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From ISBD(CF) to ISBD(ER): Process, Policy, and Provisions

Ann Sandberg-Fox and John D. Byrum

The International Standard Bibliographic Description for Computer Files (ISBD(CF)) has been revised recently to take account of rapid changes in this important medium. In addition to setting out the process by which the revision was accomplished and the policies incorporated in the International Standard Bibliographic Description for Electronic Resources (ISBD(ER)), we provide a detailed indication of the stipulations of the ISBD(ER). With the emergence of this international standard, the next step is for the agencies responsible for national cataloging codes to update their rules.

BACKGROUND: PROCESS FOR REVISION OF ISBD(CF)

The first edition of the International Standard Bibliographic Description for Computer Files (ISBD(CF)) was published in 1990, following considerable study of the evolving medium and developmental work to articulate appropriate bibliographic practices. This standard focused on two principal aspects of computer files: software programs and machine-readable databases. ISBD(CF) proved successful in its effort to provide internationally acceptable provisions; the Anglo-American Cataloguing Rules, 2d ed., revised (AACR2R), for example, incorporated many of its recommendations and stipulations.

Technology, however, has evolved at a relentlessly rapid pace throughout the 1990s and new forms of computer files have been quick to emerge. By 1994, the International Federation of Library Associations' (IFLA) Sections on Cataloguing and on Information Technology, the groups that had jointly sponsored development of the ISBD(CF), decided to initiate a revision of the existing standard, despite its relatively recent publication. The ISBD(CF) Review Group was formed to include experts from the Library of Congress (LC), Uppsala Universitetsbibliotek, Bibliothèque National de France, and Biblioteca Nacional (Madrid), with John Byrum as chair and Ann Sandberg-Fox as editor. In addition, eight corresponding members volunteered to participate, with the result that specialists from the United Kingdom, Canada, the Netherlands, Denmark, Finland, and Croatia were also involved.

The review group was charged to examine the ISBD(CF) in all its provisions in order to ensure its ability to meet the current bibliographic needs of users in this highly volatile area. In particular, attention was directed to four developments:

1. The emergence of interactive multimedia, a still developing technology that combines and stores products of
audio and video technologies, together with text and graphics, on optical discs, needed fuller treatment in the ISBDs. While the computer aspects of this material involve ISBD(CF), the audio and video aspects are covered by the ISBD for nonbook materials (ISBD(NBM)). Because computer technology is essential in using this material, there has been strong support for treating it as a computer file. If ISBD(CF) were to be applied, there would be particular need to define this material in relation to other types of computer files. There would also be the need to review and revise stipulations, particularly in areas 1 (Title), 3 (Edition), and 5 (Physical description), to accommodate interactive multimedia.

2. Developments in optical technology had resulted in new and improved optical discs to replace magnetic disks as primary storage devices. These included more efficient CD-ROMs (compact disc read-only memory) and CD-I s (compact disc-interactive), and the new Kodak photo CDs (photo-optical compact disc). Provisions in area 5 (Physical description) of ISBD(CF) for describing optical discs covered only CD-ROMs, merely described as "compact disks." The term "disk" had been used throughout area 5 to describe both optical and magnetic devices. Further identification was considered necessary in current descriptions to distinguish among the various optical storage devices. Consideration also was needed for the proposed use of the spellings "disc" and "disk" to differentiate between optical and magnetic devices respectively.

3. The rapidly increasing availability of remote electronic files on the Internet needed greater attention than received in the ISBD(CF). The Internet had emerged as a global network that allowed users access to a vast wealth of remote electronic files. Libraries had started to catalog this online material—particularly electronic journals and other textual files considered of value to their collections. The debut of the OCLC Online Computer Library Center, Inc. Inter- cat project in 1993 demonstrated interest in providing bibliographic access to these remote resources. Although ISBD(CF) covered remote electronic files, with specific stipulations for their description in area 3 (Type and extent of file), only limited treatment had been given to them because they were a relatively new phenomenon. Designations of the type of file had been limited to general terms only—"Data" and "Program"—and their combination "Data and program." These terms were considered inadequate to identify the many different types of data files and software on the Internet. Also, information on the mode of accessing remote electronic files is provided for in area 7 (Notes) of ISBD(CF), but examples of the access note in this area only gave brief, generalized instructions. In the networked environment of the Internet—in which an electronic file may be accessed by several methods and reside in many directories—more detailed information has been considered necessary for users to be able to locate and retrieve such files.

4. Finally, reproductions of computer files presented a bibliographic concern of growing urgency. Increasing numbers of electronic titles were becoming available in a variety of physical formats. In addition to alternative physical carriers (disk and cassette) and carriers of different sizes (3 1/2-inch and 5 1/4-inch disks), a computer file might be available in print format and, in the case of remote electronic files, downloaded and copied to a disk or other device. Cataloging practices have varied on how to treat copies of computer file titles (as well as reproductions involving other forms of library materials, for that matter). In ISBD(CF), stipulations in
area 5 (Physical description) were limited to situations where a computer file could be available in alternative physical carriers.

With IFLA sponsorship and additional funding from the Research Libraries Group, the review group initiated its work program by meeting at LC in April 1995. In preparation for this session, the editor prepared a series of seven white papers that were distributed electronically to review group members for comment and discussion. In these papers, a broad spectrum of cataloging issues affecting computer files was addressed. These issues had been the subject of study by ALA cataloging groups as well as the focus of considerable debate on several Internet electronic discussion lists, including AUTOCAT, EMEDIA, and INTERCAT. Issues covered in the papers were: (1) interactive multimedia; (2) the general material designation (GMD); (3) sources of information; (4) reproductions; (5) file designations; (6) publication issues; and (7) a compilation of points and queries relating to definitions, dates of publication, and specific material designations.

Based on responses to these papers, the editor then readied a first draft of the revised ISBD(CF), which was distributed to the review group at the April meeting. Decisions taken at this meeting were then incorporated into a draft revised text that was subsequently issued for worldwide review in September 1995.

Over 30 responses were submitted by individuals and representatives of library associations and national libraries during the six-month review period. Most comments were specific and covered both major and minor stipulations throughout the text. These ultimately consisted of about 110 pages of single-spaced text that included extensive statements (both positive and negative) regarding the primary issues raised in the white papers. A number of respondents offered suggestions for changes and, in some cases, proposed wordings of the text. For each bibliographic area, the editor developed an issue paper to relay the specific comments in brief form to review group members. Ultimately, all problems were resolved, and the editor produced a revised version of the newly named International Standard Bibliographic Description for Electronic Resources (ISBD(ER)) for review group members, who voted unanimously to approve it.

Subsequently, the ISBD Maintenance Group, which is responsible for ensuring consistency among the ISBDs, studied the text and suggested a few changes to bring it into closer alignment with the general ISBD framework; the text now incorporates these changes. This final version of the ISBD(ER) was unanimously approved by the members of the IFLA standing committees sponsoring the project and in mid-July 1997 the text was submitted to the firm of K. G. Saur for publication in late August.

**POLICIES AND PROVISIONS FOR ISBD(ER)**

Within this framework, the principal changes made in the ISBD(CF) will now be presented. Changes were made in all areas of the text, but in the case of areas 6 (Series) and 8 (Standard number), changes were so minor that they do not need to be discussed here. To facilitate comparison of the stipulations in the ISBD(CF) with those in the ISBD(ER), changes are identified numerically by area and by stipulation within area.

The revision process of the ISBD(CF) involved three major iterations. These are distinguished here as:

- The first draft of the revised ISBD(CF) (distributed to review group members)
- The draft revised ISBD(CF) or simply draft revised text (distributed for worldwide review) (ISBD(CF) 1995)
- The published ISBD(ER) (1997)

**AREA 0: PRELIMINARY NOTES**

0.1.1 Scope

The first issue addressed by the review group concerned whether interactive multimedia was within the scope of the
revised ISBD(CF). In the white paper on this issue, the editor described developments in the technology and the work of the U.S. cataloging community in preparing the Guidelines for Bibliographic Description of Interactive Multimedia (Guidelines 1994), which had recently been approved by the Association for Library Collections and Technical Services (ALCTS) Committee on Cataloging: Description and Access (CC:DA). Under the Guidelines, interactive multimedia was identified as a unique class of library material to be cataloged with its own GMD. The review group, however, found that such material was within the scope of the ISBD(CF), because it was characterized by its use of computer-controlled technology to access and manipulate its content. As a result, provisions were either added or amended to show inclusion of this material. For the most part, the text of these provisions was derived from specific instructions in the Guidelines (1994).

The scope was also revised to provide more specific direction for treatment of items with a multi-ISBD character (e.g., a computerized map). The general instruction in ISBD(CF)—which directed users to consult the available ISBDs as needed—was considered inadequate; comments received from the review underscored the need for more specific guidance. As a result, the text in ISBD(ER) 0.1.1 now recommends that a bibliographic agency first make full use of the stipulations in the ISBD(ER) and apply provisions of other ISBDs as appropriate. If preferred, however, an agency can apply another ISBD appropriate for the material, supplemented with application of the ISBD(ER).

Finally, new text was introduced in ISBD(ER) 0.1.1 to identify edition issues associated with electronic resources and possible methods of treatment. The purpose of this text was to inform users early on about these situations and their treatment, and to reference the specific areas—2 (Edition) and 5 (Physical description)—where they are addressed in detail.

0.2 Definitions
The addition of new terms to the list in the ISBD(CF) was predictable, given developments in computer technology and the cataloging of computer files that had occurred since its publication in 1990. The list of 63 terms in the ISBD(CF) was initially expanded to 73 terms in the draft revised text that was submitted for worldwide review. Later, in response to comments received on review, the definitions to be given in ISBD(ER) were expanded to 101 terms including several technical terms, the new GMD, and 27 resource designations related to area 3 (Type and extent of resource). All terms were originally listed in stipulation 0.2 in the draft revised ISBD(CF); however, for ease of use, the entries and definitions for the GMD, the resource designations, and specific material designations were consolidated later into a listing that is part of Appendix C in ISBD(ER).

0.5.1 Order of Preference of Sources
Several substantive changes were made in ISBD(CF) stipulation 0.5.1 to resolve difficulties in applying the existing provisions and to accommodate interactive multimedia and the increase of remote access Internet items. Two excellent source documents available to the review group at the time were the Guidelines (1994) and Cataloging Internet Resources (1995). In addition, the review group considered approaches taken by cataloging groups abroad to develop specific guidance in this area.

The resulting text in the ISBD(ER) 0.5.1 was derived in part from section D of the Guidelines and provisions to chapter 9 of AACR2R. These amendments included: (1) recognition that there might be circumstances in which access to the internal sources of information would not be possible (e.g., the inability to load a resource); (2) identification of alternative sources of information in situations where the necessary information was lacking in the preferred sources; (3) instruction to favor the source that provides information applicable to the item as a whole and includes a collective title in the case of interactive multimedia; (4) direction to
take information from a compressed or unreadable remote access item after it has been processed for use; and (5) a caveat that in the case of all sources to prefer the source that provides the fullest or most complete information, when the information varies in degree of fullness.

In addition, the list of internal sources was expanded to accommodate the description of remote access items on the Internet and World Wide Web better. These sources, which are among those listed in Cataloging Internet Resources (1996), include: first display of information, the header to the file including ‘Subject’ lines, home page, TEI (Text Encoding Initiative) header, or other identifying information prominently displayed. With the exception of “home page” and “TEI header,” this expanded list conforms to the amendment to AACR2R rule 9.0B1.

