CONFERENCE REPORTS

1991 CONFERENCE SCENE: PREDOMINANT THEMES

CAROL PITTS HAWKS

1991 marked a year of travel for this editor-in-chief, including attendance at a number of acquisitions and serials-related conferences for the first time. The Society for Scholarly Publishing (Philadelphia, PA, May 22-24, 1991), the North American Serials Interest Group Annual Conference (San Antonio, TX, June 14-17, 1991), and the Charleston Conference, Issues in Book and Serial Acquisition (Charleston, SC, November 7-9, 1991) drew together a wide representation from the acquisitions, serials, publishing, and bookselling communities. Three themes emerged as issues of overarching concern to these communities over the course of 1991: funding difficulties for libraries and the larger research community, the future for electronic resources, and electronic journals.

FUNDING DIFFICULTIES FOR LIBRARIES AND THE LARGER RESEARCH COMMUNITY

Three challenges face the academic community: funding research, publishing scholarship, and maintaining library collections. This theme surfaced at the Society for Scholarly Publishing specifically in presentations made by Paul H. Mosher, Vice Provost and Director of Libraries, University of Pennsylvania and Mary E. Clutter, Assistant Director for Biological, Behavioral, and Social Sciences, National Science Foundation.

Paul H. Mosher

Mosher opened his remarks with a telling transparency reflecting that "business is not as usual." The current "crisis in resources" in universities has affected academic libraries, vendors, and publishers. From the publishers' perspective, are academic libraries worth considering? Mosher argued that the library buys at the front end of the process helping to fund development costs. Thus, libraries have a very important contribution to make to publishing.

In order to grow, all parties have been playing the margins; now we are much closer to falling over the edge. In the university environment there has been a backlash about raising tuition. Overhead recovery costs on grants and faculty course loads are under fire. The public is having a crisis about how much higher education is worth to them. As a result, state subsidies are down.

During the question and answer session, a telling remark was made by Fred Spilhaus,

Director, American Geophysical Union: "When librarians stop buying the marginal stuff, we'll stop publishing it."

Mary E. Clutter

Clutter enlightened the audience about the role and expectations of granting agencies. Specifically, granting agencies expect that grants they make to scholars will result in publications. Clutter also mused that it is interesting that the federal government (through grants) has colluded with the universities in the "publish or perish" syndrome. Clutter confirmed remarks made by Mosher indicating that Congress is not expected to increase the NSF budget, primarily because no one thinks scholars are hurting.

ELECTRONIC RESOURCES: THE FUTURE

In a time of shrinking financial resources, the academic community is also faced with proliferating electronic formats and resources. Issues such as pricing models, resource sharing, copyright, and the future of print were addressed at all three conferences.

Clifford Lynch

The 1991 Charleston Conference kicked off with a rousing opening presentation entitled "Conversion of Library Collections to Electronic Information: What Happens If We Succeed?" by Clifford Lynch, Director of Library Automation, University of California. Lynch began his presentation with a quote from a consultant's report that had changed his approach to strategic planning 7 to 8 years ago. "You have failed to prepare for the consequences of your strategic plan succeeding." Strategic planning is reasonably common in libraries today, but libraries often fail to plan for coping with the results of such plans actually succeeding. In the current context of this presentation, Lynch addressed the question of what happens when we move from the print medium to the electronic?

Lynch dealt with five assumptions and issues facing libraries in this arena today. First, acquisition dollars will remain constant for the foreseeable future, i.e., there will be no or-der-of-magnitude increases in funding. Second, libraries are becoming increasingly interdependent, particularly in consortial arrangements and cooperative collection development. In the context of electronic information, the information is rarely purchased, but rather leased. Licenses are signed to permit access to electronic information and such licenses supersede copyright law. Licenses rarely allow you to share the information between libraries unless the license has been specifically negotiated for the entire consortium.

The third issue concerned the cost of access. It would be silly to acquire journals without providing access to their contents. With abstracting and indexing services, how much access is enough? How much money should be committed to buying access to the collection rather than purchasing the actual source material? How much are libraries revising their purchasing of journals to match the access tools?

