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And They Were There-Reports of Meetings

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The Interconnected Information Environment: Perspectives for Resources and Technical Services

Report by Janet L. Flowers
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The Resources and Technical Services Section of the North Carolina Library Association sponsored a workshop, entitled, "The Interconnected Information Environment: Perspectives for Resources and Technical Services," on September 27, 1996. The workshop attracted 80 attendees and was quite successful in providing various perspectives on the issues to be considered when designing, selecting, or implementing automated systems.

Keith Wright from UNC-Greensboro set the stage by talking about some of the pitfalls and promises of automation. He noted several problems, including the fact that technology really is a consumable, not a capital expenditure, i.e., there are ongoing replacement expenses. He also pointed out that there are hardware problems resulting from varying levels of transmission capacity. He further noted that librarians are still trying to put square information into a MARC record. For perspectives, he strongly urged attention to the needs of users who a) do not care about our problems with technology (they want what they want when they want it.) and b) need a seamless information environment. In planning for technology, Dr. Wright emphasized that librarians need to become more informed about user characteristics and needs.

Pam McKirdy from Greensboro College talked about systems from an administrative perspective, using the concepts of priorities, politics, and poltergeists to establish the environment in which decisions are made. Ms. McKirdy noted that there must be far more cost/benefit analysis in these tight budget times. She also advised careful attention to all of the players in the technology picture. She acknowledged that the best made plans are often changed by surprises, ranging from gifts to termites and noted that flexibility is often required when dealing with technology. She advocated a positive "make it so" approach.

Catherine Wilkinson from Appalachian State University talked about the ways in which systems decisions are made. She categorized them into three approaches: hindsight, foresight, and nosight. Hindsight is based upon the library's previous experiences; foresight is based upon a focus towards the future, and nosight is a lack of experience as well as a crisis environment when making the decision. Ms. Wilkinson has experienced systems decisions using all three of these approaches and shared a list of questions to use as part of the decision-making process to ensure foresight.

Kathy Brown, from North Carolina State University, described an outsider's view from inside a software development project. Ms. Brown spent considerable time working as a consultant for DRA on their acquisitions and serials control modules. The information from this experience is proprietary; however, Ms. Brown was able to share some excellent tips with the audience. They include the following: a) pay attention to standards development, b) look for opportunities in development efforts, c) prioritize your functional needs from essential to trivial (do not ask for everything!), d) remember that the vendor must market products that have universal appeal (which may not be what you want), e) take leadership roles in feedback to systems vendors. Ms. Brown made it clear that library systems vendors are under severe constraints in their development projects, including limited funding, very different user groups, and increasing expectations for faster turnaround on software releases. She advised the audience to take a holistic approach when making systems decisions.

Ricki Brown, from Cumberland County Public Library, discussed the ideal versus reality or making the system work for you. Ms. Brown talked about the increased management reports available from their new system and how they had resulted in a rethinking of their needs and ways of doing business. Susan Wood, of Glaxo/Wellcome, Inc., used Sisyphus and the Rock of Automation as a metaphor for the sometimes uphill battle to get everything we want for acquisitions and serials. Be aware that there are always survival issues such as downtime and ergonomic concerns. Ms. Wood recommended training, humor, and patience to help staff through the transition times. Joe Collins, from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, described the systems environment in the Technical Services Division there and how they are moving toward the use of Technical Services Workstations to integrate the processes. Mr. Collins recommended characteristics such as realism, open-mindedness, adaptability, patience and optimism for getting through the changes.

The final speaker, Jordan Scepanski, the new Executive Director of the Triangle Research Libraries Network, closed the meeting with advice regarding choosing systems for collaboration. He noted that the industry has become highly competitive and increasingly international. He shared the following principles: 1) Do not be misled by the "grass is greener" syndrome. 2) Be aware that no system does everything, i.e., have realistic expectations. 3) Do not just follow the leader; what is right for other libraries may not be right for your situation. 4) Remember that the system vendors are in business and must make a profit; your needs may not coincide with theirs. 5) Consider the track records of the system vendors when making a decision. 6) Obtain as much information as possible, including information from other customers. 7) Don't fall for a hands-on interface. Be aware that you are introducing yet another player into the automation field when you are using multiple vendors. 8) Be certain to always think about the users' perspectives. 9) Select for your setting; think about your particular needs. 10) Remember that cost is not the only -- and maybe not even the most important -- factor in the decision. 11) Be aware that technology does not save money. 12) Choose a system for your future not your present.
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needs. 13) Remember that standards are important. 14) Promote collaboration with other libraries or institutions whenever possible to conserve money. and 15) Just because the director wants it, does not make it bad. Most directors value the opinions of staff and are not always able to make the popular choice. Dr. Scepanski ended with an admonition that the systems or tools we use are secondary considerations; it is we, the people, who compensate for their failures and maximize their strengths to provide the best possible service to our users.