0.5.2 Prescribed Sources

The reworking of the sources of information in ISBD(CF) 0.5.1 resulted in a similar reworking of the list of prescribed sources in section 0.5.2. In place of the verbal explanation given in the ISBD(CF), the editor decided to use a chart to clarify the prescribed sources in each area. In ISBD(ER) 0.5.2, the specification of sources for use in areas 1, 2, 4, and 6 are, in sequence: internal sources; labels on the physical carrier; and documentation, containers, or other accompanying material. In the case of areas 3, 5, 7, and 8, it is permissible to use any source.

Area 1: Title and Statement of Responsibility

With the exception of the GMD, changes in the stipulations in ISBD(CF) area 1 were minor, limited mostly to the addition of a few examples illustrating remote access items; these examples replaced existing examples that were seen as being dated or no longer relevant.

1.2 General Material Designation

Undoubtedly, the most notable, albeit controversial, change in area 1 was replacing the GMD “computer file” with “electronic resource.” This, in turn, resulted in changing the title of the revised document from ISBD(CF) to ISBD(ER) and the replacement of every occurrence of “computer file” with “electronic resource” in the text. The decision to make this change was taken only after extensive review. Although review group members had expressed dissatisfaction with the term “computer file” and seriously considered other possibilities early on in their discussions, they retained it for the GMD because it was judged to be an overall better indicator of the medium than the alternatives considered. In the chair’s note accompanying the draft text of the ISBD(ER), this decision was mentioned. Surprisingly, a large percentage of ISBD recipients (approximately 40%) reacted to this observation, with the majority indicating varying degrees of dissatisfaction with “computer file” and, in a few cases, proposing possible replacement terms. Independent of these responses, subscribers to INTERCAT participated in a lively debate concerning this topic in which they questioned the relevance of the term “computer file” to represent material on the Internet and on CD-ROMs (GMD 1995).

There was a decided need to revisit the issue. Possible terms that the review group considered earlier included “resource,” “file,” “document,” and “record,” modified by the terms “electronic” and “digital.” Of these, the term “electronic resource” received the greatest support. Translation of the term into other languages was not deemed to be problematic by the European members of the review group. They pointed out the existing lack of one-to-one equivalency in translating “computer file” into their languages, resulting in the substitution of other terms. For example, in France, the equivalent of the term “electronic” (électronique) had already been used for translation of “computer” in the original GMD. Finally, what perhaps best describes the rationale for the choice of “electronic resource” as the new GMD is expressed by Beaney (1996), who wrote: “We like the term [‘electronic resource’] because it is
general, easily understood outside cataloging circles, and is relevant to collections of both remote and local files.”

**Area 2: Edition**

### 2.1 Edition Statement

Several substantive changes were made in area 2 of the ISBD(CF). These concerned section 2.1, which involved clarifying the concept of “edition” and reconsidering the issue of single and separate records, particularly as related to remote access items. In the text of ISBD(ER) 2.1, the occurrence of a new edition continues to be linked to changes in the intellectual or artistic content of the item that would result in the creation of a separate bibliographic record. However, items in different system-related formats (e.g., IBM and Macintosh), which were treated as distinct editions in the ISBD(CF), are not considered sufficiently different to constitute a new edition or to warrant a separate bibliographic record in the ISBD(ER). Additionally, items in different types of physical carriers and items in different output media or display formats were also not considered distinctive editions in the ISBD(ER).

A new paragraph was also added in ISBD(ER) 2.1 to provide treatment for items with multiple edition statements, specifically interactive multimedia; in this text, which was derived from the Guidelines (1994, section 1), the cataloger is instructed to transcribe the statement that relates to the item as a whole; if there is no one statement that applies to the item, then that or any additional statements may be given in area 7.

Two remaining concerns with section 2.1 resulting from the review of the revised text were the treatment of frequently updated resources and use of the term “version” as being synonymous with “edition.”

The first concern centered on the description of remote access items, which are subject to frequent or continuous updating. Some of the ISBD respondents noted that the highly changeable nature of these remote access materials made upkeep of existing records and the creation of new records extremely troublesome. In an attempt to help stabilize the bibliographic description for such items, an instruction was added in ISBD(ER) 2.1 to omit edition statements altogether in the edition area and, instead, to give an appropriate note:

- Frequently updated; Last update: 2/18/97.

The second concern was whether the term “version” should be considered synonymous with “edition.” In ISBD(CF), the terms “version,” “level,” “release,” and “update” were equated with “edition,” which implied justification for the creation of new descriptions. In comments on the draft revised text, it was noted that “version” served sometimes as an indicator of major changes and at other times as an indicator of minor changes. It was thus clear that the terms, although related, should not be treated as synonymous. The resulting text in ISBD(ER) 2.1 reflects this ambiguity by stating that “version” and other related terms can indicate an edition statement; however, because they might indicate either major or minor changes, they are not necessarily a reliable guide to indicate a new edition.

**Area 3: Type and Extent of Item**

Of all the areas in the ISBD(CF), area 3 received the most extensive revision. In basic orientation, the text of ISBD(ER) area 3 remains the same as in the ISBD(CF), that is: designation of the type of item is mandatory in the description of remote access items and optional for local or direct access items, with extent or size of item to be given when the information is available and the bibliographic agency wishes to record it. In all other respects, however, this area was thoroughly reworked to improve its usefulness in identifying the variety of remote access items now available on the Internet and World Wide Web.
3.1 Designation of Item

The revision centered on ISBD(CF) section 3.1 and the associated list of file designations that now appear in Appendix C. At the time of the ISBD(CF) revision project, the three designations allowed—“Data,” “Program(s),” and “Data and program(s)”—were seen to be too limited to provide a meaningful or useful identification of many of the items that had become widely available online. Two failed attempts to expand these particular designations were reviewed. One such attempt was a proposed list of 17 additional terms presented in the Guidelines (1993, B:5). A CC:DA task force charged with reviewing the manual disapproved of the expansion and open-ended provision to add more terms as needed, but decided to make its own attempt to expand the list by proposing a compromise to add specific modifying terms in parentheses following the existing designations (e.g., “Computer data (Numeric)”). While this approach built on the present designations and their structure, it did not address the problem of additional information appropriate to this data element (number of files, records, statements, and bytes) which when included made the designation unwieldy. In its final report to CC:DA, the task force withdrew its proposed compromise (ALCTS CC:DA Task Force 1993).

In the white paper distributed to the review group on this issue, the editor offered another approach for consideration that borrowed from these attempts. This solution was to retain the present designations and modify them, if desired, with the list of terms given in the fixed field 008/26 (type of computer file) in the 1988 edition of the USMARC Format. For “data” these terms were “Numeric” (code a), “Representational” (code c), and “Text” (code d), with the resulting designations:

- Computer numeric data
- Computer representational data
- Computer text data

In the case of “Computer program” (code b), the editor suggested the modifiers “application” and “system” be used as appropriate:

- Computer application program
- Computer system program

The review group endorsed this approach, but decided that these terms should be further expanded to accommodate other types of files. An additional list of 22 designations that could be used singly or in various combinations was proposed. These designations consisted of well-established terms widely used in the global computing community of producers and users. A particular effort was made to ensure that all chosen terms be mutually exclusive.

Three levels of specificity were introduced, starting with the present three generic designations at the first or top level. Specific designations representing these categories were listed at the second or middle level, and, in turn, more specific designations for these categories were listed at the third level:

- First level: Computer data
- Second level: Computer numeric data
- Third level: Computer census data

Designations at any one of these levels could be used as desired by the bibliographic agency. In the case of data and program combinations, specific designations could be combined:

- Computer census data and spreadsheet program

In the case of “interactive multimedia” and “online service(s),” these terms may be used singly or in combination with other terms:

- Computer interactive multimedia
- Computer interactive multimedia game

Following extensive discussion, the final list of 30 designations was approved and incorporated into Appendix C of the draft revised ISBD(CF) that was sent for review. Overall, comments from ISBD recipients were supportive of the proposed des-
ignations. Suggestions were made to clarify some designations and to request definitions for all designations. A concern was expressed that the list appeared to be closed, a condition that might limit its future usefulness. Also, with the flexibility allowed in choosing levels of designations, some commentators wondered about lack of uniformity in bibliographic descriptions.

However, what was unexpected were several comments concerning the description of physical details (sound, color) and accompanying material relating to remote access items. Direction in the “Introductory note” to area 3 in the ISBD(CF) called for giving this information in area 7; this direction had been retained in the draft of ISBD(CF) that was circulated for review. Responses from about 25% of the reviewers ranged from calling for the abolition of area 3 in favor of giving the information in areas 5 or 7, to suggesting that the sections in areas 3 and 5 be harmonized, to requesting that all sections in area 3 be made optional.

To resolve this issue, review group members were surveyed to select from among the following alternatives: (1) to retain the provision in the draft revised ISBD(CF) text, which allowed for the physical details for remote access items to be given in area 7; (2) to give the physical details in area 3 on an optional basis, following the file designation; or (3) to record the physical details in area 5 on an optional basis in addition to giving the file designations in area 3 as listed in Appendix C. Responses from members indicated a majority preference for the first of these options.

Following the decision to change the GMD to “electronic resource,” the designations in Appendix C, in turn, were introduced with the word “electronic” in place of “computer.” A separate list of these designations without the word “electronic” was also included in the ISBD(ER) to accommodate bibliographic agencies giving the GMD in their bibliographic descriptions.

In response to the concern about the list of designations being closed, a provision was added to authorize the user to supply an appropriate designation when none of the designations in Appendix C was appropriate. As to the choice of a term, catalogers are instructed to prefer a term that is currently well established, in use by both the producers and users of the particular resource, and is mutually exclusive of other terms used as designations. Finally, as noted earlier, definitions for the designations listed in Appendix C were added to Appendix C in the ISBD(ER).

3.2 EXTENT OF FILE

Two remaining changes concerned ISBD(CF) section 3.2. The first involved inserting text in the introductory paragraph regarding compressed forms of remote access items. In ISBD(ER) 3.2, the text reads (1997, 53): “When the resource is in a compressed form, the bibliographic agency may omit this information.”

The second change resulted in revising the punctuation pattern from introducing information on “extent” with a colon space after the number of files to a space, colon, space, which conforms to the punctuation pattern given for recording this information in chapter 9 of AACR2R (1988, rule 9.3B2):

ISBD(CF): Computer data (1 file: 96007 bytes)
ISBD(ER): Computer data (1 file: 96007 bytes)

AREA 4: PUBLICATION, DISTRIBUTION, ETC.

The major concern with ISBD(CF) area 4 was whether the stipulations were adequate for the treatment of remote access items. Concerns were centered, in particular, on the stipulations regarding publication and dates. With respect to publication, examination of the provisions throughout this area showed uniform treatment for cataloging all computer files—both remote access and local or direct access—as being published. The consequence was that formal statements of publication that included place, publisher, and date were given in area 4 when the
Information was available; otherwise, if such information were lacking, the abbreviations "s.l." and "s.n." were given.

In contrast to this treatment, chapter 9 in AACR2R calls for the cataloger to distinguish between published and unpublished items, and to apply differing cataloging treatments for each category. In the case of unpublished items, only date information would be given (AACR2R 1988, rules 9.4F1, 9.4F2). These instructions became the topic of considerable discussion in the cataloging community when libraries started to catalog material on the Internet as part of the INTERCAT project. The question of whether remote access material should be considered published was addressed in a set of guidelines published in Dillon and others (1993, B:2) with the suggestion that a remote access item be treated as published if it carries a formal statement of publication, or as unpublished if it lacked such a statement. In the later revised text (Cataloging Internet Resources 1995), this suggestion was amended to treat all items on the Internet selected to be cataloged as published items. In essence, this treatment conformed to that found in the ISBD(CF).

