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Random Ramblings- The Difference Between a Great and a Good Research Library: Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow

Bob Holley

Wayne State University, aa3805@wayne.edu

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totally unorganized. But this gallimaufry is organized along broad subject areas and alphabetically by author within those classifications. They are kept in good order by an enthusiastic and knowledgeable staff who were busy shelving and re-shelving during my visit. A perplexed look as I tried to think of an author's name brought an immediate concerned, "Can I help you find something?" And they could and did without hesitation. There is no better way to learn a collection of books than by shelving them. My impression is that the staff loves working with those books. When I finally brought my discoveries to the register, the woman helping me, noting a particular selection, said, "Oh, I'm glad someone is finally buying this." The book is a worn paperback titled *World War II*, by **Roger W. Shugg** and **H.A. DeWeerd** and published by **The Infantry Journal** in 1946. The book looks well-traveled but it has a good home now and some contemporaries to share its shelf with.

The owner of **Browsers' Books** is **Scott Givens**, a young family man who also owns a store in Corvallis, home to **Oregon State University**. I salute **Mr. Givens** for his choice of profession, a low-margin business that depends on quantity sales and quality of stock and service. Some second-hand booksellers have grown rich through the book business. They are usually antiquarians who cater to a clientele of collectors that know what they want and will pay handsomely for the right item. But most second-hand booksellers are satisfied to make a good living, a decent enough income to pay

the rent, feed, clothe, and shelter the family, and set aside something for a rainy day and not just those plying their trade in Oregon.

Scott Givens deserves the sobriquet Bookman, for it is clear, when conversing with him and exploring his store in Albany, that he has that love of books that is sometimes described as a mania, a madness, even a disease. It takes one to know one and the one who introduced me to **Browsers' Books** was another Bookman and collector nonpareil, **Jack Walsdorf**. There seem to be few bookshops, past or present, that **Jack** has not visited, including **McMurtry's** original **Booked Up** in the Georgetown area of our nation's capital. When **Jack** sang praises for **Browsers'**, I knew that it had to be a special place, and I was not disappointed, rather, I was exalted. It was love at first sight.

Here is a place that is reasonably organized but only to a point. **Givens** told me how he liked to mix classic literature with modern writing so that the browser could see the old and the new together and have more choices than had they been totally separated

"Browsing and choices" is the very definition of a good bookshop, not unlike a good public or academic library. Browsing and choice as a philosophy are the mark of a good bookseller, the very character of the bookseller as artist, a retailer with a spiritual affinity with his ware, the codex, that most perfect technology for preserving and sharing the wisdom and knowledge and whimsy and adventure and all else of all ages.

A good bookseller, one that deserves the premier rating, must price the books fairly

and fairly compensate those who sell stock to the bookseller. **Scott Givens** rates *Premier* on both counts. What impressed me most about what he bought from me was what he selected and what he left in the box. He left books that he either had enough of or knew he couldn't sell. The ones he bought were books he knew he could sell and esoteric books that he was drawn to as a bookman, ones that he hoped he could sell. At the very least, some of his customers would find them interesting enough, too, and an interesting book will sell. But what impressed me most about **Scott Givens** was his integrity. A day after my visit to **Browsers' Books**,

I received a note in the mail along with a business card and a check that **Scott** included because, upon reflection, he felt that he had not paid a fair price for the items he bought from me. **Diogenes** would not need his lamp in **Browsers'**.

