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Reconstructing Collection Development

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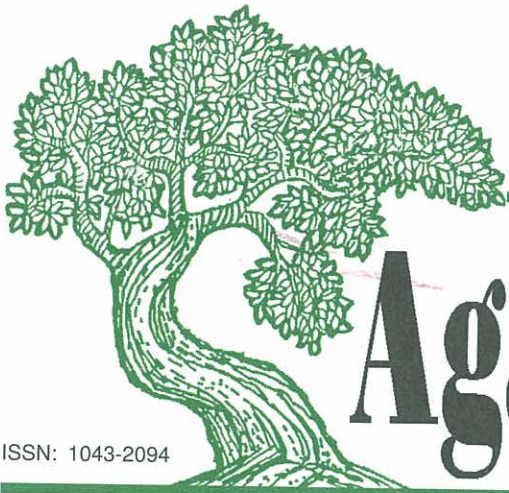
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Against the Grain

“Linking Publishers, Vendors and Librarians”

Reconstructing Collection Development

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We should start by thanking the **Charleston Conference** for gathering us together for reasoned and civil discourse in an

atmosphere of Charleston's charm and Southern hospitality which has borne fruit for 24 years.

Nina Totenberg the other day on NPR described a Democratic firing squad as a circle of politicians shooting at one another. That was not the case in the presidential election campaign just concluded, but traditionally has been so. The reason for mentioning that story is that it is an apt description of what has befallen collection development at the hands of its practitioners, librarians.

We have adopted the mantra “access instead of ownership,” thus devaluing the careful efforts to reflect and respond to our readers’ individual needs.

We have run like lemmings to the sea to the

“big deal leases on journals,” thus, spending money on a great many journals our readers’ did not need and have not used, money that had previously been invested in actually acquiring books and other information objects we actually owned.

We have engaged compulsively in collaborative collection development, emphasizing the collaboration, not the collecting, building elaborate and expensive mechanisms for collaborating, but not increasing the extent and depth of our collections.

We have passively observed the development of such apparently omnivorous Internet harvesting agencies as **Google** and the **Internet Archive**, each in its own way asserting in hidden ways the death of librarianship.

Lately, however, I have seen some signs that collection development may have a chance of some resurgence. Here are some of those indicators.

Jeffrey Gatten and **Tom Sanville** in last month's *D-Lib Magazine* in their article “An orderly retreat from the big deal; is it possible for

consortia” show that about 30% of the titles from any “big deal” publisher account for about 80% of the articles downloaded. **Sanville** and **Graffan** write: “Those titles deemed to be of low value might then be discontinued to save the associated costs.”

Peter Suber in this month's *SPARC Open Access Newsletter* reports that the **Citicorp** analysis of **Reed Elsevier** and the STM journal industry asserts that library budgets are maxed out and more cancellations are likely on the one hand and that open access experimentation is here to stay.

Numerous small digitization projects and Internet site capture projects are underway. New portals devoted to well-defined topics with a variety of digital objects for use by scholars and stu-

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If Rumors Were Horses

The library, publishing, and vending business seems to be going fast and furious.

This is from the *Temple Times* 12/8/2004 and Editor **Betsy Winter**. — **Temple University President David Adamany** has announced the appointment of **Larry P. Alford** to the newly-created position of vice provost for libraries and university librarian. Alford joins **Temple** from the **University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill**, where he is deputy university librarian. As vice provost for libraries, Alford will oversee all of **Temple's** 17 libraries in a federated system that includes the **Paley Main Library**, the **Law Library** and the **Health Sciences Libraries**. Alford will assume his new position at Temple on Feb. 15, 2005. Reporting directly to the Provost, Alford is charged with leading a program of expansion, centralization, and development of the Libraries' facilities and



holdings. His major responsibilities include strengthening the Libraries' education efforts for students and faculty, and improving access to the Libraries' electronic resources. **Temple's** creation of the new vice provost position signifies the increased importance of the Libraries in supporting the scholarship, research, and teaching demands of a faculty infused with more than 50 new tenured or tenure-track hires over the past year and as many as 110 more over the next 12 months, consistently improving academic standards and student qualifications, and the recent shift to a more residential Main Campus. “The notion that the library is or should be at the heart of the university has become a cliché in recent years, but I still believe it strongly,” Alford said. “A great university library in today's environment must be user-centered, which means making it easy to find a book in a three-mil-

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dents are available and continue to be enhanced by teams of selectors and I.T. professionals.

Institutional repositories are gathering digital objects on many subjects and making them available. Ingestion is managed as a selection process in all these cases.

These hopeful signs lead me to "reconstructing collection development."