In his fourth issue, Lynch predicted that the reference material will be the first material to appear in electronic format other than the early journals. Reference works can be manipulated into factual databases very easily. For example, in a recent search of California's MEL-VYL system, over 10,000 titles published since 1980 contained the word *dictionary* in the title. Similar results

were achieved for the word *encyclopedia.* Lynch predicted two possible scenarios: the pricing for electronic information must be rethought to bring it into line with print prices, *or* the variety of sources will diminish and coalesce into fewer products. The first scenario is very unlikely, so libraries can expect a much more selective future.

Finally, there is a trend toward production of reference collection databases such as the Late Ancient Collection published by Chadwyck-Healey. These collections are static since little information will be added in the future. The collection is currently priced with a perpetual license. What is the life span of such products? How should they be priced? Should libraries amortize the costs of such databases over a period of time?

In summary, budgets will be fixed in the future at the same time that the cost of access will skyrocket. Electronic information in the reference area will be a major challenge and has broad implications for collection development policies.

Timothy B. King

Similarly, the NASIG Annual Conference opened with a presentation entitled "Impact of Electronic and Networking Technologies on delivering Scholarly Information," by Timothy B. King, Vice President, Marketing and Sales, John Wiley & Sons, Inc. King began his presentation by identifying five conditions that he is sure will be true in 15 years in the year 2006.

1. Information will be delivered faster and in a more individualized fashion.
2. Information will be accessed and used in new ways that we cannot even conceive.
3. Extraordinary electronic networks will exist using know-bots to retrieve and manage information.
4. Print will still exist.
5. The roles of print and electronic information will have changed.

In addition, King elaborated on the ways in which researchers engage in research activity and development. First, they identify what is going on in the world of research, but which has not yet been published. Second, they must stay current with what has just been published. Third, they must search the literature for what has been published. Fourth, they may engage in collaborative research as a result of their findings.

King cataloged a number of changes that he predicts will occur in the next 15-year period in the delivery of scholarly information. First, mail and fax will decrease. Logically, conference attendance will decline as well (But, they are so much fun that he seriously doubted this will actually occur!). Editing and refereeing will still continue, but will be conducted electronically. However, he was not convinced that the process will improve in speed with the exception of the elimination of mail delay. Instead, material to be refereed will reside on the computer until the referee has time to review it. Transmission of images will take longer to move to electronic formats.

Second, current awareness and browsing of current literature will change and be refocused. The demand for the paper version of abstracts and current awareness tools will decline. Instead, the researcher will read abstracts online and then request the actual copy of the article. Currently, electronic versions refer to the print copies for images. In 7 to 10 years, the print version of journals will refer to the electronic version which will include moving images. In addition, the electronic version will become the archival version with paper copies used and destroyed.

Third, the ability to conduct a comprehensive, historical search of the entire literature of a

field will become possible, but over the course of a number of years in the future. Being able to search everything electronically is a long way off, because too much is not yet in electronic form. Fourth, King predicted the increase of collaborative research at a distance. Researchers will no longer need to be near one another to collaborate effectively. Exchange of information can occur almost instantaneously across networks.

What do these changes mean for librarians? First, data exchanges will become more complex, and librarians must determine what portions of this communication should be archived. Second, librarians will be mounting more current awareness databases and subsequently deciding which print journals to keep and which to cancel. Determining how much of this material to provide and at what cost will pose another challenge for librarians. Third, King does not expect to see much retrospective conversion of data into electronic format so libraries will continue to be the repository for historical information. Finally, the incidence of articles with sound and motion will increase. Libraries will be increasingly required to deal with handling electronic journals.

Rebecca T. Lenzini

At the Society for Scholarly Publishing meeting, Rebecca T. Lenzini, President of CARL Systems, Inc., opened her remarks with a quote from the late Hugh Atkinson: "Users don't care if you have it, they just care if they can get it." Many of the investments libraries have made over the past years have provided the platforms for real resource sharing. For example, millions went into developing local online public access catalogs. Libraries can now tell users what is available in some standardized ways.

This leads to a triangle of information provision:

1. Libraries know what they have;
2. Libraries are able to tell users what they have; and
3. Libraries are able to use networks such as the Internet to retrieve that material for users.

Libraries will not have the means to continue building enormous paper collections. When the OPAC first appeared in libraries, users asked where were the citation indexes to the articles. Now that citation indexes are available, users are asking where the full text is. In reality, it is sometimes easier to buy a piece of the package (the article) rather than buy the entire package (the journal).

Lenzini closed her remarks with a word of caution to librarians. Libraries are involved in providing very compelling services. These services will have real revenue potential. Administrators in our own institutions may not think libraries are up to the challenge.