Any business has its risks, but **Scott Givens** exhibits a certain courage and optimism to have put his fortune and his future into the second-hand book business, but he is surviving and, I hope, prospering in an unlikely sort of town during a time when eBooks that you can't really own, share, or re-sell are getting so much undeserved attention. So if you ever find yourself in Oregon on Interstate Highway 5, take exit 233 and follow along Pacific Avenue in Albany. Stop at the corner of Pine Street, park your vehicle, and plan to spend some time and money on bibliotherapy. Buy at least one book and drive away feeling better than you did when you drove in. 🐾

Random Ramblings — The Difference between a Great and a Good Research Library: Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow

Column Editor: **Bob Holley** (Professor, Library & Information Science Program, Wayne State University, Detroit, MI 48202; Phone: 248-547-0306; Fax: 313-577-7563) <aa3805@wayne.edu>

I've pondered many years about what makes the difference between a great and a good research library. I finally hit upon an operational definition that makes sense to me, at least for the past. I'll start with an example. I wrote my dissertation at **Yale University** with access to one of the greatest research libraries in my field, French Literature. After less than a week spent in looking for a topic, I chose a niche subject, *Dialogues of the Dead*. This minor genre, popular from around 1680-1720 in several European literatures, was based upon one classical text written by the Greek author **Lucian**. I immediately started looking for the key documents to begin my research. I had no worries about the major authors, but I needed the only critical work on the genre, privately published in Paris, and a major text by **Jungerman**, a distinctly minor author. I found both in the stacks ready to be checked out. Along the way, I consulted the best work on **Lucian**, published in French in 1882, and a scholarly article

published in Germany while the bombs rained down during World War II. The only document missing from **Yale** was a dissertation edition of **Fontenelle's** *Dialogues des morts*, which I was able to borrow on extended interlibrary loan. I chose my subject and then found virtually everything that I needed in one great library.

The process would have been much different in a good library such as the **University of Utah** or **Wayne State University**. I know these collections well from my experiences as French selector. I would have needed to select my topic carefully if I wished to depend mostly on my institution's library resources. While interlibrary loan would be an option, I would need to find some way to make print or, today, digital copies of any missing key texts that I would need to consult frequently. Visiting other libraries on research trips would pose the same issues for such documents. One last option would be for me to go live somewhere near a great library to make use of its resources. I have always

suspected that many **Wayne State** faculty and students live in Ann Arbor because they have reciprocal access to the **University of Michigan** collections in another great library. As a doctoral student with a good library, I would have had to choose my subject carefully or find alternate ways to access key research materials.

What I described above for the past was also true for faculty research in many disciplines. In the same way as many STM (science/technology/medicine) researchers needed lab facilities, many Humanities and some Social Science researchers needed access to key monographic research materials. As long as serials were available only in print, the same was true for STM. I remember a case study for my management class

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New Products.
New Content.
New Look.

Same Proven Results.

A leading provider
of digital humanities
and social sciences content,
Project MUSE offers books and
journals, from prestigious university presses and scholarly
societies that are fully integrated for search and discovery.
Welcome to a new chapter in scholarly research.

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about a high-level faculty hire in oceanography who asked for thousands of dollars in new serial subscriptions. During this period, I strongly favored giving new faculty and doctoral students some sort of library allocation to buy materials to support their research.

Today, providing resources is easier for those disciplines with comprehensive research databases since, I believe, the expectation that researchers access print items is low in many disciplines. Research libraries still need to provide access to books for Humanities and Social Sciences scholars. Good libraries promise just-in-time availability. Patron-driven acquisitions can acquire most needed materials from the normal vendors in print or as eBooks, from print-on-demand, in the out-of-print market, from a growing number of comprehensive collections such as **Google Scholar**, the **Hathi Trust**, etc., or through ILL. For ILL materials, the library can ask for permission to digitize materials, especially if they are out of print. Great libraries are still building collections for the future, just-in-case, albeit less comprehensively for many of them. **Yale University**, as a great library, had thousands of unused books. The books were there when I needed them, but I doubt that anyone in the intervening forty years has looked at the more esoteric materials. Self-publishing is also complicating matters. According to the report I heard on National Public Radio, of

the one million titles published last year in the United States, 750,000 were self-published, mostly as eBooks. I don't know how much interest research libraries should have in these materials. A final trend for some good libraries is to reduce voluntarily print collections by removing unused materials to create space for other library or university functions. Warehousing is dead; access is alive.