Special Libraries Association/ Southwest Regional Conference
Albuquerque NM
October 30-November 1, 1996

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The theme for this first ever SLA Southwestern Regional Conference was “The Once and Future Library: Technology in Transition.” An appropriate theme for today (and years to come!), this conference featured a full day of Continuing Education (CE) programs and a day and a half of Conference sessions. Also fitting, many of the speakers for the conference sessions were drawn from the southwest. Five Chapters from the southwestern US worked for nearly three years in the planning for this conference: Oklahoma, Rio Grande, Rocky Mountain, San Diego, and Texas. Out of 225 people attending the conference (more were turned away in the end due to space limitations) 30% were from other Chapters.

Attending a regional conference has many advantages over attending the annual conference. For some people, it is much more affordable in terms of both time and money, plus it is easier to meet and talk with colleagues in the more intimate atmosphere. In addition, the smaller focus with fewer program choices was a real plus for some.

For the conference itself, there were ten sessions, divided into two separate tracks: “Applying Technology Today” and “Trends of the Future.” In the first track were the following programs: “Copyright Protection of Electronic Information” presented by Dr. J. Wesley Cochran, Director of the Law Library at Texas Tech University; “Working Effectively with MIS” presented by Olga Wise, Librarian at Tandum Computers Unix Division in Austin; “Managing Electronic Journals: A Case in Point” with two speakers, Dr. Susan Starr, Director of the Science and Engineering Library at UC San Diego and Rebecca Ringer, Computer Files Cataloging Librarian at the Geisel Library, UC San Diego; “Ask the Experts: Finding Information on the Internet” given by four experts in: business information (Judith Bernstein of Parish Business and Economics Library at the University of New Mexico), biomedical information (Sarah Morley at Lovelace Medical Library, Albuquerque), legal information (Larry Dershem at the Legal Research Center, UC San Diego), and chemistry information (Jacqueline Stack, Los Alamos National Laboratory Research Library); and “Making it Through the Millennium: Survival Tips for a Changing World,” a group discussion led by Barbara Denton, Director of Research Information Services, Inc. in Austin.

The second track had the following programs: “Corporate Library Survival Past the Year 2000,” presented by Dr. Lawrence Enoch, Manager of the network MCI Library and owner of Enterprise Information Services; “Integrating the Digital Library Laboratory (LANL) personnel, the largest multi-disciplinary national laboratory, situated on 43 square miles, with 54 major facilities, and 12,000 employees. Among other things, LANL is the world’s premier high performance computing center, working to solve problems in areas such as modeling and simulation of the global climate, wildfire and hurricane paths, and the spread of influenza. The main principles of the Library Without Walls are delivery of integrated products to the scientists’ desktop via a Web interface, knowledge management and facilitation of scientific communication, with development driven by customer requirements, and judging of products by their ability to enhance collaboration.

The current projects use a Web interface and Z39.50 and include mounting scientific databases (of special note, the development of the Science Citation Index into a end-user friendly product with a Web interface), digitizing 10,000 Los Alamos technical reports, adding electronic journals (integrating them with the catalog and citation databases, and involving collaboration with other New Mexico libraries and scientific publishers), and development of electronic preprints databases.

Each of these has raised many questions about both documents and users, including the navigation of large image files, the user interface for compound documents, document authentication, and use of natural language for information retrieval. The session ended with this list of questions, emphasizing customer needs as the bottom line, to ask about the project: What is the value added? Are end-users more productive? Is the cost justifiable? Does it facilitate collaboration?

“Copyright Protection of Electronic Information,” presented by Dr. J. Wesley Cochran, Director of the Law Library at Texas Tech University. Beginning with a review of the basics of the Act of 1976, this session moved into a discussion of what changes are coming our way as we move into the electronic environment. Some of the more interesting issues concern Section 109 of the Copyright Act of 1976, CONFU, and pending legislation. Section 109 is the “First Sale Doctrine.” This means that the owner of a legitimate copy of a work can do almost anything with that copy — resell it, give it away, or even burn it. But things are different in the software/electronic world; in most cases, one is not buying an actual copy but buying a license to use the copy. So the First Sale Doctrine does not apply.

CONFU is the Conference on Fair Use (in the electronic environment), consisting of publishers, information vendors, and librarians. Three of the working groups are addressing things such as ILL, images, and electronic reserves (although that group apparently never met a second time). Suffice it to say that fair use in the electronic age is very

Puzzle: The Library Without Walls at Los Alamos,” presented by Rick Luce, Director of the Los Alamos National Laboratory Library; “Exploring Document Management Technology: A Corporate Solution for Library Services,” by Bruce Carothers, President of RightAngle Systems and Technology, Encinitas, CA; “Mass Data Storage: Two Points of View,” by Joe Sturdevant, Program Manager for High Performance Storage Solutions Division of IBM and Dr. Stuart Weibel, Senior Research Scientist, OCLC; and Multimedia: “What’s Happening. What’s Next?” presented by Margaret Sylvia, Assistant Director for Technical Services, St. Mary’s University Academic Library, San Antonio.

