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Biz of Acq -- The Effect of Consolidation of Acquisitions and Serials/Periodicals Units on the Management of Electronic Resources

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QUESTION: *A public library has an extensive vertical file consisting of pamphlets, photocopies of articles, photographs, and staff-produced bibliographies. Most of the material in the files deal with local and regional history, industries and institutions. The library now wants to digitize this material and make it available on the Web. Are there copyright problems with this?*

ANSWER: The issue of vertical files in libraries is an interesting one and the practice of maintaining them goes back many years. When vertical files were conceived, materials placed in them were original copies of works such as pamphlets, publishers' reprints of articles and actual newspaper clippings. After photocopiers became ubiquitous in libraries, much of the material in vertical files was replaced with photocopies as opposed to original copies. This practice is not mentioned in section 108 and whether this copying was fair use or not has never been litigated.

Reproducing this material in digital form raises typical copyright concerns. If the works reproduced are still under copyright, permission should be sought for the reproduction and display of the material on the Web. Many of these works may be out of print or the publisher may have disappeared. For these materials the library should perform a risk analysis, and may determine that there is little risk in digitizing an old photograph of local interest and mounting it on the Web. In other words, the chance that anyone will complain about the reproduction

and display is slight. Or the library simply may be willing to assume the risk involved because of the importance of the material to the library and its users even though there may be some liability should the copyright owner complain.

QUESTION: *A library has subscriptions to periodicals databases (Wilson, Proquest, etc.), and all of the university's satellite locations also have access to them. The university is now opening a new satellite location in a foreign country. Will the university be in compliance with the database licensing agreement if students in the new satellite location overseas are given access to the databases?*

ANSWER: The answer depends on the license agreement itself. Does the library have separate license agreements for each satellite location or is there one license that covers the university's main campus and all satellite campuses? The language of the contract controls. The contract could state that access is limited to students of the university and be silent about the satellites. This would mean that any enrolled student, regardless of the branch or satellite at which she attends classes, is covered under the agreement.

Or the license might state that it covers only the main campus or the main campus and its satellites in a particular state or country. As a rule of thumb, if the license agreement does not contain any geographical restriction, one should assume that it is world wide in geography but limited to enrolled students, faculty and staff of the university. 🐼

Biz of Acq — The Effect of the Consolidation of Acquisitions and Serials/Periodicals Units on the Management of Electronic Resources

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Column Editor: **Audrey Fenner** (Head, Acquisition Department, Walter Clinton Jackson Library, The University of North Carolina at Greensboro, Greensboro, NC 27406; Phone: 336-691-5753; Fax: 336-691-5755) <fenner3@att.net>

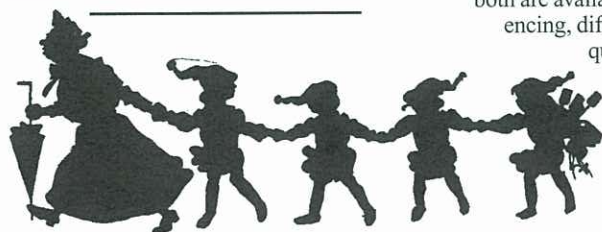
Column Editor's Note: *Xiaoyin Zhang and Michaelyn Haslam describe and explain the transition process at the Acquisitions and Serials/Periodicals units of the University of Nevada, Las Vegas Libraries merged. New positions, responsibilities and reporting structures streamlined workflow and enabled the consolidated department to take full responsibility for checking links, confirming access, and maintaining connectivity to electronic resources. — AF*

The University of Nevada, Las Vegas (UNLV) is a research intensive institution with 24,000 students and over 700 full-time faculty. The UNLV Libraries' collections contain over 950,000 volumes and 5,800 subscriptions. The Libraries' materials budget is about \$4.4 million including soft money. One of the goals resulting from the strategic plan of the UNLV Libraries was to increase access to digital collections. A big step in this direction is the decision to prefer online to print resources where both are available. As most libraries are experiencing, different skills and processes are required for the acquisition and maintenance of electronic resources. At the UNLV Libraries continuing evaluation of organizational structure to assist the Libraries in achieving strategic goals has resulted in

several major changes. One of the changes was to consolidate the Technical Services units of acquisitions, serials, periodicals, and bindery into a new department named **Materials Ordering and Receiving (MOR)** in 1999. MOR became part of a new division called Collection Development and Management along with collection development and document delivery services.

After the establishment of the new department, further organizational refinements were made. MOR staff spent a substantial amount of time analyzing existing tasks to identify similar functions to see if they could be combined, streamlined, or eliminated. Lines of supervision were adjusted. Staff cross-training was implemented to expand employee skills and expose them to all aspects of materials ordering and receiving.

