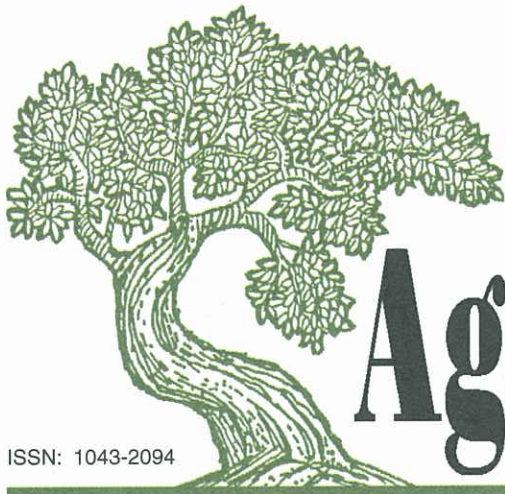
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Against the Grain

“Linking Publishers, Vendors and Librarians”

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Library Collections: Will They Still Need Us When Everything is Online and Findable by the Major Search Engines?

by **Margaret Landesman** (Head, Collection Development, Marriott Library, University of Utah, Salt Lake City, Utah; Phone: 801-581-7741) <Margaret.landesman@utah.edu>



What happens to user enthusiasm for library collections in a world where quantities of the information you used to get at the library are easily had by any person with a computer and a Web connection? Or, at least, by any person with a computer and a Web connection and a credit card and the willingness to use it?

Users have access to more stuff than anyone can manage, much less carefully judge, read, and digest. We worry about the quality of what they are getting — do they? What kinds of collections can we build that will be compelling enough to compete with the growing number of alternative routes for obtaining information?

I have recruited a bunch of people who have opinions about future directions in library collections. They are from libraries serving different sorts of users, from consortia, and from publishers exploring new and interesting publication models. I asked them to write about what they see in the future.

“As researchers have seen their access to remote materials increase, local collections have lost much of their significance,” **Michael Stoller** writes about the irony of the fact that just as we are getting good at sharing collections efficiently, we are signing licenses which eliminate sharing of the most in demand parts of our online collections. “Digital

technology has made it possible for researchers to access our collections without regard to *where* they are — in the library, at home or in the office — we should not have to add the caveat that it now depends on *who* they are.”

Amy Brunvand writes from the other end of the spectrum — about the need to create online local collections of materials which are easy to get today but which will become the missing information of tomorrow. “The future of libraries may turn out to depend just as much on obsessive bibliographers indulging their own collection fetishes as on

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If Rumors Were Horses

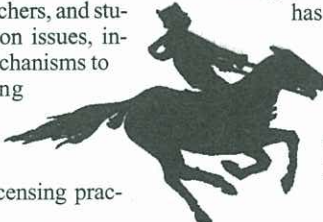
On Tuesday, September 12, 2006 the awesome **Ellen Duranceau** <efinnie@mit.edu> will begin an expanded role in the **MIT Libraries** as the new **Scholarly Publishing and Licensing Consultant**. In this new job, **Ellen** will lead the development and implementation of a program to increase awareness among faculty, researchers, and students about scholarly publication issues, including the establishment of mechanisms to assist faculty with publishing choices, publishing agreements, and management of intellectual property. **Ellen** will also continue to manage the licensing prac-

tices of the Libraries, acting as a resource for licensing policy and negotiating licenses for major databases and journal packages. To accomplish this expanded role **Ellen's** job will be full-time, and a number of her other current tasks will be re-assigned to colleagues. This new opportunity

has been made possible by additional funding from the **Provost's Office**.

Ellen will report to both **Steve Gass** (Associate Director for Public Services, MIT Libraries) <sgass@mit.edu> and **Marilyn McSweeney** (Head, Acquisitions and

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Just heard that the fantabulous **Laura “Lolly” N. Gasaway** <laura_gasaway@unc.edu>, our johnny-on-the-spot expert on copyright issues, has become **Associate Dean for Academic Affairs** at the **University of North Carolina School of Law**. She leaves the **Kathrine R. Everett Law Library** at **UNC Chapel Hill** after 21 years as **Director** to accept this new position. As we all know, **Lolly** is a past-President of the **American Association of Law Libraries** and a frequent speaker and writer on copyright and libraries. **Congratulations, Lolly!**

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Adventures in Librarianship — Selling Your Soul

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

I recently had the pleasure of sitting down with **Susan Doorslamm**, Assistant Director of Libraries for Hardly County. **Ms. Doorslamm** made news at a poster session for this year's ALA convention when she announced her Library's new marketing and fund raising strategy. Entitled "I Went Down to the Crossroads," the session made more than a few senior librarians blanch and junior librarians sign up for nursing school.

[For the sake of full disclosure, **Ms. Doorslamm** agreed to be interviewed only after **ATG** committed to a profit-sharing arrangement with the **Friends of Hardly County Library**.]

ATG: You caused quite a stir at ALA with your new approach to fund raising and marketing. Can you tell us what inspired you?

SD: Well, first was the desperation. That, followed by the County Commissioner sending out an appraiser to size-up the library's property. Then there was the six hour "Apprentice" marathon on cable.