Because it is not feasible to give details on all of the above sessions, I will describe in more detail two, one from each track.

Integrating the Digital Library Puzzle: The Library Without Walls at Los Alamos,” Rick Luce, Director of the Los Alamos National Laboratory Research Library.

The Library Without Walls is intended to be a new and better way to serve the information needs of Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL) personnel, the largest multi-disciplinary national laboratory, situated on 43 square miles, with 54 major facilities, and 12,000 employees. Among other things, LANL is the world’s premier high performance computing center, working to solve problems in areas such as modeling and simulation of the global climate, wildfire and hurricane paths, and the spread of influenza. The main principles of the Library Without Walls are delivery of integrated products to the scientists’ desktop via a Web interface, knowledge management and facilitation of scientific communication, with development driven by customer requirements, and judging of products by their ability to enhance collaboration.

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unclear (and that many would like to see applications of fair use severely curtailed).

Among the pending legislation of interest are: database protection bills, which
would allow the act of compiling a database to be copyrightable so that something like the
alphabetical list of names in a phone book could be copyrighted (contrary to a
previous court decision); the National Information Infrastructure, which would, among
other things, move the Copyright Office from the Library of Congress to the Department
of Commerce; and the upcoming international convention in Geneva.

There were three CE courses, a full day titled "Digital Libraries: Computer Concepts
and Technologies for Managing Library Col-
lections," taught by William Saffady (Pro-
fessor, School of Information Science and
Policy, State University of New York at
Albany); a half day session called "Finding
the Right Stuff: Using and Evaluating
Internet Search Engines," taught by Candy
Schwartz (Associate Professor, Simmons
College Graduate School of Library and In-
formation Science); and a half-day course
titled "Electronic Document Delivery: The
Ultimate Solution?" taught by Mary Jackson
(Owner/Manager Deliv Service Consult-
ant, Association of Research Libraries).

These sessions, all giving official CE cred-
its, received good reviews.

Twenty-four vendors displayed their
wares at the Technology Fair and helped
support the conference. Not surprisingly,
there wasn't enough time set aside specifi-
cally for the vendors, but it was a pleasure
to see and talk with them in this more intimate
setting. The conference kickoff was a splen-
did reception for the attendees and the ven-
dors, set up in the vendor area. Sylvia Piggot,
the President of SLA gave a short speech
and all the Presidents of the participating
Chapters were introduced. The food was ex-
cellent, and a great time was had by all.

Shopping in the Serials Supermarket Today
Report by Joyce Tenney
(U. of Maryland Baltimore County)

On October 4, 1996, at Franklin and
Marshall College in Lancaster, Pennsylva-
nia, NASIG and the Delaware Valley Chap-
ter of ACRL cosponsored a seminar en-
titled "Shopping in the Serials Supermarket
Today." It was focusing on the expanding
modes of publication for scholarly informa-
tion and their impact on collection develop-
ment within academic libraries today.

The speakers were John Tagler, Direc-
tor of Corporate Communications, Elsevier
USA, Ellen M. Saur, co-manager of Project
Muse for Johns Hopkins University Press,
and John G. Zenelis, Acting University Li-
brarian, Temple University. John Tagler
spoke on "STM Publishing Yesterday, To-
day and Tomorrow." He started the discus-
sion with a history of STM publishing and
the scholarly journal. The ten traditional
types of scholarly journals were discussed
and how electronic journals are developing
as companions to them, or as their own enti-
ties. The various electronic products cur-
rently is place and being developed by
Elsevier were discussed. Lessons learned
from these projects were outlined and how
they are influencing the future plans for
projects at Elsevier. Ellen Saur gave a his-
tory to date of Project Muse and how it has
grown and changed. A demonstration was
given to show the various capabilities of the
product. She announced that two new elec-
tronic only journals would be added this
year. They have plans to try to find a fund-
ing source to add back files to the project
at some future date. They are trying to bring
in other publishers to expand the scope of
the project. The various pricing structures for
Project Muse were discussed and how the
future looks in terms of pricing options.
Future plans for increased bibliographic infor-
mation and additional features were ex-
plained. John Zenelis spoke on the budget-
ing and collection development aspect of
dealing with rapidly expanding information
technology, and balancing user demands
with flat or declining budgets. He discussed
ways Temple University is dealing with electronic
resources of all forms and responding to
user demands. He expressed the need for all
to become very aware of the licensing agree-
ments and be aggressive when negotiating
with publishers and agents.

Following lunch, a lively question and
answer session occurred with many sharing
ideas, and problems that their institutions
were experiencing in dealing with electronic
resources and technologies. Again and again,
budgeting problems were discussed.