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And They Were There: Reports of Meetings -- 27th Annual Charleston Conference

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And They Were There

Reports of Meetings — 27th Annual Charleston Conference

Issues in Book and Serial Acquisition, “What Tangled Webs We Weave,” Francis Marion Hotel, Embassy Suites Historic District, and College of Charleston (Addlestone Library and Arnold Hall, Jewish Studies Center), Charleston, SC, November 7-10, 2007

Charleston Conference Reports compiled by: Ramune K. Kubilius (Collection Development / Special Projects Librarian, Northwestern University, Galter Health Sciences Library) <r-kubilius@northwestern.edu>

Column Editor’s Note: Thank you to all of the conference attendees who volunteered to become reporters, providing highlights of so many conference sessions. Check for more reports in upcoming ATG issues. Also, visit the Charleston Conference Website for session handouts and discussions. The entire 2007 Charleston Conference Proceedings will be published by Libraries Unlimited / Greenwood Publishing Group, available in fall 2008. — RKK

Concurrent Sessions — Friday, November 9th, 2007

Cross Campus Collaboration — Presented by Doug Kiker (Assistant Librarian, University of Florida), Cecilia Botero (Assistant Director for Resource Management, Health Sciences Center Library, University of Florida), Edward T. Hart (Acquisitions and Serials Librarian, Chiles Legal Information Center, University of Florida)

Reported by: Rachel A. Erb (Dr. C.C. and Mabel L. Criss Library, University of Nebraska-Omaha) <rerb@mail.unomaha.edu>

Even though the presentation was about addressing electronic resource and serial collection development at one of the largest research universities in the Southeast, if not the US, it was possible for librarians at smaller academic institutions to glean some ideas about collaborative efforts. What one quickly learns is that even institutions with traditionally more robust budgets also have to pare down in the face of increasing costs, etc... The presenters provided a clear overview of how to collaborate with independent libraries on the same campus. Resource sharing, and the necessary license negotiating that ensues, seem a bit daunting. The creativity of the presenters’ problem-solving is commendable.

Conservancy for Print — Presented by Matthew Bruccoli (Jefferies Distinguished Professor Emeritus, Department of English, University of South Carolina), Richard Layman (Vice President, Bruccoli Clark Layman, Inc.), Joel Myerson (Carolina Distinguished Professor Emeritus of American Literature, University of South Carolina)

Reported by: Blair Hinson (SLIS Student, University of South Carolina)

In stark contrast to the recurring theme of this year’s conference of providing more electronic access and accommodating new sources like Wikipedia and Google because that is where students go first for their information, Bruccoli, Layman and Myerson came out as strong advocates for the reference book, in print and on paper. But far from appearing as twenty-first century Luddites, they made a compelling

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case for the tactile and sensory experience of handling a book, one that was edited and vetted and published, and one that provides a level of authority not possible with a questionable Website.

In a presentation made without a Powerpoint or electronic wizardry, Brucelli noted that real books aren’t a “quick fix.” While the conveniences of eBooks are extolled, he noted that reference books can be read with pleasure in a well organized format and evoke a sense of authority not possible with eBooks. Unlike single-author “heroic” reference books and the libraries they are found in, Websites are not centers of intellectual and cultural life. He likened the sensation of using eBooks to “kissing through a screen door.”

Layman pointed out the inevitability of the Internet, but noted the resulting paradigm shift in information is in the repackaging of old information in a new form. He likened the proliferation of digital content to a “hacker culture,” one that is irreverent and challenges authority. But while delivery is king right now, value in authority will be back.

Myerson noted that in the electronic age, it was assumed we could know more, but we have become so dependent on the technology so that we actually know less. An example he used was that one third of young people today cannot even recall a phone number without consulting the phone book in their cellular handset. Rather than conceding authority and becoming coffee shops, libraries need to reassert their authority and value. Otherwise, as Brucelli pointed out, libraries might just as well go the next step and increase traffic by putting in a saloon.

