Biz of Acq -- Function and Friction

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Questions & Answers
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ANSWER: Yes, email is considered to
be a writing even though there are ways to
fake email. Permissions should be maintained
either online or in an analog file so that they
can be retrieved. More difficult is telephone
permission — verbal permission is worth
the paper it is printed on. If permission is ob-
tained over the telephone, one should follow
up with a memo sent to the copyright owner
summarizing the permission received, and
maintain a copy of this in the permissions file.
Fax permissions also should be maintained in
this file.

QUESTION: If a library has a large col-
collection of old sheet music that is deteriorat-
ing, may it digitize the collection and make it
available on the Web?

ANSWER: The term ‘old sheet music’
does not really define whether the music is
in the public domain or is still under copy-
right. If it is still protected, then under sec-
tion 108(o), a library is permitted to repro-
duce deteriorating works but only after it
makes a reasonable effort to purchase another
copy at a fair price. The library may make up
to three copies of the work after this effort.
One of these copies may be digital, and the
library may make it available within the li-
brary but only on a library intranet. It cannot
make the material available on the Web with-
out permission of the copyright owner.

QUESTION: From an institutional point
of view, should universities encourage facul-
ty to register their copyrighted works?

ANSWER: This question assumes that
the institution has some interest in the facul-
ty member’s copyrighted works. Only the
copyright owner can register the copyright;
if it is the institution that owns the copyright
in the work, then only it can register the work.
Registration of the work gives the owner the
ability to file suit in federal court as well as
access to certain remedies. If the faculty
member owns the copyright, then why the
university should care about registration is
unclear other than wanting its faculty to be
able to enforce their rights.

QUESTION: PowerPoint Viewer is a free
download. A librarian wants to put the pro-
gram on a CD and distribute it at no charge.
Does it require permission to do so?

ANSWER: Yes, permission is required.
Only the copyright holder has the right to dis-
tribute a work whether in analog copies or by
permitting downloads and regardless of
whether or not there is a charge. Others may
distribute the work absent permission from
the owner.

QUESTION: Are Web links (just the urls)
copyrightable?

ANSWER: Individual links are not copy-
rightable. They represent a Web address which
is a fact, and facts are not copyrightable. Com-
piations of urls would be copyrightable if the
compilation is not a total universe of data and
there is sufficient originality/creativity in the
selection, arrangement or value adding, such as
annotating the urls.

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Column Editor’s Note: At the Stanford
University Libraries, three separate units
were consolidated to form the Acquisitions
Department. A managers group chose a func-
tion-based organizational model for the new
department. Christa Easton, Head of Acqui-
sitions at SUL, describes this structure and
the new division of work within the merged
department. — AF

The Acquisitions Department of the
Stanford University Libraries (SUL)
was formed on January 3, 2003 of the
merger of three units: Monographic Order
Services, Monographic Receiving, and Serial
and Digital Acquisitions. The three units had
formerly been part of a single department that
was divided in 1995 as part of SUL Technical
Services Re-engineering process. That
department was called Serials and Acqui-
sitions. As the head of the new department, I
deliberately left the word “serials” out of the
department name, with a goal of focusing on
our work rather than on a given format.

The Acquisitions Department is com-
priased of fifty-four staff (46.75 FTE) who are
responsible for ordering, receiving, and copy
cataloging of monographs, ordering and re-
cieving of serials, and acquisition of elec-
tronic resources.

The department managers soon began a stra-
tegic planning process as a means of determ-
ining the direction of the new department. Our
strategic priorities were:
1. Implement the best methods to cre-
ate efficient and effective opera-
tions, including:
• Clear responsibilities
• Effective methods to resolve
problems
• A plan to address employee
and management competen-
cies
2. Develop methods to align
group and individual perfor-
ance with SUL organizational
needs
3. Design the acquisitions
organization
to better support
our mission
and vision
4. Find most effective
methods to strengthen rela-
tionships with partners,
create informed consumers,
and create respect for our expertise
In August, 2003 we considered several or-
ganizational models to determine which would
best meet our strategic priorities as well as the
following organizational imperatives:
1. Provide comprehensive support for
purchase of and access to commer-
cial electronic products.
2. Maintain a backlog-free environment
despite cuts in staffing.
3. Prepare for Acquisitions’ role in the
Stanford Digital Reposi-
tory and other elec-
tronic archiving work,
such as LOCKSS.
Based on these cri-
teria, the managers group
selected from several po-
tential organizational models. The model that
best met our strategic priori-
ties and organizational needs is
one that focuses on function and
reduces emphasis on format. We
selected this organization in part
because of its transparency to
those outside and to foster
cross training and deploy-
ment of staff. We identified
three core functions: order-
ing, receiving, and fiscal ac-
tivities. Staff and tasks were
arrayed in the following units:

Ordering
The Ordering unit will place all orders
regardless of format and claim new orders.
The staff will also be responsible for all
cancellations and for renewal verifications,
as necessary.

