
Preface

This volume marks the end of an editing era. We pay tribute to the editorship of Irene Godden, who took a dwindling series in 1991 and brought it back to the vitality envisaged by the founding editor, Melvin Voigt. We hope that a new joint transatlantic editorship, backed by a vigorous editorial board, will build on existing strengths and bring a wider perspective to future volumes. We will look back on developments and look forward to trends—and we will not be alone in doing this as the millennium draws to a close. We will seek experts in the field to cover all areas of librarianship and intend to publish comprehensive and scholarly articles that will report on advances and serve as a benchmark for the future.

This volume paints a picture of the way librarianship is advancing, moving through broad technical advances to specific applications of technology, and then examines three more focused issues: fund-raising, distance education, and library history.

Rick Forsman provides a useful introduction to the other papers on technology in the university library by giving an overview of research on the evolving roles of the information professional and the library, the issues of licensing and fiscal management, and the future adaptation of librarians as they work with electronic resources. He urges librarians to shape this new environment rather than react to it.

James Terry takes us on a fascinating tour of the development of automated systems for libraries. He charts the move from homemade systems in university computing services to the current concentration in the hands of a few large corporations. It is instructive to revisit the early dreams of fully integrated systems and compare these dreams with the commercial imperatives of today's developments on the Web.

Mary Jean Pavelsek considers one particular service on the Web, the provision of electronic journals, or e-journals. We are faced with a multiplicity of such services in today's libraries, and Pavelsek provides us with guidelines to evaluate these services and put them in an arena where they can be compared. These guidelines are used to look at two particular projects, JSTOR and Project Muse.

Norman Desmarais takes us further into the realm of electronic publishing with one librarian's experience of authoring electronic publications. This author worked on a project to produce a CD-ROM on the American Revolution. Here we see the librarian as a producer, moving one step further from the librarian as a consumer. Once again, commercial pressure provided a series of opportunities and constraints.

Derek Law examines electronic cooperation between libraries in the context of Metropolitan Area Networks in the United Kingdom. He considers networking for libraries in the UK to be at a crossroads where disparate initiatives could coalesce via Metropolitan Area Networks. The capacity for sharing resources between libraries and the organizations to which they belong can spread to cognate institutions such as local councils, schools, hospitals, museums, and art galleries.

Art, and the true images in art galleries, is central to the paper by Christine Sundt, which looks at the history of access to images to support study on a global basis. She examines the recent use of electronic access via the Web with a particular focus on the Image Directory. We have moved a long way from the days when a painter had to be employed to depict the items in a collection, but we must still take care that our current digital access to images is available to all who need it.

Accessibility is the theme of Daniel O'Mahony's paper on public access to electronic government information. The author is concerned about the fleeting nature of government information when presented in an electronic format. Paper formats have long seemed vulnerable, and in need of preservation, but on the whole they have survived. Digital information can disappear in a matter of months, either because the public files are no longer available or because the technology employed to access them has become obsolete. O'Mahony recommends a program to preserve electronic government information.

To preserve any of our resources in libraries, we need sufficient budgets, but because we seldom have this, many libraries are committed to development fund-raising. Joan Hood looks at the founding of some of the most famous U.S. library collections and considers the growth of "Friends of Libraries" to support continued development. She discusses the development of these groups and the publications that have supported their work. Hood also examines foundations that give grant aid to libraries, along with government agencies, as libraries reach out for new financial support. In addition, she covers how best to attract individual donors, the major source of donated funds.

Sirje Virkus takes us to Eastern Europe to consider cooperation in distance education for information professionals in Estonia. She covers the history of cooperation between Nordic (Finnish, Norwegian, and Swedish)

librarians and Estonian librarians. After describing a pilot project for school librarians and the opportunities and threats to distance education in Estonia, Virkus reports that a major project supported by the Open Estonian Foundation, begun in 1996, will last until 2005 and improve information technology and distance education in Estonia.

The last article focuses on the histories of U.S. land-grant university libraries. (In the last century, the U.S. Federal Government granted each state land, the proceeds from the sale of which were to be used to establish colleges in agriculture and mechanic arts.) Douglas Ernest discusses the library historiographical thinking since World War II and examines how this thinking has been applied throughout the histories of land-grant institutional libraries. He stresses the importance of university library histories and expresses hope that better trained historians, who include the context of changes, will produce them.

Advances in Librarianship will continue to report and analyze significant trends in librarianship. Clearly, information technology will dominate in future papers, but major advances in library education, special collections, library histories, and library operations, among others, will also receive attention. It is also our intent to produce a millennium volume that will consider 20th-century advances and look forward to the 21st century.

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