What about the future of collection development as many great libraries turn into good libraries? Does it matter? Paradoxically, the current model may result in great libraries being those libraries with enough funding to purchase large collections of electronic resources. With the just-in-time model described above, an English professor in a good library would have almost equal access to needed resources as that of a faculty member in the great library that had already purchased them in digital or print formats. The researcher in the good library will need personal or institutional access to funding and may have to wait a bit for the items to arrive, but the funding in many cases shouldn't be that great nor the wait very long. On the other hand, has the great library wasted resources on the materials that no one will ever use? The exception for the researcher in a good library may be rare materials, but even here many libraries are turning away from using funds to purchase common materials. Instead, they are channeling resources to make their rare materials digitally accessible.

The issue then becomes whether the just-in-time model won't work in some areas so that great libraries are still needed. Area studies are the first possible exception. If significant numbers of print materials with research significance have a good chance of disappearing forever from the marketplace because of short print runs and the inability of local libraries to collect them, a great library should purchase them right away since they won't be available just-in-time for good libraries. With increasing globalization, I suspect that the number of these areas where great libraries need to collect comprehensively is diminishing.

A second area worth considering is eBooks. I suspect that good libraries won't have to worry about eBooks from commercial publishers, even those that appear only in digital editions, because enough libraries are worried about this problem to solve it. I have greater concern for the vast numbers of privately-published, digital books. **Amazon** is actively seeking digital authors; there are currently 1,475,826 **Kindle** books available for sale at 3:45 pm, July 21, 2012. **Apple** advertises over 700,000 for sale from **iBooks**. I don't know how many of these items are uniquely digital and how many have or will have interest for researchers. The **Kindle** Direct Publishing Terms and Conditions allow authors to withdraw their digital books with five days' notice so that some may disappear, perhaps without a trace. I don't know if any libraries are considering systematic efforts

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to archive **Kindle** and **iBooks** books of potential research interest.

The third area is grey literature. Great libraries provided comprehensive subject coverage through their extensive collecting of gray literature, which includes “patents, technical reports from government agencies or scientific research groups, working papers from research groups or committees, white papers, and preprints.” (Wikipedia) Bibliographers spent much effort in tracking down these resources, which often cost very little once they were found. I suspect that many of these resources exist digitally on the Web. Both good and great libraries will be able to find them once researchers or librarians know that they exist. Great libraries, however, may continue to collect them for the reason given next.

Good libraries that build collections based upon patron-driven acquisitions will be able to provide researchers with what they want. Great libraries will be able to provide researchers with useful resources that they didn’t know they needed. Perhaps the main function of great libraries will be to scan subject areas where they would have comprehensively collected in the print world at Conspectus Level 5 to acquire in print or digital format materials of research interest that do not appear in standard sources and that even the reasonably-skilled researcher might never discover. In some cases, a record with a link to the digital resource may be all that is needed if continued availability is highly probable. Faculty and students in these great libraries will be able to use the integrated library system or its successor to find useful items that would otherwise be difficult to identify. Researchers in good libraries may need to develop more sophisticated searching skills to include scanning **Amazon** entries, developing precisely-targeted searches in Google or the other search engines, or discovering specialized bibliographies. Or, if the great libraries do decide to collect the items or the links as described above, all that the good libraries’ researchers may need to do is to access the great libraries’ integrated library systems, which I assume would be available on the Internet.

To conclude, to assure the greatest access to scholarly resources, perhaps the great libraries of the world should revive the idea of cooperative collection development where the goal is discovery rather than purchase. The commercial databases will cover some areas, notably STM, because enough great and good libraries have traditionally purchased these resources to make their creation and maintenance profitable. For poorer areas with extensive grey literature or self-publication, I could see informal agreements where, for example, the **Yale University** libraries would collect comprehensively anything on the Incas, while the **UC Berkeley** libraries would do the same for the Mayans. While the Internet has destroyed any hope of systematically collecting all human knowledge, newly-focused cooperative efforts would be a step in the right direction and provide a new definition of a great library. 🌱