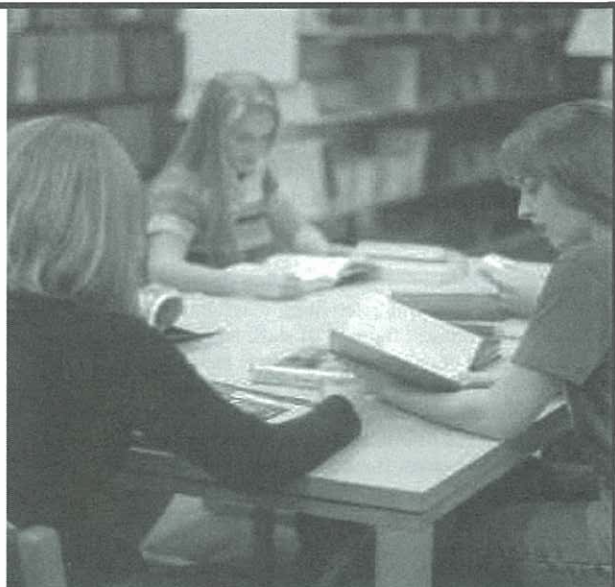
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Due to the rapid increase in the acquisition of electronic resources and the new workflow required to process them, the Libraries formed an Electronic Resources Task Force to establish policies and procedures. It was recommended that **MOR** assume responsibility for ordering, receiving, and maintaining connectivity to electronic resources. The department would provide one clear point of contact for content providers and library staff for all electronic resource connectivity-related problems. It would also centralize processing of all periodicals regardless of format.

In January 2001 **MOR** began a process review to reevaluate workflow, to identify resources needed, and to prepare staff to take on the new responsibility of managing electronic resources. At that time **MOR** staff consisted of one department head with eight library assistants and a number of student workers. The primary responsibility of the department included ordering, receiving, and paying for materials in all formats as well as binding.

During the process review, two **MOR** library assistants resigned. One was responsible for periodical check-in and the other for claiming. The position responsible for receiving materials was lost due to the implementation of shelf-ready

books which were received directly by Circulation. The vacant check-in position was transferred to another library department. The claiming position was reclassified to a higher level to include electronic resource maintenance. Due to the reduced workload resulting from cancellations of print journals and decisions to bind library materials more selectively, the bindery person was reassigned to take on periodicals check-in and claiming activity. A policy of claiming one time per issue was implemented to reduce claiming activities. Student assistants were given responsibility for more complex work, including being trained to do daily periodicals check-in. As a result of these changes, daily processing continued to move smoothly for print materials. However, integrating the management of electronic resources into **MOR** required that the staff develop a new set of skills within a short period of time. In 2002 the staff attended six training sessions covering Internet protocols, HTML, Web browsers and authentication to familiarize them with the Web environment. After training, **MOR** assumed the responsibility for maintaining connectivity of electronic resources. Weekly meetings were held to discuss issues related to connectivity and to establish procedures for troubleshooting and problem solving.

With the retirement of the serials assistant early in 2003, the department had the opportunity to reexamine activities related to or-

dering and receiving materials in all formats to see if it could further combine similar tasks. Serials/periodicals invoice and renewal activities were merged with monograph invoice processing. The serials check-in process was incorporated into the periodicals check-in process. Once these operations were consolidated, the primary responsibilities of the vacant position were changed from serials invoice payment and check-in to ordering and maintaining electronic resources. This position was filled in August 2003.

With the increased volume of work and professional skills associated with the management of electronic resource connectivity, a request for an Electronic Serials Librarian position had been made in late 2002. The position was approved in July of 2003 and filled that September. With the additions to the staff, a shift in focus from a predominately print environment to a predominately electronic environment became possible. At the same time, the bindery operation was transferred to the Libraries' Preservation and Conservation Department.

At this time **MOR** is staffed with the head of the department, a librarian, six library assistants, and student workers. Three library assistants responsible for ordering and receiving and the Electronic Serials Librarian report directly to the head of the department

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who manages and oversees the operation of the department. Three library assistants responsible for serials/periodicals report directly to the Electronic Serials Librarian who manages the process to acquire, renew, and cancel serials in all formats.

Refinements in the department structure, integration of similar activities, reassignment of responsibilities, training of staff, and successful hiring of new staff have helped expedite the transition to a predominately electronic environment. With a librarian and two library assistants whose priorities are management of electronic resources, the department can now pay more attention to maintaining information related to electronic resources, tracking changes in content, and updating URLs. In addition, the staff is responsible for the **Serials Solutions A to Z** title list and will be maintaining a link resolver.

