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Charleston Library Conference

Our Common Future

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DISCOVERY VERSUS DISINTERMEDIATION

Presented by Jane Burke (Vice President, Serials Solutions)

Reported by: Anna Fleming (Northwestern University, Galter Health Sciences Library)
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Burke expounded on how libraries become increasingly removed from the research process when users regularly begin their research with Google and move unknowingly into library-purchased content. Citing "Project Information Literacy," a study of early adult research habits out of the University of Washington's iSchool, she highlighted a user preference for "bountiful" resources and an impatience with opaque systems. Further, she declared the OPAC dead, or at least moribund, now that it is no longer the primary discovery tool for researchers. Burke urged libraries to mask complexity from users—including to give up bibliographic instruction as an introduction to the library—in order to make discovery easier and less intimidating. She talked of using web-scale technologies (Primo Central, Summon, Google Scholar) to simplify searching and to promote a library's collections.

OUR COMMON FUTURE

Presented by Ivy Anderson (Director of Collections, California Digital Library)

Reported by: Audrey Powers (University of Florida) < apowers@lib.usf.edu >

Previously published in Against the Grain, Vol. 22 Issue 3

Anderson began her presentation by summarizing the current state of affairs with an analysis based on three perspectives: the bad news (the economy), the uncomfortable news (rise of digital technologies and the information explosion) and the good news (creating a sustainable future). To address sustainability, thought provoking questions related to what issues you are grappling with, how you are coping, and what you are doing to be sustainable were posed. Her analogy to the Army Field Guide and library operations acknowledged where libraries need to change:

Defense – Reduce costs of core operations

Offense – Effective transformation

Joint Operations – Develop deep collaborations to share resources

She mentioned several major projects underway that epitomize retooling the way we do business such as Judy Luther's approach to rethinking technical services (Streamlining Book Metadata Workflow), the recent agreement between Columbia and Cornell to collaborate and redirect emerging resources to collections and services (2CUL), collaborative management of print collections (Heading WEST: Towards a Western Regional Storage Trust) and the large scale shared digital repository (HathiTrust).

During her presentation she interwove examples from the University of California Libraries to illustrate her points. This approach was useful to many librarians attending the conference because the University of California Libraries provides benchmarks of future initiatives for many libraries.