In an attempt to apprise review group members of the discussion and varying treatment for describing remote access items, the editor prepared a paper on the topic. Responses indicated that members found the ISBD(CF) sections to be adequate, with some recommending that the treatment of remote access items be clearly stated in the “Introductory note” to the area. In addition, the position that all remote access resources are considered to be published is given in a footnote in stipulation 0.1.1 (Scope) and is mentioned in the definition for “publication” of remote access items in stipulation 0.2.

4.4 Date of Publication, Production, or Distribution

With respect to dates, the difficulty was in providing treatment for online services and other dynamic resources, such as World Wide Web sites, whose publication dates frequently change in conjunction with changes in their content. Such dates commonly appear in these items in the form of month, day, and year, followed at times with a precise recording of the time in hours, minutes, and seconds. Giving an open date in the cataloging record for these items, as in the case of multipart items, was considered, but was found to be insufficient to reflect this situation. After worldwide review, however, this issue was revisited. Subsequently, text was added in ISBD(ER) stipulation 4.4.1 to allow for a note to indicate the month, day, and year that appear in a dynamic resource, e.g.:


Description based on home page dated: 09/06/96.

The related note for indicating the frequently changing content of these resources, discussed in section 2.1, could also be used in conjunction with this note. Another concern regarding dates was the treatment of items, such as interactive multimedia, that contained multiple copyright dates associated with their production (e.g., written program, sound production, graphics). It was decided that a new stipulation should be added to address this situation. The text of ISBD(ER) stipulation 4.4.7.1 was derived from the Guidelines (1994, section J) and contains instructions that the latest copyright date should be given when there is no other date in the item applicable to the item as a whole. It does not matter whether the copyright date appears in conjunction with the written program or some other aspect of the production.

Area 5: Physical Description

ISBD(CF) area 5 was the focus of considerable revision, which resulted in several substantive changes. First, the “Introductory note” was completely reworked to address edition issues associated with physical carriers available in different types and sizes, in different system- and printer-related formats, and in different output or display formats. In all these situations, the ISBD(ER), which builds on
the basic text in the ISBD(CF), offers the choice of making separate bibliographic descriptions for each physical carrier involved or, alternatively, making distinct physical descriptions for each carrier in the same bibliographic record. In the latter approach, each description would occupy a separate line in the record or could be grouped in a single continuous line. In addition, a new paragraph was added to cover the treatment of interactive multimedia made up of two or more physical carriers, with distinct physical descriptions mandated for each carrier in the same bibliographic record. This treatment is in accord with the preferred treatment in the Guidelines (1994).

5.1 Specific Material Designation

The second major change made in ISBD(CF) stipulation 5.1 was the introduction of the spelling "disc" to describe optical physical carriers with the confinement of "disk" to the description of magnetic carriers. This decision was influenced by the adoption of these spellings in the Guidelines (1994, section K), as well as by the results of a survey compiled by Jizba (1996).

5.3.1 Dimensions

ISBD(CF) stipulation 5.3.1 was changed to provide an option to express the dimensions of physical carriers in inches rather than in centimeters, as is customary in the ISBDs. This option, which is given in a footnote in the ISBD(ER), was recommended, in particular, by European members of the review group who felt it important that bibliographic agencies be allowed to exercise a choice in this matter.

Review of other stipulations in ISBD(CF) area 5 resulted in the deletion of stipulation 5.1.3 whose provisions for recording the make and model of machine in parentheses after the specific material designation were considered to be outdated. For the same reasons, stipulation 5.2.4, which provided the option of recording format characteristics that were largely associated with disks, was also deleted. Stipulation 5.3.4 was amended to take into account the description of items consisting of physical carriers of different dimensions. The instruction in the ISBD(CF) to omit such dimensions from the physical description area and to give them optionally in a note was rewritten to incorporate the instruction in AACR2R rule 9.5D2. As a result, ISBD(ER) calls for giving such dimensions in the physical description area, with the smaller or smallest and the larger or largest dimensions separated by a hyphen.

Suggestions stemming from the review of area 5 proposed further clarification of the methods of description set out in the "Introductory note," which was accomplished in the final text of the ISBD(ER). In addition, commentators asked the review group to consider replacing the specific material designation "computer optical disc" with the identification of particular optical disc formats (e.g., CD-I, CD-ROM). After considerable deliberation, a compromise solution was approved in which the designation, "electronic optical disc" would be retained, but an option to name in parentheses one of the following particular disc formats: CD-I, CD-ROM, or Photo CD would be added, e.g., 1 electronic optical disc (CD-ROM). In addition, provision was made to record other optical disc formats as they became known, dependent on the wishes of the bibliographic agency and the established identity of the format by both producers and users of the item. These provisions were incorporated as a new stipulation (5.1.3) in the ISBD(ER).

Finally, review of the treatment for accompanying material in stipulation 5.4 in the draft revised text indicated some confusion in describing these items. The text was subsequently clarified and incorporated in ISBD(ER) stipulation 5.4.

Area 7: Notes

A lengthy review of ISBD(CF) area 7 resulted in numerous changes throughout the text that were incorporated in the draft revised ISBD(CF). Most noticeable were: (1) the addition of new examples to illustrate interactive multimedia and remote access items that affected the ma-
jority of the stipulations; (2) the addition of anew stipulation 7.2.2, which separates notes for the bibliographic history of an item from notes for the source of the edition statement (renumbered 7.2.1) and the requirements to give the note for the latter if applicable; (3) the note for system requirements for local or direct access items; and (4) the note for mode of access for all remote access items.

Comments received from the worldwide review prompted further revision. A strong suggestion was made to place the notes for system requirements (7.5.1) and mode of access (7.14, the last listed note) as the first notes, which reflected the directions given in the text of these stipulations. The ISBD schema for this area, however, prevented this reordering. It was then decided to reorder the note for mode of access to its more logical placement following the note for system requirements. In the ISBD(ER), the former note is listed as 7.5.2; also, additional text was inserted in the “Contents” section introducing this area, to alert bibliographic agencies as to the precedence and mandatory status of these notes.

Other comments from reviewers resulted in expanding the new stipulation 7.2.2 for notes on the bibliographic history of an item and stipulation 7.9 for notes on the description of the copy in hand to include, respectively, indications of the frequently changing contents of remote access items and information on the edition or issue used in the description. These notes, discussed earlier in the context of area 2, were incorporated in sequence in the ISBD(ER).

**APPENDIX A: MULTILEVEL DESCRIPTION**

ISBD(CF) Appendix A illustrated the multilevel description of a local access item. This single application was expanded in the draft revised text of the ISBD(CF) to illustrate two choices of multilevel descriptions that pertained both to local and remote access items. Following the review, it was decided to replace one example with a more illustrative title and to add a third choice of multilevel description to further illustrate its application in the ISBD(ER).

**APPENDIX B: BIDIRECTIONAL RECORDS**

There was no example of a bidirectional bibliographic record in ISBD(CF) Appendix B that illustrated scripts written in opposite directions. To remedy this deficiency, an example was found that illustrates an item in both English and Arabic scripts.

**APPENDIX D: RECOMMENDED ABBREVIATIONS**

The list of three recommended abbreviations in Appendix D of the ISBD(CF) was shortened to two in the draft revised text. Following review, abbreviations for the three optical disc formats, (i.e. CD-I, CD-ROM, Photo CD) were added to the ISBD(ER) along with three abbreviations used to express the dimensions of physical carriers in area 5.

**APPENDIX E: EXAMPLES**

The ten examples in the ISBD(CF) Appendix E were replaced initially with nine new examples in the draft revised text. Five additional examples were contributed as a result of the review. Consequently, Appendix E of the ISBD(ER) includes 14 examples from the United States, the United Kingdom, Canada, Finland, France, Russia, Slovenia, Spain, and Sweden. These cover a variety of electronic resources including local and remote access items as well as interactive multimedia.

**INDEX**

The ISBD(CF) index was not revised until final editing of the ISBD(ER). Major revision was undertaken with the purpose of providing greater in-depth access to the stipulations and their contents. This resulted in the expansion of entries from 107 in the ISBD(CF) to 272 in the
TABLE 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ISBD(ER) Stipulation</th>
<th>Provision/Content</th>
<th>AACR2R Rule</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0.1.1</td>
<td>Scope</td>
<td>9.0A1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.5.1</td>
<td>Order of Prescribed Sources</td>
<td>9.0B1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.5.2</td>
<td>Prescribed Sources of Information</td>
<td>9.0B2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>General Material Designation</td>
<td>1.1C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>Edition Statement</td>
<td>9.2B1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>Resource Designations</td>
<td>9.3B1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>Extent of File</td>
<td>9.3B2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>Date of Publication</td>
<td>9.4F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>Specific Material Designations</td>
<td>9.5B1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.2</td>
<td>Format Characteristics</td>
<td>9.5C2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.3.1</td>
<td>Dimensions</td>
<td>9.5D1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.2.2</td>
<td>Bibliographic History Note</td>
<td>9.7B7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.5.1</td>
<td>System Requirements Note</td>
<td>9.7B1b</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.5.2</td>
<td>Mode of Access Note</td>
<td>9.7B1c</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.9</td>
<td>Resource Described Note</td>
<td>9.7B20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

ISBD(ER), for an increase of approximately 150%.

CONCLUSION

The focus of this discussion on the principal changes that were made in the ISBD(CF) necessarily overlooks the many other changes of lesser importance that also went into this revision. These ranged from spelling and punctuation oversights to the replacement of outdated examples and the addition of new ones to illustrate pertinent text. Much of this work was aided by written comments submitted by reviewers of the first edition, and later by reviewers of the two early iterations of the ISBD(ER).

IMPLICATIONS FOR AACR2R

What, may one ask, are the implications of the ISBD(ER) with respect to the development of national cataloging codes and the automated environment in which most cataloging is being done, particularly in the United States? Already activities have been initiated in some European countries to update existing manuals, rules, and codes to incorporate the features of the ISBD(ER). Within ALCTS, CC:DA has taken action to initiate an investigation of the implications of ISBD(ER) for AACR2R chapter 9 (Kinnery 1997). Table 1 is intended to highlight the most significant provisions of chapter 9 that should be harmonized with ISBD(ER) as the result of the CC:DA effort.

We recommend that the work needed to update AACR2R chapter 9 be pursued in the near term in order to capitalize quickly on the advances that have been realized with the publication of ISBD(ER).

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GMD discussion. 1995. INTERCAT. August 30–31, September 1, 11–12.


Public Libraries and Adult Fiction: Another Look at a Core List of “Classics”

Judith J. Senkevitch and James H. Sweetland

In this study, we examined the extent of change over a one-year period in the adult fiction titles most widely held by over 4,000 OCLC Online Computer Library Center, Inc. member public libraries in order to clarify the degree of stability of a consensus list of most-held adult fiction. The study is part of a continuing research effort to contribute to the understanding of the nature of adult fiction collections in public libraries and to develop useful models to assist librarians in evaluating their adult fiction collections. Findings indicate that the most widely held adult fiction titles are recent, popular works that form a stable core from one year to the next; results also suggest that such a listing of widely held titles might be suitable as an evaluation tool in smaller public libraries. The implications of these findings are discussed and recommendations are made for further research.