There are four threads:

1. Retreating from the big deals and re-focusing or re-balancing our collecting efforts.
2. Open access as cure all.
3. New cultural artifacts and genres we ought not to miss in collecting and preserving for posterity.
4. What's left for librarians to do.

Retreating from the Big Deals

The big deals took money in bigger chunks and for longer periods of time, whether consortia were involved or not, from spending on other aspects of our collecting programs. The slogan "access instead of ownership" had the effect of empowering a kind of statistical librarianship, in which the number of journal titles and articles accessible took primacy over the quality of the articles and the relevance of the titles to any given community. As resistance to re-signing the big deals in the past couple of years became more apparent, some institutions have either opted out of those deals altogether or successfully negotiated much better prices. Opting out and getting better prices suggests that there should be some money for other titles, selected, not settled upon.

For reasons I have not yet understood, there has been little enthusiasm for toppling the entire for-profit STM industry by simply holding spending down, selecting tightly, and not signing deals that capture more and more of our annual acquisitions budgets. If the 60 **Carnegie I** research universities' libraries walked away from the big deals altogether and resumed title-by-title selection, much of what the open access movement seeks to accomplish could be gained more quickly. More about this in the open access section coming next.

Gatten and Sanville try to distinguish between title-by-title selection as a kind of art or craft in the dismal days before big deals and the sort of retreat scenario predicated on better statistics of downloading. An even better indicator of use would be citation. This is a distinction of no difference in my view. Title-by-title selection is important, especially with accurate indicators of use, because it helps collection development managers, whether AULS for collection development of collectives of selectors, balance their efforts and their assets across all the disciplines and interests we support.

As I asserted in the **Fiesole Retreat** conference **Katina** and **Becky** mounted last March,

Preoccupation with the journal literature of scientific, technical, and medical fields, 90% of which has a half-life of

under 12 months, distracts us from literatures of more enduring qualities. And, ironically, as more of that STM journal literature is available online, we could be turning to an article economy, and just-in-time mentality toward it, rather than succumbing to the vapid blandishments of lots of access to spuriously important literature for the sake of seemingly improved title counts and measures of "hits" by unwitting surfers. That succumbing to those blandishments diverts vast sums of money otherwise available for publications of lasting value and for archives or collections reflecting uniquely on otherwise forgotten histories of our institutions and environments is a tragic miscalculation. Even in the context of the STM disciplines themselves, such a miscalculation reduces access to better, more cited literature published by scholarly societies.

In short, if there is money that could be reallocated by retreats from the big deals, I suggest that selectors, bibliographers, curators, and AULS for collection development, consider how to return that money to spending on books, maps, music, and even journals, but in other fields than science, technology, and medicine. I know that my colleagues in the university presses especially would appreciate that sort of a move.

Open Access

Is Open Access a panacea or a recreational chemical?

Here are a few pertinent facts, some of which may seem like cold water or a wet blanket.

Author pays publishing endeavors, some of which have been underway for five or more years, have yet to prove self-sustaining.

Authors have not rushed to the model, despite the enormous expenditure of time and effort by the **Public Library of Science** people. Only 4% of authors publishing in the *Proceedings of the National Academy of Science* have opted for open access. **Ian Rowlands'** "ciber group" study, "STM at the crossroads" shows that many authors would not pay at all and on average authors would pay only \$275 to make an article open access. In fairness, **Rowlands** also discovered that there was not widespread acquaintance with open access principles and methods.

More articles have been made free of access control by the scholarly societies themselves by a very large margin than by the open access movement. Take a look at the 777,000 free articles at **HighWire Press** in the **Free Back Issues** program and the enormous number of free articles in the **Astrophysics Data Service**. These efforts were determined and directed by the scholarly societies, whose members are our professors and researchers. And those members are the authors, who, in the main, have not yet been persuaded by the open access movement to change their behaviors.

The **Cornell** study, released in August, shows that Open Access "memberships," another word from subscriptions in my opinion, will be more expensive than subscriptions. Note

also that the most visible open access journals, **BioMedCentral** and the **PLoS Biology** and **Medicine** journals, have resorted to institutional "memberships" as a partial alternative to payments from authors for open access. **PLoS Biology** mentioned that in their first year of operation they got about \$200,000 in payments from authors.

Suspending judgment, because the open access movement is only three or four years into its existence, the question of its efficacy cannot be answered. Will it be a panacea? Is the open access movement just a feel good exercise?

And here are a couple of other questions I cannot answer. Given the good works and the not-for-profit positions of a great many high impact, numerous cited STM journals published by scholarly societies, why have they been lumped in with the exploitative for-profit publishers? Why has the open access movement not worked with these societies or at least distinguished them from the exploiters?