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We’re All In This Together — Lessons Learned in Library-Vendor-Publisher Relations — Presented by Anna Fleming, Moderator (Acquisitions Librarian, Galter Health Sciences Library, Northwestern University), Lynn M. Fortney (Vice President & Director, Biomedical Division, EBSCO Information Services), Nick Niemeyer (Site License Manager, Annual Reviews), Kevin Cohn (Product Director, Atypon Systems, Inc.)

Over 60 persons in the Carolina Ballroom heard the panelists’ answers to questions posed by moderator Fleming (shortened here): What do you wish librarians knew about how your company does business? What do you wish you knew more about when starting to work with a new library customer? What is the biggest obstacle to working together smoothly? What’s been most helpful in securing good relations? The panelists, representing different sectors, didn’t necessarily relate to all questions (some were less relevant to their work), but all addressed each question, making for a lively session. Librarians are key direct or indirect constituents in all panelists’ work. Cohn indicated that his company’s visibility (name recognition) may be an issue. Other communication issues and problems: the lack of: clarity (in emails, for example), openness, forthrightness, feedback. Niemeyer expressed amazement at how rarely things go wrong. Moderator Fleming, with portable mike in hand, managed a lively Q&A. Fortney capably represented the subscription agent sector perspective when society publishers in the audience expressed their opinions on why direct contact with customers, without intermediary subscription vendors, is desirable, and at least one librarian audience member expressed dissatisfaction when that is done with the lure of a large discount. As moderator Fleming indicated at one point, “it is a complicated universe.”

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SERU — NISO’s Simplified E-Resources Understanding (SERU) Project — Presented by Todd Carpenter (Managing Director, NISO — National Information Standards Organization), Lauren Kane (Director of Publishers Relations, BioOne), Selden Durgom Lamoureux (Electronic Resources Librarian, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill)

Reported by: Karen Fischer (University of Iowa Libraries) <karen-fischer@uiowa.edu>

Carpenter stated that the goal of NISO is to create community-based consensus standards, and SERU is a good example of how that works. In the Fall 2005, a group of people explored whether there might be another way to arrange licensing, so that not every single resource, when the risks are low, would need a negotiated license. By October 2006 the group reached an initial common understanding and approached NISO. NISO members will vote on SERU in Summer 2008.

The SERU best practice statement is a mutual understanding between a library and a publisher. It addresses many of the same issues common to license agreement, but is eliminates the need for a contract by articulating a shared understanding. It is intended to be used when the risks are low for both the publisher and the library. Lamoureux, a member of the SERU team, noted that SERU shifts the “agreement” between a publisher and library away from contract law and into the realm of copyright law (fair use). She encouraged libraries and publishers to register for SERU during its pilot period (and after!). Lastly, Kane shared a publisher’s perspective. BioOne felt that joining SERU was a natural partnership because it fit with their goals, such as their commitment to Libraries and sustainable revenue, and it helps reduce the barrier to timely researcher access to information. The subscription economy need not be adversarial, and Kane encouraged libraries to start asking publishers if they have registered with SERU. Visit: http://www.niso.org/committees/SERU/.

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Adventures in Open Data — Presented by Greg Tananbaum (Consultant), Myron Gutmann (Director, Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research), Sara Wood (Chief Data Officer, Swivel)

Reported by: Elizabeth Ann Blake (SLIS Student, University of South Carolina)

In this session, moderator Tananbaum and speakers Gutmann, and Wood discussed the numerous questions as well as the abundant promise that currently surrounds the open data movement. This movement, which allows for certain data to be available to everyone — without restrictions such as copyright or patents, is undoubtedly of enormous value (monetarily and otherwise) to data seekers. However, many challenges remain such as establishing the authority, provenance, and confidentiality of information and the ability for distributors and gatherers of data to keep abreast of technological change. Gutmann discussed the history of data sharing in the social sciences, and lauded the open data movement for its success of open data as a tool for collaboration in the social sciences. He explained that this new and expanding technology has increased data use and stressed that it is essential for data to be properly curated and preserved. Wood, the Chief Data officer of a new, very 2.0-oriented Website called Swivel, discussed the importance of facilitating data curation through emerging technologies. Swivel’s mission is to make data useful by allowing the exploration and comparison of data, graphs, and maps, and allowing users to share insights via email, blog or data downloads about the data uploaded to the site.