Curating Collective Collections — “Reflexive Curation: Accident, Risk, and Medium in the Collectively Curated Collection”

by **Richard Fyffe** (Samuel R. and Marie-Louise Librarian of the College, Grinnell College) <fyffe@grinnell.edu>

Column Editor: **Sam Demas** (College Librarian Emeritus, Carleton College & Principal, Sam Demas Collaborative Consulting) <sdemas03@gmail.com>

In this column, I have been invited to reflect on the risks we may face as we move closer to a distributed, shared, “collectively curated” national or global collection, drawing on some ideas I explored in 2002 in an article on “Technological Change and the Scholarly Communication Reform Movement.”¹ There, I pondered the inherent risks in relying on market mechanisms for production and distribution of the scholarly and cultural record in digital formats, as those risks may be illuminated by the work of social theorists **Manuel Castells**, **Ulrich Beck**, and

Anthony Giddens. Here, I want to extend some of those considerations to print as a medium and to the systems that are emerging for a more strongly interconnected network of shared collections of print. Is the digital medium “riskier” — more vulnerable to loss — than print? And is risk inherent in the medium — the material — or in something else? What is the nature of this “risk,” and how should we respond?

But I want to start with a personal story. Early in my career, as chief librarian of the **Essex Insti-**

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News From the Field

Δ **Mark Sandler** reports that **CIC’s** publisher-based Shared Print Repository focusing on STM journals has now validated and processed 75,000 journal backfile volumes at the **Indiana University** facility.

Δ The **Maine Shared Collections Strategy** partners have completed an **OCLC** reclamation project to ensure more accurate data in **WorldCAT**, and collection analysis is underway. The Maine program will be based on a distributed archiving model.

Δ **Judy Russell** reports that Florida’s statewide shared collection program has a new name: **FLARE, Florida Academic Repository**. While awaiting funding for a high-density facility, **U. of Florida** has leased warehouse space to begin storing materials within the shared collections framework. Work is underway on an MOU specifying last copy retention policy through **FLARE**, and policies are available at: csul.net/node/774.

Δ **ReCAP, Research Collections Preservation Consortium**, the shared storage facility of **Princeton, NY Public Library** and **Columbia** has begun a one-year planning process to explore changing the shared library storage facility to a shared collection. **ReCAP** partners are working with consultants **Lizanne Payne** and **Marshall Breeding**, and organizations **Sustainable Collections Services** and **OCLC Research** to identify business models, discovery tools, and workflows, and to analyze **ReCAP** holdings to set priorities for sharing.

Δ A total of 102 libraries from 17 states joined **WEST, the Western Reserve Storage Trust**, in 2011, including three sets of consortial members. In the first archiving, five Archive Builders (**UC SRLF, UC NRLF, Stanford, Arizona State, and Oregon**) have ingested and reviewed hundreds of titles and thousands of volumes, and an additional 13 Archive Holders have committed to archive thousands more titles. For cycle 2, Archive Holders and Builders have been identified for an additional 4,000 titles beginning in summer 2012.

Δ **OhioLink** has approved a *Preservation Policy for Serials Contained in the Ohio Regional Library Depositories* that governs management of the collections of the 13 state-supported universities and continues its pilot efforts aimed towards de-duping their five shared depositories.

Δ The libraries of the **California State University** system have begun a shared collection management project under the aegis of the *Libraries of the Future Taskforce (LOFT)*. **Sustainable Collection Services (SCS)** will compile and examine circulation and overlap data across six LA Basin campuses. The results will provide a foundation for discussing shared print options within the LA Basin.

Δ **Sustainable Collection Services (SCS)** has created a *Deselection KnowledgeBase*, which is now freely available to the academic library community. It includes 250 articles, white-papers, Websites, blogs, slide decks, conference proceedings, and books — all focused on monographs weeding; offsite book storage; library space planning; shared print initiatives; collaborative collection management; collection use; collection assessment; national-level collections research; digital preservation; and various musings about the future of print collections. See <http://sustainablecollections.com/deselection-kb/>. 🌱