Cold water, wet blankets and questions aside, if the open access movement does result in some savings, I recommend re-allocating savings to the arts, humanities, and social sciences collection development programs, just as I mentioned in the retreat from the big deals earlier. Indeed, I recommend that institutions NOT pay the membership fees, voting with their money, just as they should do with regard to the big deals, and let the open access movement proceed on a pure author-pays basis. That would be an excellent marketplace test AND it would release money back to the humanities and social sciences.

New Cultural Artifacts and Genres

By over-investing in science, technology, and medicine, by indulging our apparently natural predilection for meetings and group processes especially in collaborative collection development, we have not only reduced support and achieved imbalance in supporting the whole academy's agenda of many disciplines and topics, but as well missed some of the new expressions of culture, particularly those involving computer and network technologies.

Intro: Cultural artifacts

- are expressions of culture & technology
- are sometimes interpretable
- but many contain instructions in the form of text, written music, images that must be used and converted to realize the cultural expression...

To make this point by posing two questions: Is poetry really poetry until it is read, to one's self or to an audience?; Is music — jazz, opera, lieder, rock tunes, hip-hop — music until it is performed, realized from instructions or improvised in a system of instructions?

Thus, storing and preserving cultural artifacts is important, but equally important is the capture, storage, and preservation of representative samples of the realization of cultural expression.

We can see that digital transformation of analog cultural artifacts makes possible in sig-

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nificant ways different and more extensive research, analysis, and appreciation of the contents of books, music, film, journals, archives, and so forth. There are also cultural artifacts that are born digital. And thanks to the Internet, in principal, digital or digitized artifacts can be made accessible very widely. That wide distribution could improve formal and informal education, increase understanding on many difficult issues, and foster global communities that might create new and better approaches to pressing problems. That is the hopeful, liberal view. An alternate view and alternate reality coexists. The Internet is a delivery mechanism for hate, for repression, and for the promotion of extremist views. Ironically, we cybrarians should collect and preserve those expressions too, just as we have the records and results of dictatorships, fascism, communism, and Nazism.

We choose the liberal, optimistic view and track. Thus, we in the cybrary profession will digitize analog artifacts and preserve them for access, use, and re-mixing, just as we will collect and preserve artifacts born digital. Other institutions and some individuals will do this as well.

Among the requirements of digital libraries, cybraries, is the preservation of bits and bytes as applications, data formats, operating systems, and hardware change. Those changes challenge cybrarians operating digital repositories to find or build methods to realize, to make accessible the cultural expressions in digital objects. Among the methods we contemplate are migration, emulation, encapsulation. However, note that these are categories of method rather than the methods themselves. None of these are proven. All are in test. And we are losing bits and bytes while we develop the methods.

Here are a few representative problems cybrarians ought to consider as we experiment with prototype digital repositories:

1. In a hyperlinked environment, no single cultural entity (bibliographic object) is complete without the linked elements; how can we store the entire environment? This is the explicit hyperlinking problem.
2. Some cultural artifacts/expressions, games, are totally dependent upon specific hardware and software arrays. In order to preserve them, we must preserve the hardware and software too.
3. Cybrarians need to take the very long term, while operating effectively in the short term.
4. Even if we successfully digitize everything and we figure out how to operate effective digital repositories, we must still preserve for access and use physical cultural artifacts.

Here is the sackbut, trombone, slide whistle, theremin metaphor — music instruments capable of continuous variation of pitch and volume, but with unique sounds, sound production methods, and cultural implica-

tions. So, mere emulation of the common characteristics is inappropriate.

I believe that books and select other analog digital cultural artifacts will be around for another couple of generations, but it is very clear that as technology and comfort with it advance and change, my great grandchildren, if the world is still inhabitable by our species, will read, view, ingest, create, and appreciate digital representations predominantly. Physical library collections may be museums and spaces for social interaction, but digital libraries will be widely used.

There is insufficient attention to the rate of change of reading and other activities engaging cultural artifacts. There is insufficient attention to the new genres and new realizations of culture. Academic e-articles have been mentioned. They are now the most complete version in this time of transit from analog to solely digital manifestations of that genre. Think also about hyperfiction in which choices made by “readers” determine the course and sometimes the outcome of stories. Games, including MUDDs and MUDD-like ones should be stored as instructions, but at least some realizations of the games should be saved too. Even the now prosaic multi-media report should be stored for replay and re-mix. Digital objects used in teaching now should be stored for re-use later too. The other day I had a call from an artist who has worked extensively in digital kinetic art. She was seeking to place her art and that of her colleagues working in that “medium” in the **Stanford Digital Repository**. Apparently the traditional gallery and museum world has no interest in that new artistic expression.