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Preservation in Historic Relief: How Can the Past Help Us Plan For the Future — Presented by Roger Schonfeld
(Manager of Research, Ithaka)

Reported by: Angela Kleinschmidt (SLIS Student, University of South Carolina)

Schonfeld gave a presentation about the history of document preservation in the U.S., and he started with the contention that the American university system is decentralized, and that this is a defining element of the system. He stated that universities have always competed against each other, and this decentralization was a hindrance to the 19th century idea of a “hub library.” The hub library would be a national system of libraries, with regionally located hubs. The organization would cut costs, and improve the collections of all participants. The idea didn’t come to fruition because no existing organization wanted to head up the initiative, and most of the libraries didn’t want to give up their collections.

Schonfeld also spoke of the newsprint-to-microfilm transition, and its parallels to today’s print-to-digital revolution. He said that when there is such a transition, there needs to be an organized effort to ensure that some of the value of the original artifact isn’t lost in the migration to the artifact’s replacement. One member of the audience mentioned that in the newsprint migration, many microfilm copies did not include the advertisements, which would be of interest to researchers today. Schonfeld suggested that for this reason, there should be a project to ensure at least one copy of print documents remain in their original format.

This session discussed the roles of publishers, librarians, and professors in the increasing numbers of journals that are on the market today. Professors need to publish for tenure, which gives publishers a reason to create journals, which makes librarians cringe at the thought of purchasing the new journals for their collections. The session was presented in a roundtable format with representatives from each side of the equation. This led to an exciting discussion with each person telling his side of the argument regarding the expansion of journals in the marketplace today.

Each side had great arguments. The professors need to publish for tenure, librarians need to provide access to the information to their patrons and publishers need to meet market demands. The publisher, Rolnik, took the brunt of the criticism. He took it in stride and finished with a strong discussion of the publisher’s role in expanding the literature. Publishers are publishing more specialized journals and until the tenure process is adjusted, expect more of the same. This was a very informative session with lively discussions on cost of journals, the tenure process and the increasing number of specialized journals.
This panel of e-resource librarians discussed questions regarding the effects eBooks will have: how different interfaces affect patrons and which innovations can improve ebook functionality and accessibility. Suggestions for new interfaces included federated searching to one that supports the methods students use to collect and collate data. One panelist questioned our assumption that users had difficulty in moving between interfaces, since they are already doing it in other areas. Further ideas indicate a need for a system that first supplies the best selection tool and then allows expert data management, as well as giving suggestions for search refinement. Accessibility can then be addressed by increasing the flexibility of the interface to allow searching across formats and platforms, using natural-language searches and indexing.

Presenters Wathen and Turtle gave a brief history of traditional scholarly publishing and gave short-term as well as long-term strategic directions of scholarly publishing. Looking at examples from the TechWorld as well as examples from other libraries, the presenters invited more libraries to participate in open access publishing.

Questions about sustainability issues were answered with this response, “There is risk but collaboration is the key and collaboration gives a brief history of traditional scholarly publishing and gave short-term as well as long-term strategic directions of scholarly publishing. Looking at examples from the TechWorld as well as examples from other libraries, the presenters invited more libraries to participate in open access publishing.

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session was very informative, and there were many questions from the attendees during and after the presentation.