As part of an ongoing effort to understand the nature of adult fiction collections in public libraries and to develop methodologies and tools to assist practitioners in evaluating fiction collections, we have conducted a series of research projects to examine various aspects of evaluating public library adult fiction. In an initial study undertaken in 1992 of evaluation practices and concerns in small and medium-sized Wisconsin public libraries, we found that a large majority of librarians had evaluated their adult fiction collections within the previous five years (Senkevitch and Sweetland 1994). However, in that study and others, researchers also found that many librarians in smaller libraries do not distinguish between evaluation and weeding, and that they are reluctant to weed lest they discard a work that might return to favor (Truett 1990). This is particularly a concern in smaller libraries with very limited resources. There is both a need for and lack of understanding of ways to identify adult fiction titles that will remain popular or endure.

Seeking to address that question, we next undertook a study, funded by the OCLC Online Computer Library Center to determine whether a core list of adult fiction titles widely held by public libraries could be identified for use in evaluating adult fiction collections (Sweetland and Senkevitch 1995; Senkevitch and Sweetland 1996). In that study, we also examined whether commonly used collection development lists of recommended titles or lists of bestsellers would be useful.

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in predicting widely held works. Using the OCLC Online Union Catalog (OLUC) of over 30 million records, we identified the approximately 400 adult fiction titles most widely held by public library participants in OCLC (Senkevitch and Sweetland 1996). While our findings suggested that this core list might be useful as an evaluation tool, they also raised questions about the stability of the list. Would the same titles remain on the list of widely held works from one year to the next, or would there be substantial change in the makeup of the list? We had an underlying assumption that a fiction work widely held by public libraries would in some sense be “classic,” and prevalence in public library collections rather than, for example, inclusion in a “literary canon,” formed the basis for the operating definition of “classic” in the study. The issue of longevity on the list—the stability of a title—raised an important question in this regard.

As part of the 1993–94 project, OCLC staff produced two lists of widely held public library adult fiction titles: one list in December 1993 that contained a total count of the holding codes for all manifestations, and a second list in August 1994 that contained a count of the individual libraries holding a given title. While some variation in the titles included on the two lists might reasonably have been expected with the modification in the parameters of the database run, examination of the two lists showed that more than 20% of the titles changed from the first to the second list within this brief period. In addition, the numbers of holdings had increased substantially for many remaining titles in the eight months between the generation of the two lists, a phenomenon also not necessarily explained by the modification in parameters. Almost by definition, a list of “classics” would be expected to change rather slowly, if at all, over time. Findings from the 1993–94 work, however, raised questions about the degree of volatility of the list of adult fiction most likely to be held by U.S. public libraries that are participants in OCLC.

Therefore, in order to explore further the potential usefulness of such a listing as an evaluation tool and to examine systematically the degree of volatility of titles on the list, we undertook a second study, funded by OCLC, in 1995–96. In this second study, we generated a new list of 400 adult fiction titles most widely held by OCLC member public libraries in 1995 and compared that list with the 1994 list to examine the relative stability of the listing. The findings of this latter study are reported here. While a brief background on key issues relating to public library collection evaluation and the role of popular materials is also provided, readers are referred to previous works (Sweetland and Senkevitch 1995; Senkevitch and Sweetland 1996) for a fuller discussion of these topics.

**Research Questions and Hypotheses**

The principal research questions addressed by this study are:

**Question 1.** Does the emphasis in public libraries on providing current popular reading appear to lead to relatively rapid changes in the titles held by those libraries?

**Question 2.** If not, could a core list of such titles be developed to assist librarians in collection evaluation?

In addition, the study provided insights into what constitutes a “fiction classic.” Hypotheses tested included the following:

**Hypothesis 1.** The listing of adult fiction titles most widely held by OCLC member public libraries will change within one year, with many titles dropping from the list and new titles taking their place.

**Hypothesis 2.** Titles with more recent publication dates will show a larger increase in number of holding libraries than those titles with older publication dates.

**Hypothesis 3.** Titles with older publication dates will be more likely to drop from the list than those with recent dates.

**Hypothesis 4.** Those titles added to the list from one year to the next will be those with recent publication dates.
Hypothesis 5. Those titles with more recent publication dates will show a greater increase in number of different OCLC records (as a result of new editions and different formats) than those titles with older publication dates.

BACKGROUND

Almost since the beginning of the public library as an institution, a primary use of these collections has been for reading fiction. While the exact percentage of total circulation accounted for by adult fiction has varied over time (Goldhor 1985), fiction remains the most common adult material taken out of the library (Johnson 1989; Vavrek 1990; Westin and Finge 1991). Analyses of the roles selected by public libraries consistently indicate popular materials center as the most commonly selected primary role (McClimne et al. 1987; Baker 1993; Shearer 1993; Senkevitch and Sweetland 1994).

Although it is clear that fiction for adults is an important part of public library collections, there has been surprisingly little research on such collections (Sweetland 1991; Senkevitch and Sweetland 1994). Researchers in a number of studies have pointed out the value of display and promotion in increasing circulation—notably Baker (1986, 1988), Long (1986), and Parrish (1986). While useful, unfortunately, these and other authors suggest that circulation, being easily manipulated, is not a good measure of value. The authors of two key works on library collection weeding unfortunately give somewhat conflicting advice. Slote (1971, 1989) recommends relying solely on circulation, but he argues that in each library the relevant time-on-shelf must be calculated individually, because such time might vary from two months to nearly ten years. In the revised CREW (Continuous Review, Evaluation, and Weeding) manual on weeding, Boon (1995) suggests considering a time-on-shelf since last circulation of two years as a viable figure for weeding decisions for fiction, in contrast to Slote's varying figure. Boon also suggests considering a title's presence on lists of recommended fiction and award-winners in the weeding process.

A relatively recent approach to collection evaluation, initially developed by the Research Libraries Group, is the prospectus approach, in which a relatively close classification of the entire collection is used as the basis for evaluation. Given its apparent success for larger academic libraries, the approach has been adapted not only for nonfiction collections but also for fiction, even though the latter is not traditionally classified by libraries (Collection Building 1994). The basic elements suggested for fiction evaluation are age of material, use (based on circulation data), and relative size of the given genre or category compared with the collection as a whole. Quality judgments for fiction are made by looking at size and growth rate, number of authors and titles owned, and desired intensity of collection for each genre. A further test of quality refers to current lists of awards and honors, presence on lists of "classics," and recent lists of ALA Notable Book awards (Baker 1994).

It is clear that both librarians and the public believe that fiction for adults is an important part of public library collections. However, despite this, there has been almost no research on how to improve this important aspect of public library service. Similarly, while librarians agree on the need for evaluation and weeding of fiction collections, there is little information on how to do it. One aspect of the problem identified in earlier research (Senkevitch and Sweetland 1994) is the lack of reliable ways to identify fiction "classics" when selecting and weeding. This study addresses that issue.

As of August 1994, there were over 18,300 participating libraries in the OCLC system; the OLCU contained nearly 31 million records with a combined total of approximately 527 million holding codes (OCLC Statistics 1994). In August of 1994, the date of the first list of titles generated from the database, the system included approximately 4,000 public libraries; a year later this number had grown to about 4,700 public libraries (McClain 1995).
### TABLE 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author/Title</th>
<th>Date of Publication</th>
<th>No. of Unique Library Holdings in 1995</th>
<th>Change in Rank by Holdings 1994-95</th>
<th>Change in Number of Holdings 1994-95</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jakes, John. North and South</td>
<td>1982</td>
<td>1,090</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keillor, Garrison. Lake Wobegon days</td>
<td>1985</td>
<td>1,078</td>
<td>.0</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L'Amour, Louis. Last of the breed</td>
<td>1986</td>
<td>1,069</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whitney, Phyllis. Dream of orchids</td>
<td>1985</td>
<td>1,068</td>
<td>-1.0</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L'Amour, Louis. The walking drum</td>
<td>1984</td>
<td>1,062</td>
<td>.5</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>King, Stephen. The stand</td>
<td>1978</td>
<td>1,057</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Holt, Victoria. The time of the hunter's moon</td>
<td>1983</td>
<td>1,056</td>
<td>-1.5</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whitney, Phyllis. Flaming tree</td>
<td>1985</td>
<td>1,055</td>
<td>-1.0</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Holt, Victoria. Secret for a nightingale</td>
<td>1986</td>
<td>1,047</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Walker, Alice. The color purple</td>
<td>1982</td>
<td>1,047</td>
<td>.0</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Holt, Victoria. The road to Paradise Island</td>
<td>1985</td>
<td>1,043</td>
<td>-1.5</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Auel, Jean M. The plains of passage</td>
<td>1990</td>
<td>1,041</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plain, Belva. Crescent City</td>
<td>1984</td>
<td>1,041</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marshall, Catherine. Julie</td>
<td>1984</td>
<td>1,040</td>
<td>-5.0</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Le Carre, John. A perfect spy</td>
<td>1986</td>
<td>1,039</td>
<td>.5</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ludlum, Robert. The Aquitaine progression</td>
<td>1984</td>
<td>1,039</td>
<td>-5.0</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dailey, Janet. Silver wings, Santiago blue</td>
<td>1984</td>
<td>1,038</td>
<td>-6.0</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Santmyer, Helen H. &quot;—and ladies of the club”</td>
<td>1982</td>
<td>1,038</td>
<td>-4.0</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Michener, James A. Alaska</td>
<td>1988</td>
<td>1,037</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whitney, Phyllis. Emerald</td>
<td>1983</td>
<td>1,035</td>
<td>.5</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hovatch, Susan. The wheel of fortune</td>
<td>1984</td>
<td>1,034</td>
<td>-5.0</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Holt, Victoria. The Landover legacy</td>
<td>1984</td>
<td>1,032</td>
<td>-2.0</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L'Amour, Louis. The lonesome gods</td>
<td>1983</td>
<td>1,032</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Archer, Jeffrey. The prodigal daughter</td>
<td>1982</td>
<td>1,031</td>
<td>7.0</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Freeman, Cynthia. Always and forever</td>
<td>1990</td>
<td>1,028</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Steel, Danielle. Crossings</td>
<td>1982</td>
<td>1,028</td>
<td>.5</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ludlum, Robert. The Bourne supremacy</td>
<td>1986</td>
<td>1,027</td>
<td>-2.0</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clancy, Tom. Clear and present danger</td>
<td>1989</td>
<td>1,026</td>
<td>9.0</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>McMurtry, Larry. Lonesome dove</td>
<td>1985</td>
<td>1,025</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Follett, Ken. Lie down with lions</td>
<td>1985</td>
<td>1,023</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This represents approximately 43% of all United States public libraries (American Library Directory 1997).

**METHODS**

Using the OLUC, we worked with OCLC research staff to generate a list of the approximately 400 adult fiction titles most widely held by OCLC member public libraries in 1995. Following the parameters used in the 1993–94 analysis, we isolated the records of public libraries from those of other libraries; eliminated non-English materials, nonbook materials, serials, and government publications by use of MARC document type fields; and identified fiction by use of the fixed field code. Multiple records for various editions of the same title were then merged under a single title, and duplicate library holding codes were eliminated. Experience in the previous project showed that because of varying editions and cataloging practices, juvenile material cannot effectively be removed during initial list creation. Therefore, juvenile titles were identified by checking for “juvenile” coding (for a standard unabridged edition) in Books in Print Plus on CD-ROM. All titles were
also checked in Wilson's Fiction Catalog. Where a title was listed in Books in Print Plus as juvenile and also included in Fiction Catalog, it was designated, for purposes of this study, as "young adult" rather than children's. The 90 titles flagged as juvenile (both the 41 designated "young adult" and the 49 children's works) were eliminated from further consideration at this point.