Emily Fayen

In a second presentation at SSP, Emily Fayen, Director of Information Systems, University of Pennsylvania Libraries, addressed the need for new pricing models for electronic information. In an attempt to explain the current dilemma, Fayen likened pricing to new math. Specifically, how many electronic books equal one traditional monograph? How many electronic journals equal one traditional periodical? Currently, pricing is based on the assumption that there is one copy of a work per reader. Royalties, fair use, etc. are based on this premise. In the print environment, preferential treatment has been granted for libraries—one copy serves many users. How do we translate this into a model for electronic information?

Fayen proposed and discussed five possible pricing models.

1. Model that is the same as that used with published materials. A single user would result in one license price; multiple users would result in one license to cover multiple users.
2. Model that is insensitive to use. Fayen argued for this model because user surveys indicate that user interaction with databases is very different if the meter is running the entire time. Users will not experiment or explore under these conditions.
3. Model that is based on potential user base. Fayen argued against this model because it unfairly penalizes the large institution.
4. Model that is based on the number of institutions. Fayen also argued against this model because it unfairly penalizes a consortium of many small institutions.
5. Model that charges for downloading or printing. Fayen argued against this model as well.

Richard Abel

In the second presentation at the opening session at the Charleston Conference, Richard Abel, Editor-in-Chief, Timber Press presented "Three Outrageous Propositions." He took a decidedly minority, though not necessarily unpopular, view of the future for libraries. Abel's three outrageous proposals emphasize the importance of books and printed material to the intellectual process of synthesizing information into knowledge. First, research libraries must reformulate the acquisitions budget to emphasize books. The current ratio of expenditures for books versus serials must be reversed. Over time, budgets should return to the 65% book/35% serial division of the past.

In his second proposal, libraries must abandon the view that the local library must supply everything requested or possibly needed. Finally, libraries must abandon the view that they have to keep everything that they acquire. Only a few principal libraries need to preserve the scholarly record in its entirety. Libraries should begin immediately to weed aggressively so that eventually there will be only a slight growth each year in the size of the collection.

ELECTRONIC JOURNALS

The final theme of these conferences dealt with the practical reality of the emergence of electronic journals as a format to be acquired and made available to the public. Two plenary session presentations at the NASIG Conference addressed the overarching issues related to electronic journals.

Anne B. Piternick

Anne B. Piternick, Professor, School of Library and Archival Studies, University of British Columbia, addressed the topic of "Electronic Serials: Realistic or Unrealistic Solution to the Journal 'Crisis'?" Piternick began her presentation with a discussion of the role of new technologies such as fax and electronic mail. Specifically, fax has been absorbed into our lifestyle very quickly, because it is easy to use and does not require a change in work style. Electronic mail has not been as easily accepted, because it is more restrictive requiring specialized equipment. In addition, the users must slot e-mail into their existing work habits. Computer conferences are increasingly popular due to speed of response.

In this arena, electronic newsletters and journals bear the closest resemblance to their print equivalents. One can cite a long list of experiments to replace the print journal. Electronic versions are just the latest experiment. Earlier experiments include copies of papers on demand, copies of papers distributed automatically based on an individual profile, and publication of synopses of papers with the full copy available on demand. In every case, none replaced the print; subscribers did not subscribe; authors did not accept. Essentially, there has been much the same response to electronic journals thus far. Piternick identified several disadvantages to electronic journals. Users want the predictability of regular issues. Authors and editors need deadlines to motivate them. Publishing a work immediately does not give the author a chance for reflection and second thoughts.

The presenter addressed the problems inherent in the migration from print to an electronic journal system. Ready access to equipment is still a problem in the developing world. Although this issue will resolve itself in the short term, it will not be so easily or quickly resolved in the third world. If third world contributions are important, this will be a continuing problem. Telecommunications costs and network access will be corollary problems.

Access implies bibliographic access. Articles from electronic journals must be included in abstracting and indexing services. Currently, many are not included because the medium has not yet reached a critical mass. In addition, no standard format for citing references from electronic journals exists. Appropriate formats for screen display and reading also are lacking.

A final problem involves the loss of control over what appears on the screen. Some computer features will allow the reader to view segments of an article out of context and never review the entire article. Issues of security of data and who has access to change the information are unresolved. The permanence of the medium is still in question and concerns are raised about the ability of updated search software to access old data. Authors are nervous that citation and usage logs will allow the publisher to determine what to archive and retain based exclusively on demonstrated use.