As the generation of people born and educated in environments and societies that are pervasively equipped with all kinds of technologies — broadcast, networked, ones encouraging re-mixing, creativity, and communication, as these generations take responsibility and as the rate of change increases the availability of technology and communication, more genres and more culture artifacts, certainly mostly digital, will result. We in the academy need to track and to account for these developments, these new genres and expressions much more effectively. We need also to account for the broadening spectrum of people variably engaged with technology and the means and/or will to continue traditional modes or new modes of creative expression.

Which agents, which institutions, which individuals will take responsibility for the “middle man” functions between creators and their audiences? Middle men are publishers, distributors, booksellers, Internet businesses, ISPs, libraries, and some individuals who collect stuff, including digital cultural artifacts. In the short run, the marketplace life of cultural artifacts, the “owners” mediate or act upon the cultural artifacts. The commercial “owners” through US laws now control not just the marketplace life of their property, but as well the property in a state of marketplace death for up to 140 years, for most of us longer than we will be conscious. For some subset of the totality of cultural artifacts under this intellectual property regime, libraries and individuals will buy a copy, make

those copies accessible, and assume responsibility for their preservation over the very long term, longer than any individual’s lifetime and longer than therefore than the term of protection of the copyright laws. Since individual collectors usually want to pass their collections along intact to an institution, even individual collections usually come into the care of institutions with long term missions of preservation and access. Museums of various sorts have the same sort of missions as cybraries.

We in the cybraries do not know exactly how to satisfy our mission regarding digital cultural artifacts. There are experiments and prototypes underway and in test. The methods previously mentioned are engaged. As mass digitization gets underway, we will face new problems, but these are essentially ones of scaling and scoping, not ones requiring huge new R&D efforts. However, university and public cybraries are not the only institutions in the game. Will the storage area network, like the Google approach prove effective and satisfactory for readers and re-mixers? Will the digital archives operated by individuals work? Can any digital repository undertake an architecture alone and not engage in relationships of mutual dependency with other cybraries? How much redundancy and when is needed? These are some of the issues of concern and so far there is not consensus on the answers to them. In addition, some of us are worrying about the means by which a reader or user in one location can effectively search, discover, and retrieve information resources, digital objects, relevant to their needs from the deep Web and the deep, protected digital repositories far, far away from home. The **Digital Library Federation Aquifer Program**, just getting underway, is an example of this sort of development.

Should we store everything? Does the sum of all digital memory in the world and in space, if appropriately managed amount to the ultimate digital archive? No, because ultimately accessibility and privacy concerns are important. And some of us think that information tsunamis are not desirable environments for learning, for teaching, for reflection, for entertainment. Some of us think that all of us should be able to employ search, discovery, and navigation tools with the subtlety and effect of chopsticks rather than ones that are most like bulldozers. The cascade of selection, but creators, editors, publishers, referees and reviewers, by colleagues, by cybrarians, and by individual collectors really matter and result in highly relevant, culturally important collections promoting the rising tides of accomplishment and expectation. The means, methods, and scope of selected collections is changing as we amass larger and larger cybrary collections in usable digital repositories, but selection will remain relevant as will intellectual access, distribution, interpretation, preservation, and presentation functions. All of these six functions are the basics of the old, librarianship, and the new, cybrarianship. In contrast, **Google** and the Internet Archive will be useful and interesting for different reasons and for other sorts of specialists — digital anthropologists and digital archeologists.

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Finally, and briefly,

What's Left for Librarians, for Cybrarians to Do?

One does not have to fast forward history at all to see what is changing. The main question is whether librarians see the implications for what is happening. I am quite optimistic that we do see the future, some of us, and that there is and will be plenty for us to do. However, not all of us see that future and not all are ready to embrace the future.

By way of stimulating thought and debate, let us think forward to a time when virtually everything is in digital form. Let us assume as well that **Google** and the other Internet indexers have continued in their current programs of making the public, non-controlled Web accessible by words and other parameters. Let's assume that publishers and libraries have figured out that making orphan books and works no longer protected by copyright available on the Web is smart. And let's assume also that new books are routinely released as eBooks. What's a librarian to do?