As with the earlier study, clarifying "title" remained a challenge. Variant records exist for what appear to be the same title. For example, A Visit from St. Nicholas also appears as 'Twas the Night Before Christmas and The Night Before Christmas. In most cases, OCLC was able to resolve this in the merging process. However, in 8 cases, alternate listings were generated for what appear to be the same work. Because all of these instances involved works identified in the analysis process as "juvenile," they were set aside for future study because the focus of this project is adult fiction. However, when the juvenile works are ultimately analyzed as a separate listing of highly held works, additional effort will be needed to clarify why certain older titles eluded the merging process.

The list of adult titles produced in August 1995 was compared with the earlier one to examine the degree of volatility of the core list of adult fiction as it applies to OCLC member libraries.

Appropriate statistical tests were made using SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) to determine the validity of hypotheses.

**ANALYSIS OF FINDINGS**

The final 1995 list of adult fiction most widely held by OCLC public libraries resulted in 409 titles, with 13 titles dropping from the earlier 1994 list and 16 additional titles appearing. The vast majority of titles are relatively recent, with publication dates since 1980. Table 1 lists the 1995 30 most-held adult fiction titles, in order by number of OCLC public libraries holding the work. Further details of the results are discussed below.

**Hypothesis 1.** The listing of adult fiction titles most widely held by OCLC member public libraries will change within one year, with many titles dropping from the list and new titles taking their place. This hypothesis must be rejected. Only 13 titles from the 1994 list failed to appear on the 1995 list, while only 16 new titles appeared on the 1995 list. This represents a change of approximately 3.2% over one year. At this rate of change it would, in theory, take at least 30 years for the entire list to be replaced.

**Hypothesis 2.** Titles with more recent publication dates will show a larger increase in number of holding libraries than those titles with older publication dates.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author/Title</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Holdings in 1994</th>
<th>Rank in 1994</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Byars, Betsy Crom. The not-just-anybody family</td>
<td>1986</td>
<td>866</td>
<td>395.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collins, Jackie. Hollywood wives</td>
<td>1983</td>
<td>865</td>
<td>403.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Condon, Richard. Prizzi's family</td>
<td>1986</td>
<td>872</td>
<td>368.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Condon, Richard. Prizzi's glory</td>
<td>1988</td>
<td>875</td>
<td>352.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DeLillo, Don. Libra</td>
<td>1988</td>
<td>871</td>
<td>375.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Erdman, Paul Emil. The palace</td>
<td>1985</td>
<td>872</td>
<td>368.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Erdrich, Louise. The beet queen</td>
<td>1986</td>
<td>865</td>
<td>403.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flagg, Fannie. Coming attractions</td>
<td>1981</td>
<td>897</td>
<td>229.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gardner, John E. Icebreaker</td>
<td>1983</td>
<td>866</td>
<td>395.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miller, Sue. Family pictures</td>
<td>1990</td>
<td>887</td>
<td>359.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stewart, Fred M. Ellis Island</td>
<td>1983</td>
<td>871</td>
<td>375.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Updike, John. S</td>
<td>1958</td>
<td>867</td>
<td>389.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vonnegut, Kurt. Bluebeard</td>
<td>1987</td>
<td>865</td>
<td>403.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Of the 393 titles that remained on the list from 1994 to 1995, those with more recent publication dates did show a slightly larger increase in number of holding libraries than those titles with older publication dates. The mean number of libraries holding a given title increased (by 39) from 915 in 1994 to 954 in 1995; the median increased (by 41) from 904 to 945. Depending upon how “older” and “newer” are defined, analysis using t-tests and correlations suggests that there is a very slight tendency for newer titles to show a greater increase in holdings (approximately 3 more per title) than older titles. Because very few titles on either list were published before 1960, these can be eliminated as outliers. When the oldest titles are removed, there is a very weak Pearson correlation of .1388 (p<.006) between increase in holdings and date of publication, which suggests that libraries may be emphasizing newer titles.

In dealing with holdings changes, it is important to remember that OCLC is a very dynamic database; member libraries continue to add new holdings, and at the same time new libraries become members. For these new libraries, records are added for older holdings as well as new accessions. As noted above, the number of public libraries with holding codes on OCLC went from approximately 4,000 in August of 1994 to 4,700 in August of 1995. Due primarily to the continued addition of new public libraries to OCLC, the total number of unique holdings attached to a given title has increased over time. One dramatic way of illustrating this fact is to note the cut-off point for the 400 most-held titles. In 1994, this was 865 (i.e., the last title on the list was held by 865 libraries), yet in 1995, the same number of titles was reached at 901.

Hypothesis 3. Titles with older publication dates will be more likely to drop from the list than those with recent dates. In fact, titles with older publication dates are no more likely to drop from the list of widely held titles than those with recent dates. Of the 13 titles dropped from the 1994 list (see table 2), the oldest was published in 1981 and the newest in 1990, for mean and median dates of ca. 1986. The 16 titles added (see table 3) had a mean publication date of ca. 1983. In comparison, the 393 titles that remained on the list had publication dates ranging from 1886 to 1991, with a mean publication date of ca. 1985 and a median date of 1986. T-tests showed no significant difference in dates between those titles that dropped and those that did not drop from

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author/Title</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Holdings</th>
<th>Rank</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bradford, Barbara. The women in his life</td>
<td>1990</td>
<td>908</td>
<td>374.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crichton, Michael. Congo</td>
<td>1980</td>
<td>923</td>
<td>301.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fitzgerald, F. Scott. The great Gatsby</td>
<td>1925</td>
<td>910</td>
<td>361.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grafton, Sue. &quot;C&quot; is for corpse</td>
<td>1986</td>
<td>907</td>
<td>380.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greeley, Andrew M. Angel fire</td>
<td>1988</td>
<td>903</td>
<td>398.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Higgins, Jack. Touch the devil</td>
<td>1982</td>
<td>907</td>
<td>380.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Irving, John. The cider house rules</td>
<td>1985</td>
<td>908</td>
<td>374.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keneally, Thomas. Schindler's list</td>
<td>1982</td>
<td>924</td>
<td>295.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Macdonald, John D. The lonely silver rain</td>
<td>1985</td>
<td>901</td>
<td>407.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Michaels, Barbara. Into the darkness</td>
<td>1990</td>
<td>908</td>
<td>374.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plain, Belva. Harvest</td>
<td>1990</td>
<td>912</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sanders, Lawrence. The Timothy files</td>
<td>1987</td>
<td>901</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sanders, Lawrence. The seventh commandment</td>
<td>1991</td>
<td>905</td>
<td>389.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sheldon, Sidney. The stars shine down</td>
<td>1992</td>
<td>904</td>
<td>392.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Steel, Danielle. Message from Nam</td>
<td>1990</td>
<td>906</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Truman, Margaret. Murder in the White House</td>
<td>1980</td>
<td>903</td>
<td>398.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
the list, nor any significant difference between those dropped and those added. However, caution must be exercised because of the small numbers of titles involved in this analysis.

Hypothesis 4. Those titles added to the list from one year to the next will be those with recent publication dates. The 16 titles added (see table 3) to the list in 1995 tended to be those with more recent publication dates; however, the overall difference in publication dates between those titles added and those dropped was not statistically significant. Only one of the 16 titles added to the list was published before 1980, F. Scott Fitzgerald’s *The Great Gatsby* (1925). Including that title, the mean date of titles added was ca. 1983, the median ca. 1987. On the other hand, only one of the new titles had a 1992 publication date, and one a 1991 date; there were no titles added with publication dates more recent than 1992.

Hypothesis 5. Those titles with more recent publication dates will show a greater increase in the number of different OCLC records (as a result of new editions and different formats) than those titles with older publication dates. This proved not to be the case. The 393 titles on both lists showed a mean number of OCLC manifestations in 1994 of 8.7, with a median of 8; in 1995 the mean number of manifestations per title was 8.99, with a median of 8. However, 77.4% (304) of the continuing titles showed no change in the number of manifestations. Of those titles showing a change in the number of manifestations from 1994 to 1995, 5 actually showed a drop (possibly due to consolidation of records), 64 titles showed an increase of only 1 manifestation, 13 an increase of 2, 2 an increase of 3, and 3 titles an increase of 4 manifestations. Among those titles with increased manifestations are two of the oldest titles (1886 and 1936), as well as one of the newest (1991). For the 83 titles that showed an increase in manifestations, the mean publication date was ca. 1984 (median 1986), showing no significant difference from the list as a whole. Further, the number of OCLC records for a title did not show any statistically significant relationship with the numbers of libraries holding the title.

Although there is no correlation between publication date and changes in holdings or rank for the 393 titles in both lists, there is a very high correlation between the publication date of a title and the total number of different records for it. In the 1994 list, this is -.8338 and in 1995 -.8297, both significant at <.0001. In other words, the older the record the greater the number of manifestations. This is not surprising, because older titles are more likely than newer ones to have been issued in various editions over the years.

**Changes in Rank over One Year**

As noted above, there was relatively little change in the whole list of titles over a year. However, the ranking of some individual titles shifted drastically from the 1994 to the 1995 list. There are a total of 422 titles in the combination of the two adult lists: of these, 13 dropped from the list over a year, and 16 were added. Obviously, it is not possible to discuss rank change among these titles, but such comparison is valid for the 393 found on the 1994 list that were still on the 1995 listing. Titles dropped from the 1994 list tended to be those toward the bottom of the rankings.

The “average” title actually dropped very slightly in rank (by .24); the median rank change was .5. The greatest drop was 96 positions, while the greatest increase was 107 positions; 5 titles did not change rank, and 12 changed only a half position. These titles with little or no change in rank appear to have little in common, other than that fact and their relatively high rank.

**Is There a Consensus Core of Adult Fiction?**

Our findings suggest that the list of most-held fiction titles is relatively stable and that the OLC could, in fact, be used as a “consensus list” of adult fiction suitable for public libraries. However, while the
1995 OLUC contained, in theory, the holdings of approximately 4,700 public libraries (as defined by holding codes in the OLUC), it is quite notable that the most-held work was owned by only 1,090 libraries, and that the 5 titles ranking 407th were held by only 901 libraries. When a list of the top 400 contains titles owned by only 19.2% of public libraries in the system, one could question the meaningfulness of the consensus.

Studies of overlap among collections in public libraries are very rare to date, even with the increased emphasis on cooperative collection development (Collection Building 1994). The only large-scale public library study is that conducted by Shaw (1985), in which 20 academic and 20 public library collections were compared. The overall figures show very little duplication of collections: 63% were owned by 5 or fewer libraries, while 20% of the titles were owned by only 1 library. When the titles selected from public libraries were checked only in public libraries, 32% were found to be held in only 1 library.

The authors of the few studies dealing expressly with fiction are primarily interested in juvenile materials. Rozek (1990), for example, selected titles from the H.W. Wilson Junior High School Library Catalog and then compared holdings in a public library with 4 junior high school libraries in the same community. All 25 selected titles were held by the public library, while the 4 school libraries held between 18 and 22 of the titles. Comparing holdings of selected fiction and nonfiction titles in 4 public libraries with 2 school libraries from each community, Doll (1984) consistently found the public libraries were more likely to hold the selected titles than the schools.