Piternick concluded that human factors will influence and undermine the adoption of the electronic format for scholarly publication. Thus, this is not a realistic solution to the journal crisis.

Charles W. Bailey

Charles W. Bailey, Jr., Assistant Director for Systems, University of Houston Libraries, began his presentation with discussion of the existing networks and their role in providing electronic conferences and lists. Bailey then identified 10 key problems with electronic journals as replacements for print journals.

1. Information is often distributed as ASCII files, which precludes the use of color and non-ASCII characters.
2. Network users have limited storage in their accounts.
3. Users may not understand mechanisms such as FTP.
4. Network performance problems and bottlenecks are substantial impediments to use.
5. Access is currently limited to academics and academic libraries, for the most part.
6. Getting information on what information is available on the Internet is a daunting task.
7. Publication in an electronic journal is still considered subterranean and may not be recognized by institutions as valid publication for promotion and tenure.
8. Indefinite archiving is not guaranteed.
9. The application of intellectual property rights is not clear.

10. Existing electronic journals are subsidized by free networks. Network economics could change resulting in access charges.

The highlight of the SSP meeting for this participant was a panel moderated by Ann Okerson, Director, Office of Scientific and Academic Publishing, Association of Research Libraries, involving three editors of electronic journals.

James J. O'Donnell

The first speaker was James J. O'Donnell, Professor of Classical Studies, University of Pennsylvania and editor of the *Bryn Mawr Classical Review.* Begun in fall 1990, the journal includes book reviews for classical studies. The two coeditors began the publication because of the sluggishness and delay in traditional publishing thus making it difficult to keep up to date. In addition, significant interest was expressed by the publishers of monographs in this field.

In addition to two editors, the editorial board is composed of 8 to 10 members whose work is all done via e-mail. In fact, O'Donnell intends that the board will never actually hold a meeting in the traditional sense. Preference for submissions is via e-mail with floppy as second choice. The editors will accept paper and/or fax as a last resort, but this option is not encouraged.

In addition to 150 subscribers, for the first year, a hard copy of the publication is being sent free to more than 300 Classics Departments to encourage them to subscribe to the hard copy or electronic version. At the time of the conference, four issues had been published with 18 to 20 reviews per issue. The editors planned to experiment with the fifth issue going out serially. Each review would be issued separately as a file via e-mail upon receipt of the review. At some point, the fifth issue would be declared complete and the reviews compiled into a hard copy version. From the editors' perspective, this mechanism makes even greater use of the speed and timeliness of the electronic format.

This publication falls somewhere between an edited and a moderated publication. All submissions are reviewed by an editor. The editor massages, combines, verifies, and edits the submission as necessary. Not everything is accepted for publication. Each item that is accepted and published has a serial item number attached to it for unique identification. O'Donnell believes that libraries should get the hard copy and not worry about the electronic version. He does not expect someone to go to the library to use this.

Joyce C. Sigoloff

The second speaker on the panel was Joyce C. Sigoloff, President, Embryonics Inc., which publishes the *Journal of Reproductive Technology.* This is a field that advances very rapidly. As a result, there was a recognized need to provide rapid exchange of information between researchers and clinicians involved in patient care. A number of researchers contacted Sigoloff about how they could improve communication of the most recent information.

The focus of the journal is determined by 25 editorial board members. In the beginning, only 50% of the board were computer literate, but all were very enthusiastic about the journal. Because not all clinicians are computer enthusiasts, Sigoloff is trying to make the system more user-friendly. The greatest cost is maintaining the database and keeping up with technical questions and problems from users. All papers will be archived indefinitely. The journal is not distributed free or via the Internet as with most other journals. Subscribers pay an annual fee of $400 for dial access via modem and for a hard copy version. Graphics are included in the print

journal, but are excluded from the electronic copy. The journal follows the format of a peer-reviewed journal and reviewers' comments are highlighted throughout the text. The first year ten papers were submitted with five accepted for publication.

Sigoloff indicated that the decision to publish a hard copy version was prompted by the decision of ISI and NLM not to cite the title in their indexes. The hard copy version has been accepted for citation in the traditional indexing sources. During discussion, Eugene Garfield's indicated that his company's evaluation for inclusion for indexing is based on the journal's track record and not on whether it is electronic or not.