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Receiving

The Receiving unit is responsible for all receipts of library materials and for the department's mission of providing access, whether through copy cataloging or maintaining profiles of our electronic products for public interfaces. The unit will consist of four parts:

**Monograph Receiving**

The Monograph Receiving unit was not changed by this reorganization. It receives all paid monographs in Roman and Slavic scripts and performs copy cataloging of these and other materials.

**Serials Receiving**

Serials Receiving is responsible for receipt and claiming of all print serials, including government documents. Some staff that formerly worked with serial bibliographic records was shifted to the Access Coordination unit.

**Electronic Products**

This unit is responsible for setting up Stanford's access to electronic products by including them in TDNet, the OPAC, etc. It is also responsible for troubleshooting when access is cut off.

**Access Coordination**

This unit is responsible for cataloging and other standards within Acquisitions, as well as pre- and post-cataloging handling of serials. Staff in this unit will receive initial serials, create serial control records, and work on projects to improve SUL's serials records.

**Fiscal and Data Services**

Fiscal and Data Services will be responsible for the expenditure and tracking of the library materials budget. The manager's tasks will include oversight of approval profiles and monitoring of vendor performance.

**Payments**

The Payments unit will assume new responsibilities for monitoring and processing renewals for electronic products.

We selected this model in hopes that it would make the organizational structure and the roles of units and staff very clear to those outside of the department. We felt that this model offered us maximum flexibility in adapting to future changes in our work. We particularly sought more resources for the acquisition and control of electronic resources. We also sought flexible deployment of staff as workload cycles through monographs and serials throughout the year, and as print subscriptions are cancelled.

The new model was put into effect November 17, 2003.

A functional (that is to say based on work function, rather than the opposite of "dysfunctional") organization has the advantage of creating pools of workers who perform similar tasks, and can lower costs as an effect. It also creates a cohesive group of workers with similar background and experiences. Of course, a functional approach to organization does have potential drawbacks: more than one department is needed to complete many tasks, difficulty in developing new ways of doing business, and potential competing priorities. These are the "friction" of the title. Based on our initial experience, I've identified two points of friction, or at least confusion, in parsing our work. Both are format-based — electronic products and government documents. While our context and decisions are specific to SUL, they can be applied to other acquisitions departments that consider a functional approach to division of work.

Prior to reorganization, one person did the work of acquiring and ensuring access to electronic products. This approach offered simplicity — everyone asked James everything. It also had a number of downsides. There was too much work for one person, especially for time-sensitive tasks such as restoring access to electronic products and responding to requests to investigate alleged breaches. Still, it was challenging to parse the work associated with electronic products.

It was quite clear that staff in Ordering should place and cancel orders. It was also clear that staff in the Payments unit of Fiscal and Data Services should be responsible for paying invoices for electronic resources — work they were already doing. However, it was also important to recognize the high-maintenance nature of payments — particularly renewals — for electronic resources.

Successful renewals for electronic products require careful monitoring and timing. We often need to request invoices from vendors. Once we have an invoice, quote, we must complete a series of internal approvals. Approvals in hand, we can pay the invoice, ideally with plenty of time for the vendor to process and apply the payment. In order to guarantee that this process begins in adequate time, Payments staff have applied our existing phased payments process (developed to ensure that we make multi-year payments in a timely manner) to the flow of invoices for electronic products. As of March 2004, we have found that only one title should have been renewed for January 1, 2004, and was not. This is an improvement over previous years and leads directly to improved service to our patrons.

Without a physical piece, it was not immediately apparent what "receiving" meant for electronic resources. We defined it as the steps that make an electronic resource apparent to our patrons. These include cataloging in the OPAC, addition to either our A-Z e-journal list or the databases web page, and addition to the proxy server, if appropriate. We equated re-establishing lapsed access with claiming of established serials, and assigned it to Receiving. However, we agreed that Ordering staff should claim unfulfilled orders, as they do for new serials and monographs.

Part of acquiring electronic journals is the annual review and verification of lists of SUL and other Stanford subscriptions from a given publisher. We initially assigned this task to the Ordering unit, likening it to pre-order searching. We are now realizing that information about subscriptions by publisher is an ongoing requirement of collection development staff, suggesting an affinity with the role of the Fiscal and Data Services Unit. It is likely that we will shift responsibility for this task to that unit as part of our ongoing consideration of how to best acquire electronic resources.

Government documents were another area where our former format emphasis required adjustments in the new functional organization. In the case of electronic materials, we were challenged by the absence of a physical item to receive. With government documents, we faced the lack of orders, since many of our materials are received via depository plans such as United Nations, United States Federal (GPO), and California State. Prior to reorganization, three staff performed the work of acquiring government document serials and government documents received via depository. They sent orders where necessary or recorded orders for materials we were to receive automatically; received serial issues in the serials control module; and performed serial title maintenance, much of it driven by publication catalogs such as GPO's Administrative Notes and Technical Supplement's listings of changes and corrections.