**Boon or Bust? Influences of Online Vendor Tools on Library Acquisitions and Collection Development** — Presented by Jessica Bowdoin (Collection Development Librarian, George Mason University), Lisa Barricella (Acquisitions Librarian, East Carolina University), Carolyn Morris (Director, New Business Development, Coutts Information Services), David Swords (Vice President of Sales and Marketing, Blackwell Book Services), David Whitehair (WorldCat Selection Product Manager, OCLC), Mark Kendall (Senior Vice President North American Sales, YBP Library Services)

Reported by: Allyson A. Zellner (EBSCO Industries, Inc.)<azellner@ebsco.com>

This session began with opinions of librarians working in both collection development (Bowdoin) and acquisitions (Barricella) on online book vendor tools. Bowdoin noted that working with only one book vendor can potentially harm the strength of the collection as they may not carry every title. However, working with multiple vendors requires learning multiple interfaces and checking to ensure a title isn’t already ordered through another vendor. Barricella listed several pros of online vendor tools such as immediate notification of non-standard orders like duplicates, professional book reviews, recommendations, quick turnaround for shipping orders and quick allocation of year-end funds. Other benefits include stock level indicators to help decision making and the availability of the OCLC number to expedite catalog entry. Kendall feels the boons outweigh the busts but an ongoing dialogue is needed to further development. Specifically needed are links to alternate editions/formats, reviews, table of contents, and previews of eBooks. Some “busts” are the need for training when interfaces evolve and system maintenance occurring at inopportune times. Morris said tools must be fast, comprehensive, consistent, collaborative, and have available support. Key items needed are: deduping, ability to add local data, download MARC records, management reports, monitoring tools (like whether selectors have viewed their slips), RSS, tagging and more. Swords took a fun, philosophical approach to the discussion. He said current online tools are like the switch from the typewriter to the word processor — no one ever went back even though the systems aren’t perfect. Whitehair only had a few minutes to run through some highlights of the WorldCat Selection Product Manager which partners with vendors to streamline the selection and ordering process while leaving the vendor/library relationship unchanged. An audience member asked why more vendors aren’t working with vendor data importing into one’s ILS (like VIP). Morris replied that Coutts does.

**What is Text Mining and Why Should Librarians Support the Next Generation of Information Tools?** — Presented by Catherine Blake (Assistant Professor, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill), Selden Durgom Lamoureux (Electronic Resources Librarian, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill)

Reported by: Ramune K. Kubilius (Northwestern University, Galter Health Sciences Library)<r-kubilius@northwestern.edu>

After some initial delays (presentation laptop set-up), Blake competently overviewed for the audience of about 75, some basics of text mining (she teaches a library school course) and how she uses it in her “other” work, assisting cancer researchers. Her previous background in continued on page 70
computing is useful since she programmed her own text extractor. Text mining differs from traditional meta-analysis; it is a means for using text in documents to extract contextual and generate synthetic information. This process allows researchers to find suggestions of new promising (not yet definitive) research areas. Blake illustrated by describing text mining of the biomedical database PubMed to retrieve breast cancer research references with mention of smoking. Text mining requires text, and not all text is “created equal”. The popular PDF format is useless for text mining, particularly when in two column layout. Text mining requires information synthesis across all articles, text, and figures (“orthogonal to information needs”). One-by-one (product) licensing hampers text miners, but publishers want to know the miners’ intent.

Text mining is now relatively common practice. Lamoreaux highlighted roles for librarians. In new electronic resource contract negotiations, ensure a researcher-librarian-publisher dialog. Promote standards in contracts and ensure they don’t contain language explicitly prohibiting text mining. Perpetual access to online content needs to be in a text mining-supportive format.