Steven Harnad

The final speaker was Steven Harnad, Visiting Fellow, Department of Psychology, Princeton University, and editor of *Psycoloquy.* From Hamad's perspective, paper publication is too slow and too expensive. It takes too much time especially when turnaround can be 6 to 12 months at best. This delay is not optimal for the growth of science.

Harnad believes that publication is a form of scholarly communication and not just an archival record. As a result, he has coined the term "scholarly skywriting" for the option of open peer commentary. Through this format, target articles of new findings can be circulated to large samples of commentators across various disciplines. The peer commentary is appended to the original document for all to evaluate and comment further.

Psycoloquy evolved when Harnad took over a Bitnet psychology newsletter and remade it into this format. He is assisted by a large editorial board who is committed to turning around reviews within days or hours. From his perspective, the peer review process has not been changed. Instead, he has shortened the time in which it occurs. There are currently over 2,000 readers or redistribution sites. Harnad does not like the use of USENET newsgroups because he is not able to determine the number of users, only the number of sites. However, for libraries Harnad recommends that the electronic journals be redirected into USENET so that they can be searched more effectively and in one similar manner for all.

Mary Beth Fecko and Linda Langschied

Two additional workshops were presented at the NASIG conference on the topic of electronic journals, taking the practical day-to-day reality issues into discussion. Mary Beth Fecko, Special Formats Catalog Librarian, and Linda Langschied, Coordinator, Nonbibliographic Database and PC Services, Rutgers University discussed "The Impact of Electronic Journals on Traditional Library Services."

Fecko and Langschied covered much of the same ground discussed in other presentations such as the deficiencies of print publications and the possible reasons for the failure of electronic journals. From the public service perspective within the library, there are still many unresolved issues including access, retrieval, user training, and cataloging. The issue of access can be divided into two components: intellectual access and technical access. Public and technical services librarians must work together to determine how much is done with these titles. The presenters recommended mainstreaming the titles through traditional cataloging and inclusion in the OPAC and union lists. Specifically, they suggest using MARC fields such as the 265 field to include the source of the subscription including electronic address and the 500 fields for mode of access and restrictions on access. In addition, technical services must consider the function the bibliographic record is to serve and how user-friendly that record is.

Gail McMillan

        In the final plenary session at NASIG, Gail McMillan, On-Line Maintenance Team Leader, Virginia Polytechnic Institute Library addressed one library's approach to "Embracing the Electronic Journal." In this very well received presentation, McMillan discussed the approach of the Scholarly Communications Project at Virginia Tech to evaluating and incorporating electronic journals into the library. The library had already decided to incorporate electronic journals into their collection, but were faced with the questions of how, when, and where?

        Specifically, a Task Force on the Electronic Journal was appointed by the University Librarian; it included faculty and classified staff from each of the areas that would handle these materials—e.g., reference, systems, acquisitions, cataloging and serials. The Task Force agreed on several key principles as their work progressed:

1. The journal should remain online at every step of the process, from internal processing through use by library patrons.
2. Electronic journals are serials and for the most part should not be treated any differently from serials in other formats.
3. It would be necessary to identify the appropriate medium for storage of electronic journals.

        Four storage and access options were identified: PC-based local area network, PC-based local bulletin board system, the Libraries' mainframe computer, and the University's mainframe computer. In its final report, the Task Force recommended storage on the university's mainframe accessible via the Libraries' information system.

        Internal processing of electronic journals was also addressed by the Task Force. Titles were handled in the same manner as other serials. However, the bibliographic record would include the means of access in a general note (MARC tag 500) and in a local note (MARC tag 590). Orders for new titles would be initiated by the Principal Bibliographer; Serials Receiving Staff would receive the issues through a dedicated e-mail address. Standard claiming procedures would be employed. New titles would be forwarded to Serials Cataloging via e-mail. Reference and training issues were also addressed by the Task Force.

CONCLUSION

        As this report indicates, the acquisitions professional is faced with challenges in a number of arenas. The themes that emerge in our professional conferences and meetings are generally those issues of greatest interest and concern at any given time. These three themes—funding difficulties for libraries and the larger research community, the future for electronic resources, and electronic journals—are likely to occupy our attention well into the future. However, these conferences were the beginning of attempts to identify the issues and potential solutions.