Two of the staff that processed government documents were added to the Serials Receiving unit, along with all government document serial receiving activities. The remaining staff member, along with all serial title maintenance work, was assigned to the Access Coordination group. This had immediate benefits in providing explicit back up for check in of government documents. Serials Receiving staff have been cross trained to check in government document serials when the former collection specialist is out, and an existing special formats receiver now helps to keep our receiving of Federal microfiche up to date.

For materials received via depository plans, understanding our depository profile is crucial in determining what we should receive. Understanding of the GPO plan is particularly crucial because we use Mercury's Shipping List Service and GPO Database Service to load bibliographic records for those materials into our OPAC. The former Federal Document specialist, who is responsible for title maintenance now, has oversight for all of our depository plans. She reports to the Access Coordination Librarian, who is responsible for all acquisitions-related bibliographic record loads.

Overall, the new structure is meant to explicitly order some government documents. We have been able to agree with our government document selectors that if they know that order and payment are necessary they forward their request to Ordering. Otherwise, they send their receipts to Access Coordination, where the maintenance specialist determines whether or not the title will be supplied via a depository plan and handles it appropriately.

Neither electronic products nor government documents fitted neatly into our new functional continued on page 85

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Adventures in Librarianship — Annotated Bibliography

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Acquisitions for May 2004

An Annotated Bibliography of the North Horton Historical Society. Mrs. Alma Bloom and the Founding Fathers: Fact and Fiction, by Corrine Bloom. Gatlin: InLocus Press, 2004. Mrs. Bloom’s great-granddaughter does a fine job compiling both fact and legend surrounding the exploits of her famous forbear, “Restless Alma Bloom.” Exactly how much influence did she have over the founding council? Did her wives know? What exactly was her relationship with Senator Flatminster and his cousins, Curly and Leviticus? Corrine Bloom is remarkably candid in her answers to these and other questions. One must assume that the age of ninety-two, Corrine has decided to damn the torpedoes. You may be both shocked and annoyed. I was.

Slaughter the Injuns (sic) Before Tuesday: Collected Sermons by the Reverend Sternum Peck. Unbound manuscript, early 1860. One is hard pressed to imagine a more brutal interpretation of man’s destiny than this cleric’s weekly sermons. Collected here are such Rev. Peck classics as “A Wagonload of Sin,” “God has a Gun, God has a Temper,” and “Drunken Redemption.” This collection makes clear why Rev. Peck’s congregation, the First Holy Ruffians, had, by 1853 dwindled to more than five backwoods barbarians.

Early Agriculture in Eastern Sullan Valley, by Bebe Shade. Gambit, 2003. For those not in the know, Bebe is a former treasurer of the historical society and an indefatigable hostess. This is her sixth monograph and establishes her place among local amateur historians. It will be clear to all readers, however, that historical fact interests Bebe far less than making veiled accusations about her contemporaries and taking revenge against perceived slights. One would think that, given her long and unforgiving memory and her passion for interpreting the most innocent comments, historical writing would come more naturally to her. But, no.

[Ann Pardon’s Diary, 1869-1885]. Anonymous gift. During her lifetime, Ann Pardon dutifully recorded the day’s weather, each of her meals, and the egg production of her chickens. A fascinating read, though we are left with more questions than answers. Did Ann have a husband? Was “Martha” a prized chicken or a blood relation? Would a diet so reliant on chestnuts and eggs lead to obesity? We may never know.

Unique Rock Formations of Softbound County, by Hyman Que. Washington, DC: USGS, 1961. A concise and thorough book at only thirty-three pages. The fact that our fair county has only two unique rock formations contributes somewhat to this brevity.

From Myron Forge to Bedly: A Good Day’s Walk, by Miss Charlotte Gnuff-Sed. Unbound manuscript, [1910]. Though Miss Gnuff-Sed was not known for walking, or for taking exercise of any sort, on September 3rd of 1909 she set off from her home in Myron Forge toward Bedly, telling her father only that she longed for a bit of fresh air. She returned in early evening whereupon her father accused her of spending the day with an Italian boy whose name is lost to history. The writing of the voluminous From Myron Forge seems to have been an attempt to put the lie to her father’s suspicion. An extraordinary work for that reason.

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organization at first glance. With thought, we were able to determine where to place staff and work by focusing on the core functions that we had identified (ordering, receiving, and fiscal activities) and applying them, with some flexibility, to the materials we handle. While these approaches may not be obvious to those outside our organization, we find that we are able to explain our logic and that this helps others grasp and remember our approach to dividing work.

Within Acquisitions, duties and responsibilities have changed, and some staff miss their old tasks or chafe under some of their new ones. For staff, these approaches to handling two of our more special formats seem to make intuitive sense. While this does not guarantee the success of our transition process, the functional approach has helped us organize our work, rationalize some aspects of division of labor, and find new resources for the high-profile work of acquiring electronic products.

My sincere thanks to the staff and managers of SUL’s Acquisitions Department, who have made great contributions to the success of our departmental reorganization and a number of work process improvements.

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Endnotes
4. Davis and Weckler, 28-29.