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## Collection Assessment in the Digital Age

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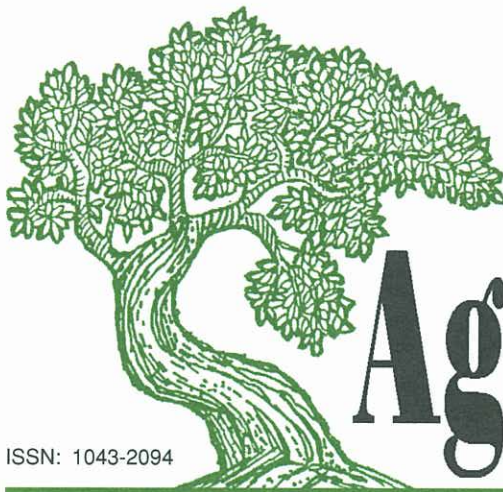
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# Against the Grain

*"Linking Publishers, Vendors and Librarians"*

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## Collection Assessment in the Digital Age

by **Kristen DeVoe** (Electronic Resources Librarian, College of Charleston)  
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The increasing availability of electronic information has extended the library's reach to its users as well as expanded collections often in terms of both quality and quantity. As electronic collections grow, libraries are finding themselves faced with a new type of collection assessment that presents challenges unique to the inclusion of materials in electronic formats in library collections. For example, the number of resources a library can include in a collection is increased with the inclusion of electronic information, the amount of data (often in the form of usage statistics) available to use in the assessment of a collection is higher, and the collection itself is in a greater state of flux as titles are quickly added and dropped from some digital collections. Further, as technology has improved quickly in recent years, a wide variety of digital tools have become available to librarians to help them assess their collections, both print and electronic. This issue of *Against the Grain* addresses the issues related to how libraries can assess their collections in the "digital age" of electronic resources, technological innovation, and new collection assessment tools and methods.

We have collected six articles from library professionals that discuss not only the collection assessment challenges faced by libraries in this age of technological modernization, but also present the innovative practices and tools for assessment that libraries can utilize because of the technology that is available.

**Debbi Smith**, Collection Development and Management Librarian at **Adelphi University**, tackles the topic of performing an inventory for a library collection that includes digital resources that are both locally and consortially licensed. **Debbi's** paper further examines the issues that libraries face when trying to quantify a collection that contains a variety of electronic resources. **Anjana Bhatt**, Electronic Resources Librarian at **Florida Gulf Coast University**, wrote up a thoughtful evaluation on the challenges and value of collecting usage statistics for electronic collections as a means to assess those collections. **Barbara DeFelice**, Director, Digital Resources Program at **Dartmouth College Library**, and **Constance Rinaldo**, Librarian of the **Ernst Mayr Library, Museum of Comparative Zoology at Harvard University**, have submitted an article describing the method and re-

sults of an experimental collection assessment of the **Digital Library for Earth Systems Education (DLESE)**, and discuss the use of metadata to analyze the collections of a digital library. **Janica Rogers**, Collection Development Coordinator and Technical Services Librarian at **SUNY Potsdam**, has included an article presenting the process and results of a new approach to collaborating with faculty to assess needs for print periodicals as collections move increasingly in the direction of online access. **Darby Oreutt**, Senior Collection Manager for Humanities and Social Sciences at **North Carolina State University**, and **Tracy Powell**, Master of Science in Library Science Student at **UNC-Chapel Hill**, examine the electronic tools that libraries use to analyze and assess their collections. While their paper most specifically focuses

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## If Rumors Were Horses

After **David Goodman** "retired" from the **Princeton University Library** four years ago, he joined the faculty at **Palmer School of Library and Information Science at Long Island University** for a few years. Effective Sept. 1, 2006 **David** is no longer with them. His permanent email address (as **Princeton** retiree), has reverted to <dgoodman@princeton.edu>. As **David** has no intention of actually retiring, he would be glad to hear of a position or other interesting work that can be done in **New York City**.

**Addlestone Library Collection Development alumnus, Morgan Brynman** has graduated from **The School of Library and Information Science at the University of South Carolina** in record time. The fantabulous **Morgan** is now reference and instruction librarian at **Butte Community College** in Oroville, CA! Congratulations, **Morgan!** And we hope to see you next year in Charleston.