The literature on academic libraries might provide some guidance, although most of these authors have only considered nonfiction material. McGrath and Simon (1972) found little overlap among the holdings of 16 Louisiana academic libraries, with roughly 83% of the titles sampled held by only 1 library. Moore et al. (1982) reported on a study done in 1977-79 of 11 University of Wisconsin libraries, using the OCLC database as a catalog surrogate, and found that 82% of titles were held by only 1 library examined.

Authors of more recent studies using OCLC have generally found somewhat higher duplication among academic library collections. For example, Potter (1986) found 69% of titles in 22 Illinois academic libraries were uniquely held. Hardesty and Mak (1994) found 49% of titles were held by only 1 of 64 smaller college libraries. Hardesty and Mak further found only 29% of titles with publication dates from 1980 to 1990 were held uniquely among the 427 smaller academic libraries examined. They also are among the very few to provide information on material in the Library of Congress P classifications (especially PN through P7), the closest approximation to the fiction focus in our study. Depending on the specific call number, there were between 23% and 51% of these recently published titles that were uniquely held among the 427 libraries.

Descriptions of and research about the use of collective lists of library holdings suggest that the analysis of peer group collections to create a baseline for evaluating one's own collection might have value. While there is little literature regarding fiction or public library collections, analyses of academic library collections suggest that there might be a very small core of widely owned titles. Thus, titles held by approximately one-fifth of all OCLC member public libraries might well represent sufficient consensus to serve as a core list of public library adult fiction. While not all public libraries currently catalog all their fiction holdings on OCLC, the data from this study are based on a sample of nearly 43% of all U.S. public libraries. Anecdotal evidence also suggests that where fiction holdings are not recorded on OCLC, the fiction least likely to be cataloged consists of paperbacks, rental collections, and ephemera. Thus, if the holdings data are not inclusive of all fiction owned by libraries, the data are most likely skewed against library holdings of current ephemeral fiction, which is retained only during a year or two of popu-
larity, and in favor of the fiction more likely to be retained over time.

**CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH**

In our previous research, we tested the predictive validity of commonly used lists, including both quality lists (such as *ALA Notable Books*) and quantity lists (such as the *Publishers Weekly* bestseller lists) as predictors of the titles held by the greatest number of public libraries (Sweetland and Senkevitch 1995; Senkevitch and Sweetland 1996). Those results show that, with the exception of the Wilson *Fiction Catalog*, the lists currently most commonly used do not represent a consensus core collection for public libraries in the United States. As such, their value as quality estimators for the purpose of collection evaluation is, at best, weak.

However, the findings presented here suggest that the OCLC list of most-held adult titles is relatively stable over time; that newly published titles do not automatically get purchased by public libraries in large quantities; and that such a listing could, in fact, be used as a consensus list of adult fiction suitable for public library collection evaluation.

**DEFINING A "CLASSIC"**

The issue of what constitutes a fiction classic requires further examination. Most of the 41 widely held works now designated “young adult” were well-known older titles, such as Jack London’s *Call of the Wild* and Charlotte Brontë’s *Jane Eyre*, originally published for adults but now frequently on school reading lists. The removal of those titles classified as “juvenil” from the list of most-held adult fiction effectively eliminated most older works frequently regarded as classics. We are presently examining these titles in hopes of explaining the phenomenon that appears to define “classics” as, in effect, older books initially written for adults that have become suitable for youthful reading.

**IMPACT OF MEDIA ON LIBRARY HOLDINGS**

Examination of the two lists suggests another factor—in addition to perceived quality, past circulation in a given library, and the like—that might influence library purchase decisions. This is the impact of movies or television on titles appearing on the list of most-held works, what might be termed the “media event.” A number of the titles that appeared on the list, or that showed considerable increase in ranking, can be connected with the creation of a motion picture or television miniseries based on the work. During the course of this study, motion pictures or television miniseries were released based on *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*, *Dracula*, *The Great Gatsby*, and several of Jane Austen’s novels, for example. We plan to examine this phenomenon in detail in the near future. In the meantime, it will be very interesting to see whether such titles rise into the top 400 by next year.

**NATURE OF THE MOST-HELD LIST**

While only two years’ study does not provide sufficient data to make solid conclusions, some speculation about the list might be in order. For example, it is intriguing that a new work seems to take several years to become widely held: the newest title added to the list in 1995 was a 1992 publication; 1 title was from 1991, and 4 from 1990. The oldest title added, from 1925, might well be an anomaly, because the other 15 all date from the 1980s. The 1925 title added, Fitzgerald’s *Great Gatsby*, might also be an example of the impact of a media event, as discussed above.

If this pattern is typical over time, it suggests several points. For one thing, at least the adult fiction that becomes widely held does not apparently go out of print rapidly. Similarly, the fact that new titles do not immediately appear on the list might indicate the care with which public libraries select their adult fiction. Regardless of a book’s bestseller status or notoriety, it would seem libraries do not immediately “jump on the bandwagon,” but rather confirm serious
interest in their community before cataloging a new title.

The same data can also be used in another way to suggest that public libraries, at least with adult fiction, are sensitive to their local clientele, in that there is relatively little overlap among collections.

**Other Areas for Future Study**

In the present study, we address library ownership—not patron use—of adult fiction. However, we now have evidence that the list of “classics” is relatively stable. This suggests that the list could be used to analyze public library circulation patterns of these widely held titles. Results of such research would help confirm or deny the validity of this approach. In particular, knowing whether or not the titles generally popular among public libraries are also popular with any given library’s users would add to knowledge relevant to the demand-versus-quality debate and provide additional insights into the nature and use of adult fiction collections. Further, an analysis of data by region and size of library might provide additional insights into library collecting of fiction.

Another area of future study concerns the children’s and young adult works on the lists. It should be remembered that the original lists generated by OCLC each included 498 titles, with approximately 90 titles in each list being currently marketed to juveniles, even though many are also listed in Wilson’s *Fiction Catalog*. We will work on this list to determine possible features of these titles over the next year.

In addition, given the surprising stability of the adult fiction list over one year and the lack of sufficiently large numbers of new titles for rigorous analysis, it would be very useful to retain the programming used to generate these lists of highlyheld adult fiction in order to extend the analysis over a longer period of time, such as five or ten years. This would provide additional insights into the nature of public library adult fiction collections and into the longer-term value of an OCLC list of most held works as a public library collection evaluation tool.

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Notes on Operations

Rethinking and Transforming Acquisitions: The Acquisitions Librarian’s Perspective

Carol Pitts Diedrichs

The skills used by acquisitions and serials experts in the past will be needed in the virtual library of the future. However, the context, environment, scope of duties, and use of these skills has changed. The managerial, business, and personal skills that will be needed for acquisitions librarians to remain central to the virtual library are discussed. I will also consider the issues of self-leadership, management, and survival in a continual state of change, and the need for creativity and innovation, as well as more traditional skills such as purchasing expertise, negotiation skills, and contract administration.

As part of evaluating current acquisitions tasks and skills, I reviewed the job description for the head of the Acquisition Department at the Ohio State University (OSU) Libraries as it existed in 1987. Ten years ago, the head of the Acquisition Department was required to:

1. administer the operation of the department with responsibility for the full range of activities associated with ordering, receiving, and accounting for all materials (monographs and serials, print and nonprint);
2. formulate policies and oversee the development and implementation of operational procedures in consultation with department personnel;
3. supervise directly two faculty members and three senior paraprofessional staff, and indirectly, a staff of more than 50 CCS (Classified Civil Service) and students;
4. serve as a member of the libraries’ Administrative Staff Conference;
5. work closely with the head of the Cataloging Department, the preservation officer, the collection development officer, and public services personnel; and
6. represent the libraries in relevant national forums, and maintain communication with booksellers and vendors for library materials.

The qualifications that appeared in the position description that was advertised included:

- A master’s degree in library science from an ALA-accredited program
- Substantial relevant experience in the acquisitions operation of a large academic or research library
- Demonstrated ability to lead and to direct professional and support staff

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in a large and complex technical services operation
- Ability to foster a collaborative approach to problem solving
- Ability to analyze work processes, especially to plan for applications of technology
- Ability to communicate clearly and effectively both orally and in writing

In general, the underlying skills required in 1987—managing, collaborating, and administering—are still required today and have not changed much. What has changed are the context, environment, scope of duties, and use of those skills for the benefit of the libraries. The changing nature of libraries will require librarians with core skills such as collaboration, flexibility, and adaptability. The virtual library might change the organizational structure in such a way that no identifiable acquisitions department will continue to exist, but the core skills that successful acquisitions librarians possess will still be required for the acquisition of library materials.

**Acquisitions Tasks Today**

Magrill and Corbin (1989) identified 10 functions of acquisitions: obtaining information about materials; initiating the purchasing process; maintaining records for materials ordered; receiving and checking materials; authorizing payment for materials; clearing order records; claiming and canceling orders; handling materials that need special treatment; dealing with special situations; and developing and analyzing performance statistics. In the later chapters, they also revealed the specific aspects of these functions such as bibliographic searching, vendor-controlled order plans, gifts and exchanges, and acquisition of serials. These tasks certainly reflect many of the acquisitions librarian's daily activities, but new tasks are present as well, such as acquisition of electronic products (including licensing), management of new outsourcing activities (such as PromptCat or shelf-ready approval plans), or copy cataloging performed at point of receipt.

It is easy to believe that the times in which one lives are times of extraordinary change. But in looking back only 30 years or so, it is clear that significant changes have occurred with a decided impact on the acquisitions functions of today. Reid (1995) provided a taste of the changes that have occurred in acquisitions tasks since the 1960s. For example, acquisitions in 1969 involved working with manual systems; using the National Union Catalog, Books in Print, Publishers Weekly, Forthcoming Books, Book Publishing Record, Cumulative Book Index, and publishers' catalogs to verify orders; checking the card catalog to be sure that a title was not already owned and seeing whether the library owned related editions; and checking paper order files to see whether a title was on order or in process. Orders were sent by U.S. mail; rush orders went by airmail. Communication with vendors took place via mail; there were no 800 phone numbers, no library-generated credit memos, and few form letters. Repetitive data entry was standard—creating the order request, creating the purchase order, etc. It could take a serials invoice person up to three months to review a large serials invoice before it could be approved for payment. If vendors had any automation, it was crude and unsophisticated.

The intervening years have seen the development of the OCLC Online Computer Library Center, Inc. utility as a verification tool, the availability of 800 phone numbers and ISBNs, the advent of the personal computer (PC) and PC-based products such as BIP Plus, automated acquisitions systems in libraries and interfaces with automation in the vendor's shop, use of the Machine-Readable Cataloging (MARC) record format in vendor databases, electronic ordering, and access to vendors through the Internet (Reid 1995).

As an outgrowth of the set of tasks assigned to acquisitions librarians, these librarians have developed a set of skills that are essential for success in managing acquisitions today as well as in the
future. In reviewing this history of the acquisitions profession, Reid closed her presentation by identifying acquisitions librarians as being (1995, 270–71):

1. “No longer immersed in the nitty-gritty details of reviewing each order and assigning vendors”
2. “Technologically adept”
3. Part of a larger decision-making process than in the past—decisions cannot be made in isolation
4. “Generalists [who must] have more of an overview of selection and of acquisitions by many means, including interlibrary loan, electronic document delivery and online databases, cataloging, and end processing”
5. “Able to grasp not only the details, but also the overview. They must make their needs known. They must be able to analyze a problem, come up with alternatives, select and implement one, scrap it if it doesn’t work, and then adopt another solution. Acquisitions librarians must be decision-makers”
6. Business people
7. People who are “[b]uying not only books, journals, microforms, and tapes, but CDs, CD-ROMs and videos, and database access, as well. More and more we are buying information customized for the user’s immediate need: we are negotiating CD-ROM and online database contracts and we are assigning IDs and passwords to our users.”