The consolidation of units and the merger of similar activities resulted in the following benefits:

- Improved efficiency in the materials ordering and receiving process - By combining functions, streamlining workflow, eliminating duplicate efforts, and reducing print processing, **MOR** staff is able to handle the workflow despite the loss of two library assistants.
- Increased staff productivity in some areas - Training and cross-training developed expanded expertise within the staff who can now fill in for each other and keep backlogs from forming.


- Allowed greater focus on the management of electronic resources - With more staff and professional support available, planning is possible. Management of electronic resources changed from being reactive to proactive.
- Maximized staffing resources overall - The redefinition of positions and reassignment of responsibilities made the best use of human resources.
- Reduced volume of work in print materials processing - The conversion to electronic subscriptions, implementation of shelf-ready books, cancellation of print subscriptions, transfer of bindery activities, and revision of the claiming policy all contributed to changing the workflow to accommodate the expansion of electronic resources.
- Enhanced communications with vendors and among library staff at all levels - One point of contact for vendors was established by creating a departmental e-mail account and designating one phone for electronic resource matters. **MOR** staff participate in meetings of other library departments and work with other departments to establish policies related to using electronic resources.

Consolidation of the department has provided several advantages, and what we have learned will serve us well as change continues. The following briefly describes some of those lessons:

- Preparing/planning are very important, especially when many changes of personnel and workflow take place in a relatively short period of time. Trying

to anticipate problems and prepare for them gives staff a better idea of what to expect and reduces frustration. Since this area will continue to change for the foreseeable future, these key elements cannot be left out.

- Planning for change and communicating decisions need to take place with the people affected, and their input should be solicited.
- Constant evaluation and reevaluation must take place to ensure that productivity is enhanced as changes take place. Feedback on how changes are working is an important component of the evaluation cycle.
- Having a long-term strategic plan gives a framework for decision-making library wide as well as at the departmental level.

In conclusion, the merger of acquisitions and serials/periodicals has made the management of electronic resources possible and expedited the transition to a predominately electronic environment. 

Related Readings

1. Bordeianu, Sever, Linda K. Lewis, Frances C. Wilkinson. "Merging the acquisitions and the serials department at the University of New Mexico: a case study." *Library Acquisitions: Practice & Theory*, vol. 22, no.3 (1998), p. 259-270.
2. Zhang, Xiaoyin. "Combining traditional journal check-in and claiming activities with electronic journal initiation and maintenance activities." *Library Resources & Technical Services*, vol. 47, no. 4 (2003), p. 208-214.

Books Are Us

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Column Editor's Note: *This column covers fictitious accounts of people in our industry — librarians, publishers, vendors, booksellers, etc. — people like us. All contributions, comments, suggestions are welcome. — AR*

Thanks to **Diane Rourke**, Director, Health Sciences Library, **Baptist Health Systems of South Florida** (Miami), for writing: "There is an absolutely ghastly description of the new national library in Paris and also the librarians there in the book, *Paris to the Moon*, by **Adam Gopnik**, an otherwise lovely memoir of his five years in Paris, raising his young son and commenting on French cultural life for his columns for the *New Yorker*. . . in fact many of the chapters were published in the *New Yorker*." While this is not a fictitious account, it aroused my interest.

So I read *Paris to the Moon* (Random

House, 2000; ISBN 0-375-75823-2, trade paper) and was transported to the City of Light, enchanted by **Gopnik's** observations on life and customs and raising a child in Paris. I was intrigued by his several page description of the national library, as well as of his experiences there, and wonder if others familiar with the library share his impressions.

Gopnik wrote the "unbelievably vertiginously enormous" new *Bibliothèque Nationale* must "have been designed by a committee made up of **Michel Foucault**, **Jacques Tati**, and the production designer of *The Man from U.N.C.L.E.* The whole thing is set up, way up, on a wooden platform the size of six or seven football fields, high up off the street. There is an unbelievably steep stairs, leading up to this plateau, which is like nothing so much as one of those stepped pyramids where the Aztecs plucked the hearts out of their sacrificial victims." There are four glass skyscrapers, each set at one corner of the platform, all very hand-

some, "in a kind of early-sixties, post-lever House, Skidmore, Owings & Merrill way."

Gopnik described applying for and getting a library card as a time consuming experience bordering on exhaustion. He began with a visit to the desk of "one severely disciplinary young lady," who took information and entered it into the "single-overseeing computer system that was intended as the glory of the place." Next he visited the desk of another young woman, who reentered and corrected all the information the first girl en-



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