First, I think our professional culture needs to move to embracing indexing and hyperlinking as it currently embraces cataloging. And simple word indexing is only the beginning. We need to develop and extend taxonomies so that texts in many languages and

from many times can be searched for ideas, not just expressions. We need to work with our colleagues in computer and information sciences to develop better means for hyperlinking, especially working on the implied links. We need as well to work with readers and computer scientists on better means for navigating complex information spaces, simultaneously in the public Web, the shallow pool, and the deeper, more complex ocean of controlled access information spaces. Better visualization tools, more finely working relevance estimators, and federated and/or broadcast searching should be on the list for immediate development. Librarians need to be involved because we are both expert searchers and teachers of information heuristic, not just information literacy but the "methods of discovery and invention" (to paraphrase Polya). In all of this, we must become better at measuring the behaviors of communities of scholars, students, readers, and users, but we must never lose sight of and advocate for the particular needs and experiences of individuals.


As the information puddles coalesce with the information ocean, our expert searching skills will need to develop dramatically. Our younger, novice readers need us now to help them determine which is an authoritative and relevant source. In the future, we will need to help them even more, perhaps by mechanizing parts of that process, as in the **Amazon** "others have bought" service.

Increasingly we will need to help our readers retrieve digital objects for their own read-

ing, viewing, using, and listening, but as well for inclusion in presentations — for teaching, as part of the scholarly process, or for advocacy. In this particular realm, joining or learning from our colleagues in academic computing is necessary. We become, therefore, adjunct communicators.

In our traditional role as custodians of culture, we need to collect and preserve, albeit using altogether new methods as yet not extensively tested, to preserve not just the objects, but the realization of the objects and the information environment in which they originated, for those who come after us.

Finally, despite the claims of some that everything can be saved and therefore should be saved, there is plenty of evidence that lots of stuff is getting lost or forgotten. This is not a bad thing, provided that someone selects the stuff to be saved. And I think the affirmative expression, selecting to save, is better than selecting for loss by neglect. The new collection development comprehends the more complicated world of creation, publishing, and expression we now live it. It values the traditional culture by culture, community by community, but it recognizes that some cultures and communities are heavily involved in digital ways and means. Above all, those whose profession, whose role in society, it is to account in the long term for culture whatever it is, has been, or will be, librarians and their colleagues in museums must grasp this nettle and continuously reconstruct their roles.

Thanks for your patient attention. 

Whither The Book?

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While there is no doubt that the topic of significant concern to most librarians during the last decade has been the cost, management and growth of serial subscriptions, especially in electronic format, the plight of the book, its continuous and gradual decline in academic collections, has largely been a matter of secondary importance. However, this is starting to change and the **Charleston Conference** took note of that by featuring a session on this issue. Several interesting and varied points of view by knowledgeable librarians, publishers, and vendors, moderated by **Milton T. Wolf**, Head of Collection Management (**University of Central Florida**), indicate that, "reports of its death are greatly exaggerated."

Even though the presenters, (**Suzy Szasz Palmer**, **University of Louisville**; **Bob Nardini**, Senior Vice President of **YBP**; **Myrna McCallister**, Dean of Libraries, **Indiana State University**; **Stephen Rhind-Tutt**, **Alexander Street Press**; and, **Mary Sauer Games**, **ProQuest**), who were limited

to no more than five minutes to make their case, took different paths to the problem of the decline of monographs in collections, their insights lead to a much more wholistic overview than might have been expected.

Paradoxically, book production is actually up and doing well, reported **Suzy Palmer**. She cited **R.R. Bowker** (5/04) preliminary figures for 2003 showing a 19% increase. Of course, when you realize that blockbusters on **Harry Potter** and the trials and tribulations of the **Clintons** account for a disproportionate number of sales, you may wonder just how well reading is faring. On the other hand, **Suzy** pointed out that "print runs of scholarly monographs are down, from an average of 1,200 twenty years ago to half that in recent years." She wondered if, "Perhaps it's the monograph, not the book, that's withering?"

Book sales are up, libraries are reporting increased circulation, but apparently no one is reading! Citing "Reading at Risk" (July 8, 2004), a recent survey put out by the **NEA**,

Suzy stated,

Fewer than half (46.7%) of Americans over 18 read literature, with only slightly more of those surveyed (56.6%) having read a book of any kind in the previous year. These figures have been consistently falling in the last twenty years—even among those with a college education or above, for whom the percentage of readers dropped from 82.1% in 1982 to 74.6% in 1992 to 66.7% in 2002.

Libraries, as we all know, have been steadily decreasing the purchase of monographs for years. According to the most recent **ARL** statistics, serial expenditures as a percentage of total library materials expenditures range from 82.9 (high) to 29.6 (low), with 66.2 the average; and monograph expenditures ranging from 47.2 (high) to 8.33 (low), with 24.5 the average. Along with this, and compounding the problem, is the percentage of the average library's budget

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