ATG: I see. May I ask, your "Adopt a Librarian" program, has that started and is it going well?

SD: Yes and yes. At first the librarians balked at having their salaries and benefits paid

by wealthy benefactors. Most of them didn't care much for the "I belong to..." so-and-so t-shirts, especially when bathing. And for a few the groveling wasn't at all comfortable. But most of the staff has adapted quite well and no longer mind living in the basements of other peoples houses. There are some benefits, you know. Cool, dark humidity is good for the skin.

ATG: Ah, right. And I remember you saying something about stapling notices to telephone poles. How would that work?

SD: It's not just the stapling. There's no money in that. We will be stapling flyers offering seasonal services.

ATG: What do you mean by seasonal?

SD: Well, gutter cleaning, tree pruning and other hard-to-reach type jobs. The library happens to own several extra-long ladders and they shouldn't go to waste.

ATG: But most of your staff is somewhat elderly. Are they going to be able...

SD: They don't know about the ladder business yet and I'd appreciate it if you didn't tell them.


ATG: Well, okay. Mum's the word. Finally, you outlined a plan to rent out the library space for wedding receptions, theme parties, raves, and a few events of questionable legality. Were you able to follow through on that plan?

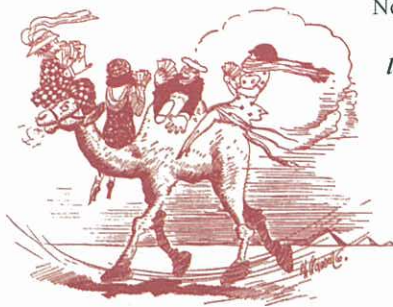
SD: I was. And it's working out very well. We're now operating in the black. No more layoff threats. A full book budget. And the librarians find that checking coats and serving drinks is no more demeaning than shushing teenagers and escorting the incontinent. We're booked solid through November.

ATG: But what about your library functions?

SD: Not much time for that, is there?

ATG: So you're keeping the library open by keeping it closed?

SD: Therein lies the genius of the whole thing. 



Library Collections ... from page 1

grand projects to aggregate back runs of the most vital scholarly literature."

There are other new sorts of entities out there — **Dan Lee** describes **Sophie**, with which we will all be able to create our own networked books — or to participate in the networked books of other authors. **Amanda Maple** sorts out new modes of access to music and its scores and recordings. **Katherine Holvoet** asks if access to government documents will be easier or more difficult. She answers, "Yes."

Johann van Reenen quotes our researchers — "If it's not digital it does not exist for me" and "Everything I need is free on the Internet." Rather than arguing this point, he suggests we strive to make it so with behind-the-scenes CD and digitization. Help customers be better users of **Google Scholar** and look for joint-venture opportunities with commercial players."

I asked **Tom Sanville** of **OhioLINK** if we still need consortia. He thinks so. "No matter how you choose to cope, you can succeed better within a group than on your own." **Tom** wants us to reinvent ourselves. "If we do not change ourselves, we ultimately will see steady, slow deterioration in our capabilities. The scary thing is that only by looking back will we see how much ground we have lost. The slow decline is deceptively painless and even rewarded

in our institutional cultures. If we wait too long, we will be unable to reverse the decline." I think this is right. And pretty scary.


Publishers face challenges — can they meet the needs of born digital scholars and also reach all of those who need access to their publications? Without going out of business? New publication models come from three groups —

Cecile Jagodzinski, **Indiana University Libraries** and **Colin Allen**, a philosopher and **SEP** editor, write about **SEPIA** — a support group for the **Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy**. The libraries liked the idea of partnering with faculty to create an Open Access tool they needed and wanted. And they wanted **SEP's** developers to start thinking about how the project can have broader applications to other disciplines.

Oxford University Press, has been trying out and studying whether or not Open Access publishing can work for mainstream journals and what has been learned from putting **NAR (Nucleic Acids Research)** online and tryout mixed models with other mainstream **OUP** journals. (See **Richard Gedye's** article in the upcoming issue of **ATG**.)

Stephen Rhind-Tutt of **Alexander Street Press** writes about a new publication model which creates something I can best characterize as a peer-reviewed wiki.

To round this off, **Rick Anderson** inquires as to whether, "If the purpose of a permanent collection is to solve problems that have now largely been solved by forces outside the library, does it still make sense for us to build and maintain permanent collections?"

On one point, I suspect all of us would agree with **Tom Sanville's** assessment of what is most difficult. "That's easy. The hardest thing is to decide what not to do, or what not to do anymore. But under limited resources, it is critical to do the much harder thing, which is to decide what not to do. We are all creatures of habit. Breaking those habits is the key." 

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by **Albert Henderson** who was editor at **Johnson Reprint Corporation** from 1964-1969. It's the eleventh in a series depicting the impact of European emigres on British and American publishing in the twentieth century. Fascinating. Highly recommended.

Another interesting article "A Google Librarian Gets into Print," by **Ben Bunnell** who is a trained librarian (went to **Michigan's School of Information**). **Ben** talks about the many **Google** initiatives that we are familiar with including www.google.com/librariancenter. Says

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