**Observing Student Researchers in their Native Habitat**

Presented by John Law (Director, Strategic Alliances and Platform Management, ProQuest CSA), Susan Gibbons (Associate Dean, Public Services & Collection Development, University of Rochester)

This was a heavily attended presentation, possibly because it was mentioned in a plenary session earlier that day. The two presenters, one from ProQuest and another from the University of Rochester, both studied student research techniques. The ProQuest researchers found that students became very attached to using one aggregator, whether or not that product was the ideal one for the topic they were researching, but that they would use a more appropriate search engine if they were more aware of what the library offered and could successfully navigate the Website. The study also debunked the myth that students are using Google as their primary research tool. The study found that most students used Google, but only as a handy look-up tool to define a word or check a fact, or as a way to get to a known site, such as a newspaper or corporate site. Overall, the students expected to find more factual and useful information from the scholarly journals.

The University of Rochester researched student habits before redesigning their library. The team found out that students wanted comfortable furniture that they could easily rearrange to meet their needs. They also found out how important parent interaction was, and they incorporated a parent brunch into student orientation in order to familiarize parents with the resources available. The audience asked many questions after the presentation, including whether the librarians did follow-up to find out how students liked the new library. Gibbons said that they hadn’t, but she did regularly take pictures of the furniture to find out how the students were moving it around. An attendee also wanted to know what the presenters thought about librarians being on Facebook. Gibbons encouraged it, and she suggested joining the network for the incoming freshman class. Law was not as enthusiastic, pointing out that students do not look at Facebook as a research tool.

That’s all the reports we have room for in this issue, but we do have more reports from the 2007 Charleston Conference. Watch for them in upcoming issues of Against the Grain. You may also visit the Charleston Conference Website at www.katina.info/conference for additional details.

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**Media Minder — An Interview with Jonathan Miller**

**President, First Run/Icarus Films (FRIF)**

**Column Editor**: Philip Hallman (Ambassador Books and Media) <philip@absbook.com>

**Column Editor’s Note**: Ambassador Media has partnered with hundreds of non-print media distributors since 1994 and provided hundreds of thousands of titles to academic libraries across the globe. This one-stop shopping approach, that includes collection development services as well as cataloging and shelf ready processing, has benefited both the libraries and the distributors and, in the process, has eased the time and energy it takes to receive an order from a faculty member, to the point of putting the item on the shelf.

When I was asked to take on the regular column, Media Minder, for Against the Grain, I envisioned it as an opportunity to showcase the point of view of a library media jobber and to point out to the various other communities within the library world the similarities and differences among us. I see it as a forum that will feature an assortment of op-ed type concerns facing all of us in media-land, as well as interviews and profiles of leading individuals and companies within our community. There is no better person to begin the interview portion of this column with than Jonathan Miller, President of First Run/Icarus Films.

**PH**: I became familiar with First Run/Icarus Films in 1988. When did the company start and what has your role been in the company? Have you always been the President? Did you start the organization?

**JM**: The company started in 1981. Icarus Films (founded in 1977) and First Run Features (founded in 1978) merged their non-theatrical divisions to form a new company, and, yes, I have been the president of the company since it was established.

**PH**: Did you work with either Icarus or First Run prior to the merger?

**JM**: Yes, I was president of Icarus Films from 1980 and had worked there from 1978, a few months after a classmate of mine from college had started it. He and I were the only employees for several years.

**PH**: What kind of background do you have? Perhaps business? Film studies or production background?

**JM**: I went to NYU and studied film production. I made a film (which we still distribute) called “Tighten Your Belts, Bite The Bullet,” which was in the NY Film Festival in 1981. I had worked for another film distribution company from 1976 to 1978.

**PH**: As we talk, the people of New Hampshire are going to the polls to help decide the next President of the United States. So, at this moment, we are focusing on politics and its impact on our lives. Do you think that films can make a difference? Can they really impact the way a student perceives a situation? Have faculty reported back to you how showing one of the films in your collection has changed a student or led to some kind of change?

**JM**: No, I do not recall receiving such a report. While I like to think that such things take place, and I am sure they do, I don’t make such a cause and effect assumption about the weight of what we do. I do think it is a more general thing: like being some small part of the evolution of a culture.