It is easy to list the current tasks involved in the management of acquisitions processes today and difficult to know for sure what those tasks will be in the future. Thus, acquisitions librarians must focus on the skills that will be needed in the future rather than on the tasks. Nisonger (1994) provides a clear reminder that students entering library school programs today will not finish their careers until 30 or 40 years from now. He argues that those students must be prepared for the fundamentals of librarianship today as well as be prepared to manage unforeseen and unimaginable change. His arguments can be extended to those already practicing in the field.

I conducted an extensive review of the management literature looking for the current thinking on leadership and management skills that would be applicable to the acquisitions professional in the future. Much of the current management theory first appears in the journal literature but is then synthesized effectively in subsequent monographic literature. This paper reflects the thinking of leading management theorists and practitioners whose works have been published in the last five years. This period was selected because the field of management theory has undergone considerable reorientation during this time. As they apply to acquisitions librarians, these skills fall into three general categories: managerial, business, and personal.

**MANAGERIAL SKILLS**

Acquisitions librarians are first and foremost managers. In my assessment of the management and library science literature, five managerial skills emerged as the most crucial: having a vision and setting goals, creativity and innovation, leadership, problem management, and change management.

**HAVING A VISION AND SETTING GOALS**

Vaill (1993, 13) defines a vision as:

an expression that does not merely describe why an organization exists and what products and services it intends to deliver. A vision is a portrayal of an organization’s intended activities and character in vivid terms that capture an organization’s human meaning and value. A vision is full of possibility. A vision is a motivational statement as much as it is a descriptive statement. It expresses the feeling that those who hold it have for the organization and its work. The bare statement of why the organization exists and of what it intends to do we will call the ‘mission.’ Its human meaning and the difference that the mission makes in the
world we will call the 'vision.' If the mission is the words, the vision is the music.

The purpose of a vision is to excite and inspire those who work for the department as well as state the fundamental values that will permeate every decision, policy, or action of the department (Philips 1993). For example, a vision that could be written for OSU's Acquisition Department might read as follows: to provide the best acquisition, receipt, invoicing, cataloging, project control, and management services so that the department can help the collection managers deliver high quality service to the university's patrons. A vision for a particular goal can help show what things might be like once the goal is accomplished.

Visions are long-range initiatives. They should be reasonable enough that there is a good chance of achieving them. However, they should also be just enough out of reach that an extraordinary effort will be required to achieve the vision. Particularly for middle managers such as acquisitions librarians, visions should be within the control of the manager to achieve. Visions that require changes beyond the manager's reasonable control are not realistic. For example, a vision that requires the addition of 10 new positions during a hiring freeze is neither reasonable nor within the control of the manager. Visions should also be well known by everyone who is a part of making the vision happen. Finally, a fundamental component of any vision is that it inspire everyone with the prospect of making that vision a reality (Yeomans 1985). Visions need to exist at all levels of an organization. Acquisitions librarians must set accomplishable visions for their departments and attempt to influence the visions being set for technical services and the library as a whole.

In 1996, the Copy Cataloging Section at OSU was merged with the Acquisition Department. Following that merger, librarians in the department envisioned that excellent service could be provided if an eight-week copy cataloging backlog were eliminated and a one-week turnaround were maintained on that material in the future. The staff believed that if they eliminated the copy cataloging backlog, there would not be as much opportunity to misplace unprocessed books. The department would either be able to locate rush material more quickly or have already processed the title by the time the rush request was received. The department would not receive as many complaints or be considered inefficient. Instead, the department would be considered a place where a collection manager could get real help and assistance. The department would improve and enhance its reputation for providing excellent service.

**Fostering Creativity and Innovation**

"Creativity is the ability to free yourself from imaginary boundaries, to see new relationships and patterns and in that way accomplish new things of value..." (Yeomans 1985, 53). When new trends are emerging, people who can think creatively are especially valuable. They are the people who first ask such questions as: Do approval titles really have to be reviewed by collection managers? Creative thinkers often rely on intuition to free their thinking process. Intuition has been defined as the ability to see the woods, not just the trees, to see the big picture, or to grasp opportunities. This combination of creativity and intuition allows one to think unencumbered by the way things have always been. Intuitive thinking is an important skill to have or acquire in the current library environment because of a number of factors that reflect our current world: a high level of uncertainty, few precedents on which to base decisions, few reliable facts available to guide decisions, a limited time period in which decisions often must be made, and often the availability of several plausible options to consider (Philips 1993).

Many people see creativity as being the province of someone else, particularly artists and other "creative types"; everyone else just plods along. Yeomans (1985) has identified four common barriers to creative thinking. The first is making wrong assumptions. Usually individuals
think that because things have been a certain way, they must stay that way. "That shuts off a whole range of new possibilities before they are even considered and assures that any ideas you come up with are nothing more than fine tuning of what you have done before... Wrong assumptions set up imaginary boundaries and restrictions that suppress innovative thinking" (p. 54).

The second barrier is going for a fast solution. Haste can lead to overlooking alternative solutions or ideas that will lead to solutions. The third barrier is not wanting to make mistakes. Any creative or original idea means going outside the known world to the unknown. In order to explore these unknown areas, librarians must be prepared to make mistakes, re-group, and begin again. The final barrier is using only the left brain. The left brain is cautious, orderly, analytical, and logical. It is the part of the brain that keeps one on time, helps one count, and allows one to do procedural work. The right brain is the maverick, "let's try it" side. That part of the brain is responsible for creative, emotional, sensitive, fun-loving, and risk-taking behavior. Today's culture encourages and rewards left brain thinking.

Most librarians have had experience with very creative thinkers who always have new ideas and, in some cases, seem willing to implement these ideas, often just because they seem interesting. Creativity is only the first step in the process of innovation. Creativity deals with idea generation in general, while innovation deals not only with idea generation but also with the implementation of those ideas (Olaisen, Lovhoiden, and Djupvik 1995). This is one of the valuable skills that successful acquisitions librarians will bring to the change process: the ability to implement new ways of doing business. Acquisitions librarians have to create their own future as librarians; being an acquisitions librarian is secondary to the more general role as a professional librarian. Achieving successful innovation means more than just encouraging the innovators, however. It is also important to have a system that supports ideas from the conceptual stage right through to production. Libraries need both creativity and innovation; they need staff to think beyond the box but also with a realistic view of how something can be implemented.

**LEADERSHIP**

Obviously, managers will continue to deal with personnel issues on a daily basis. The aspect of managing personnel that is of most concern is not the nitty-gritty but rather the issue of leadership. One particular aspect of leadership—developing a sense of responsibility in staff—is fundamental to the success of acquisitions librarians. In order to develop (or enhance) a sense of responsibility in staff, leaders must give staff full responsibility to do their own work and must develop mutual confidence and respect. In turn, this will reduce the need for supervision to a minimum. Leaders must allow freedom of expression, which can allow staff to become more self-directed under the guidance and direction of policies and workflows established by the organization. Managers must focus on being sure they get the results they need and that no reasonable library policy is violated rather than directing every detail of how the work is accomplished (Van Fleet 1973).

One technique for allowing this freedom of expression is to use mission-type orders. Mission-type orders focus on telling the employee what needs to be accomplished, not how it has to be done. The manager needs to convey the mission to be accomplished or problem to be solved, the limitations imposed, and the resources available. Both responsibility and authority must be given; they go hand in hand.

Mission-type orders are also a good way for acquisitions managers to encourage proactive behavior. Proactive managers identify a problem, concern, or service enhancement before a crisis develops. In contrast, reactive managers tend to restrict their actions to problems brought to them. Crises in the organization dictate their actions. The proactive manager identifies a problem—such as a four-week delay in the review and processing of approval material. That problem and the desired outcome—a reduction in the time needed to
process the material to one, two, or three weeks—is presented to staff. The order—to identify ways to reduce the processing time to one, two, or three weeks—is given to the staff to solve. This is a far more effective strategy than simply identifying a potential solution without the input of the staff most directly involved.

Using this approach also requires managers to back the decisions made by their employees. Managers must let employees put their methods to work. Staff members will not stick their necks out when they are afraid of having their heads chopped off. Accountability is equally important; it is fair to hold staff accountable for results. Of course, this does not mean berating them when something goes wrong, but rather evaluating the issue to determine what can be done differently next time.

An important part of developing this sense of responsibility is keeping staff informed. Thompson (1994, 120) states that:

Employees frequently feel left out of the loop, and in our CNN [Cable News Network] society, knowledge and information wield tremendous power. It isn't necessarily that those in positions of power and authority withhold information as much as they fail to keep people informed. ... The reluctance to tell everyone that there is in fact no news gets misconstrued as an attempt to keep people in the dark. In other cases, the hesitancy of leaders to admit their mistakes is seen as another such concealment strategy. ... The failure to admit our shortcomings in the view of those who already are aware of them can nearly disqualify us from being seen as a leader.

The capabilities of integrated library systems today require staff to use independent thinking to be successful. These systems function best when staff are empowered to make skilled decisions throughout the workflow. The need to empower staff is a matter of survival.

**Problem Management**

The fourth managerial skill is problem management. It is not possible here to discuss specific techniques involved in problem management. Instead, the focus here is on the process of problem management itself. The first step in many problem-solving models—problem definition—often assumes that the manager already knows what the problem is. Lubans (1994, 140) uses the term "mess finding" as the "the fuzzy, ineffable, first intuition that something is going or has gone awry and that missing or ignoring this initial step might explain why our best efforts sometimes fail." In the problem-definition stage, managers can also look for ways to improve a process even where there isn't a problem, but where there are different ways to achieve results.

The problem-definition stage is very important because, as with an illness, the symptoms often mask the problem. The apparent problem might not be the real issue that needs to be resolved. Managers often treat the symptoms—the most obvious thing that is not functioning correctly—rather than determine the fundamental problem and address that. Of course, it feels good to do something with positive and immediate effects. However, that resolution will be short-lived if the root of the problem has not been addressed. In most cases, the root problem will simmer and smolder and manifest itself again, at which point more energy will have to be directed toward its resolution.

For the most part, managers find themselves surrounded by problems. As a result, the key issue is to determine which ones deserve attention. Thus, the essential first step is to get a clear, objective picture of the problem, who is involved, and who is affected. The manager must also determine what is not the problem and understand the limits of what can be achieved.

For example, until recently, the Acquisition Department at OSU did not have enough personal computers for each staff member to have dedicated access to departmental resources. Much time was spent juggling work and access time to appropriate equipment. Obviously, there was a solution—buy more computers—but the library had other priorities at the time for its equipment budget. In defining the problem and the limitations, it was
clear that the library was not going to be able to replace all PCs immediately. It was also clear that the dumb terminals were actually useful for some activities and specifically needed for activities such as serials check-in, where we already had two printers. Thus, the primary question became, if the department received new PCs, where would they be most effectively deployed?