Gosh! Swets celebrated its 105th anniversary

on September 26th, 2006! Beginning life as a **single bookshop** in Amsterdam, **Swets** is now one of the world's leading subscription services companies, with offices in over 20 countries around the world and is immensely proud of its heritage. By focusing on its core business of **subscription management**, **Swets** will continue to maintain and improve its range of services to customers and publishers. [www.swets.com](http://www.swets.com)

We really missed **Arlene Sievers** <axs23@case.edu> at the **Charleston Conference** last year. You know what, when I saw that she had registered for the Conference this year, I breathed a sign of relief and wrote her. Came to find out that all was very well with **Arlene**. As we all know, **Arlene** got engaged at Charleston two years ago. She got married in May a year ago, bought a house in July, as well as a new car. It was a pretty busy year!! And **Arlene's** stepson **Charlie** (who stays with them during the

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# Collection Inventory in the Digital Age: How Can We Analyze Until We Know What We Have?

by **Debbi Smith** (Collection Development and Management Librarian, Adelphi University)  
<[smith8@adelphi.edu](mailto:smith8@adelphi.edu)>

In *Fundamentals of Collection Development*, Peggy Johnson defines collection assessment as measuring the extent to which a collection meets the institutional goals of a library and collection evaluation as examining a collection either on its own terms or in relation to outside collections and comparative tools.<sup>1</sup> In either case, it seems clear that any attempt to analyze a collection necessitates determining what is actually in it. In the digital age of databases, electronic journals, eBooks and digital library management systems, it is not always completely clear what constitutes a succinct library collection.

In 2005, the **Adelphi University Libraries** began a strategic planning process using ACRL's *Standards for Libraries in Higher Education* as a template. One of the areas examined was "How do/should the library's collections and online databases compare with its peers?" This led to an attempt to systematically examine Adelphi's inventoried collections and online databases with those of its local competitors and its national peer institutions (as determined by the **National Center for Higher Education Management Systems: NCHEMS**). As a result of this strategic planning, an inventory was begun in 2006 to document the status of our collections. This inventory as well as other strategic planning initiatives related to holdings, digital resources and consortia arrangements caused us to reconsider what should be included as part of the collection.

Since the previous inventory in 1996 there has been a major renovation and shift of the collections in the main library. In addition, the general collections were merged with those of the now closed science and fine arts satellite libraries. Technological progression since 1996 has made the inventory process much more streamlined and efficient: software functionality and wireless technology in the library stacks let us scan the barcodes in each book using a laptop, compare it to our holding records "live" and add notes and codes on the records with the book actually in hand.<sup>2</sup> We are examining all of our traditional physical holdings in this manner: circulating monographs, reference volumes, bound journal volumes, microfilm, video, and audio materials. The primary objective, as it was ten years ago, is to adjust bibliographic and item records to reflect actual holdings, both in our own bibliographic database and in **OCLC's WorldCat** database.

When the last inventory at **Adelphi University Libraries** was conducted in 1995-1996 there had been two electronic conversions of the catalog (card file to CLSI, CLSI to INNOPAC) which had never been reconciled to the shelves; this inventory was conducted primarily to clean up the database. At that time the process was conducted completely off line, without the new technology that has simplified the process. A computer list was generated for each segment of the

LC classification scheme, volumes within each segment had their bar codes scanned, and scanned records were then dumped into the computer daily to be matched against what was in the bibliographic database. This process revealed what volumes were lacking barcodes and needed to be


put in the system, what books with barcodes were not in the system, and what books that were not on the shelf were actually missing. Again, the only items we were taking a count of were the traditional print items in our brick and mortar buildings.



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### Collection Assessment in the Digital Age *from page 1*

on **OCLC's WorldCat Collection Analysis Tool**, their examination also identifies important features that such assessment tools could include to be helpful in building a superb collection for their user population. Finally, **Brian Rossmann**, Government Information Specialist at **Montana State University**, has contributed a consideration of assessing government document (FDLP) collections in light of **GPO's** shift towards an essentially completely electronic depository model. 

### Rumors *from page 16*

**ARL** has published **SPEC Kit 293** which identifies the politics and procedures that **ARL** member libraries are using in the external review process for candidates who are eligible for promotion, tenure, or continuing appointment. When a librarian becomes eligible for promotion to the next rank or for permanent appointment, some institutions require external reviews of the candidate by peers at another institution. These reviews become an important part of the evaluation of a librarian's potential for ongoing contributions to the position and the profession. The **Spec Kit** examines how external reviewers are identified and asked to participate in the review process, what instructions are given to reviewers, what materials are included in candidates portfolios, and the criteria for evaluating candidates portfolios, among other questions. The survey was distributed to the 123 **ARL** member libraries in February 2006. Seventy-seven libraries (63%) responded to the survey. Librarians at 35 of the responding institutions have faculty status. Forty-four institutions offer tenure or other permanent appointments (32 with faculty status and 12 without). Slightly more than half of the respondents (39 or 51%) do not require external reviews for librarians who are candidates for promotion, tenure, or continuing appoint-