The second step—putting a problem in context—can be facilitated by various techniques. For example, “reframing” is a technique that allows you to put yourself in someone else’s shoes and consider the problem from their perspective. Another technique—force-field analysis—asks you to describe the worst-case scenario as well as the ideal situation. The situation regarding equipment was right in the middle between these two extremes.

The next stage of the analysis focuses on the forces that are making the situation better or worse. As a result, the forces affecting the problem can be identified (Phillips 1993). The third technique—brainstorming—is the one most often misused by managers. The real idea behind brainstorming is to produce as many ideas as possible without evaluating them. Brainstorming is also a technique that an individual can use for problem solving, not just a group. Finally, Muir (1995, 103) defines benchmarking as a process that “compares a library’s work processes to those of other libraries.” The goal of this exercise is to identify other libraries with better procedures and to adopt their “best practices,” thereby improving library operations.

These techniques are useful because they facilitate thinking about problems in new ways. For any given problem, there are likely to be several alternatives for solving the problem or managing the solution, the third step in the process. The term “problem management” rather than “problem solving” has been used here because problem management is not just about finding a solution. Sometimes there is no solution to a problem. In our example, rather than spending extraordinary time debating the solution, the Acquisition Department had to focus on managing the situation and coming to terms with how to schedule and share the existing resources effectively. In such circumstances, one of the main objectives of problem management is helping people come to terms with the situation.

This part of managerial skills should not be limited strictly to the evaluation of problems. These techniques and ways of looking at problems are also useful for looking at new ways of doing business. One of the key things acquisitions librarians must learn to do is ask questions about their work. Finding time to think about what we are doing rather than simply reacting is difficult. But, taking time to ask questions and examine assumptions can result in new ideas and approaches. For example, Yeomans (1985) identifies two excellent questions to ask: Is this function or project really contributing something, or could it be disbanded? What would be the effect on the organization if it weren’t around? During one hiring freeze at OSU, this question was posed about the extensive searching done on serial check-in duplicates before disposal. As a result, the process was changed from extensive searching to holding the duplicates on shelves for four months before disposal. The re-searching done before disposal was eliminated. The assumption was made that any major problems with the duplicate, such as an invoice for payment, would reveal themselves within the four months. At the end of four months, rather than discarding the pieces as had been done previously, the duplicates were sent to the appropriate destination library. The pieces could be used as fill-ins or staff at the location might know of reasons for retaining the duplicates.

This new approach works well for everyone and eliminated a labor-intensive searching process.

CHANGE MANAGEMENT

Change management is an extensive topic with many aspects. This section will focus on a few key thoughts on this topic. Most are about the realities of today and the mandate librarians have to keep them-
selves poised and ready to deal with a world in constant change. First, according to St. Lifer (1996, 26),

better than six out of ten library staff say their job responsibilities have changed in the last year, while more than three out of four say their jobs have changed in the last three years. Of those reporting changing jobs in the last year, almost six out of the ten cite technology as the primary reason, followed by reengineering/staff development and downsizing/cost-cutting.

These facts are no surprise to most librarians, but they reinforce the reality of the library world today—things are never going to get back to “normal.” Unpredictability and change are the norm.

Being proactive about change rather than being a Pollyanna is essential for future success. Individuals with a Pollyanna mentality believe that change is something that happens to you. In contrast, acquisitions librarians need to be proactive in making change happen. In order to do this, individuals must institute habits that will help them stay ahead of the curve. Managers need to know what is coming. For example, when OCLC was first exploring and developing its PromptCat product, librarians at OSU quickly expressed interest in serving as a test site for this product. As a result, we participated in a beta test that assured us PromptCat would be a valuable and efficient tool for our workflow. Although it was over three years before we could actually begin to use the product because of capabilities of our integrated library system and our vendor, we were still able to plan additional changes during that period with the knowledge that this new tool was coming (Rider and Hamilton 1996).

Scanning the environment and identifying new ideas is one technique to try. For example, individuals can read less-familiar newspapers and magazines, talk to new people, or go to unfamiliar places once in a while. These sorts of activities help individuals become more receptive to new ideas. In today’s library world, many new ideas are very revolutionary. Professionals must look for and embrace new ideas, as they are the foundation of professional growth and development. But we must not lose sight of the fact that change must be grounded in reason and rationale. We must not change things just because we think it is time to try something new. We must keep in mind the way in which people pick up on new ideas. Shaffer, as quoted by Holt, uses the image of a bell curve as a rule of thumb: Whenever a new idea is presented, we must expect approximately 6% of the audience to come to the conclusion before us. They are the true visionaries. Another 8%, roughly, are fast to grasp the point and become advocates. About 36% soon jump on the bandwagon, while another 36% drag their feet but grudgingly agree to go along. Acceptance then drops off at the same rate, with about 8% never accepting the idea and 6% that try to sabotage it (Holt, Stammel, and Field 1996).

**Business Skills**

In the area of business skills, four key areas hold the most importance for the future: financial and contract administration skills, publishing expertise, automation and technical skills, and negotiation skills. The first three have long been part of the acquisitions librarian’s skill set and area of expertise. Hewitt (1989, 107) Reinforces the need for this expertise in a single example:

The bibliographic world and the book trade with which the acquisitions department must deal is international, multilingual, complex and disorganized. Many acquisitions tasks, albeit repetitive, reflect the complexity of interaction with this environment. At the University of North Carolina, for example, a CPA management consultant from the University’s Systems and Procedures Department conducted a three-person, month-long study of the Acquisitions Department. He concluded that it was easily the most complex procurement operation he had ever examined. Even more gratifying was his conclusion that the department’s procedural complexity was fully justified by the demands of acquiring library materials from
an international market in a research library environment.

This does not absolve acquisitions librarians of the responsibility to work to eliminate as much of the redundancy and unnecessary complexity as possible, but it does confirm the inherent skills and expertise needed to manage acquisitions effectively.

When talking about financial skills, fiscal management is often a responsibility of both acquisitions and collection development librarians. In libraries where these positions are held by different individuals, each group manages the budget from a different perspective. Generally, collection development librarians have responsibility for allocating the budget and acquisitions librarians take responsibility for insuring that the budget is expended according to the time constraints and regulations required by their institution. The key factor in the area of business skills is the need to keep them up to date as the environment changes, particularly as it relates to the evolution of scholarly communication. Allison and Reid (1994, 31-32) state that:

Ross Atkinson writes that “acquisitions administrators—who, along with circulation, interlibrary loan, and preservation officers, have primary responsibility for delivery in the paper-based academic library of today—need to begin planning now to expand their knowledge and responsibilities to respond to the new requirements for information delivery in the rapidly approaching age of networked information.” He further explains that acquisitions leaders, so as to assume a major role, must broaden their knowledge in the economics of publishing and scholarly communication; in electronic publishing; in information technology and telecommunications.

If acquisitions librarians have not kept their skills up-to-date in this area, they will be ineffective in dealing with external partners.

For example, the 1988 internal audit of the OSU Acquisition Department focused on items such as the paper order requests submitted by collection managers. Since that time, new auditors, those with electronic data processing (EDP) expertise, have worked with the department on electronic transfer of funds to a serials agent and the entry of order requests directly into the acquisitions system by collection managers. Had the acquisitions librarian not kept her skills up-to-date in the area of audit standards in the EDP area, she would not have been as effective in dealing with these professionals.

In the 1980s, having an extensive understanding of the details of automated acquisitions systems was the most important automation skill needed by acquisitions librarians. In the early stages of system development, this knowledge enabled the acquisitions librarian to redesign internal procedures to maximize use of the system and to work effectively with system designers to improve deficiencies in the system. Today, those details can be left to staff members who work with the system intimately every day. Instead, the acquisitions librarian’s focus should be on new technological applications such as learning about the World Wide Web, including the potential uses of web technologies in the department. In addition, the nature of training has changed from formal training delivered in a classroom or off-site to informal collaboration or individual exploration. Kalin and Clark (1996, 32) have captured the essence of this change in their article on technostress:

The rapid change of technology necessitates a different approach to training. ... Staff also have to make a commitment to learn new skills. Training must become an integral part of their work life, not an adjunct activity. An increasing number of libraries are finding it unrealistic and impractical to provide formal training for every occasion. Rather, they are encouraging and embracing informal, collaborative modes of training.

Negotiation skill is the last business skill in this section, and the area in which acquisitions librarians need the most education. Acquisitions librarians have nego-
tiated for many things in the past, such as approval contracts and discount schedules. However, today’s environment requires librarians to negotiate more often, even down to the individual license agreement, and with more resolve that the library is the customer and can demand and expect to receive more of what it needs and requires. When the term “negotiate” is used, people first think of high-level, large negotiations such as labor contracts. They may also think of more personal negotiations such as buying a car or a house. In reality, people negotiate on a regular basis without even realizing it (Lewicki 1993). Negotiation is simply the discussion that brings about a result or agreement, especially where some element of bargaining is involved. For example, you negotiate when you share scarce resources with a colleague such as printing to a shared printer, or when you divide the chores of daily living with a spouse. These are good examples of negotiation because they aren’t governed by rules set by a higher authority.

Once again, space does not permit a detailed discussion of the processes and principles of formal negotiation. Instead, acquisitions librarians should focus on the following thoughts about the results and nature of negotiating:

1. In most situations, there is a solution that will benefit everyone, i.e., the classic win-win. For example, in a license negotiation, in a win-win situation the library gets the product it wants at a reasonable price. The supplier gets to make the sale while preserving the rights that are essential to success.

2. Anything can be negotiated. Not all negotiations result in success, but it is often possible to change or bend the existing rules successfully. When librarians call to discuss a product, they can encounter a set of rigid rules at the customer service level that are not viable for the library’s situation. Negotiators do not have to accept responses such as “that’s the only way we distribute the product.” Instead, they should work their way up the hierarchy until they reach someone who has the authority to discuss and negotiate the terms. Negotiation can be initiated for anything for which the existing terms are not agreeable, although the negotiation might or might not result in a change.

3. Negotiators should always go into a negotiation with more than one option. Each party should be flexible in trying to understand where the difficulty lies for the other party and should look for a solution that meets all concerns (Yeomans 1985).

4. Negotiators must be willing to walk away from the deal. Before getting into a negotiation, acquisitions librarians should work with those in their own organization, such as the collection development officer or director to determine what factors can inhibit the deal. Once agreement is established within the organization about those factors, negotiators will have the knowledge and authority about what compromises can be made and when to walk away from the deal.

**Personal Skills**

Personal skills are a difficult set of attributes to define and articulate because there are so many of them, because they are often intangible, and because there is no consensus on which are the most important. I consider self-leadership (meaning the ability to lead oneself in areas of growth and improvement) as the critical component to the future success of acquisitions librarians. Self-leadership is recognized by most theorists as an essential criterion for successful leaders. It is seen as the foundation on which other personal attributes are built. Five aspects of self-leadership are the focus of this discussion: having a good attitude, making good first impressions, managing stress, assessing one’s performance, and using power effectively.

Almost always, individuals control the way in which they respond to things. Nothing in the actual work environment dictates how one reacts to things. It is not
uncommon for something to happen at work that causes individuals to feel angry. They have two choices about how to respond: they can control or channel anger toward positive results and let it out in appropriate ways, or they can have a positive outlook on what can be achieved. Because individuals have a choice, most of the time they will be better off reacting in a positive rather than a negative way. People like to work with a positive person more than a negative one. Upbeat thinkers are more fun to be around and people have more confidence in them.

It is impossible for people to know what a person thinks and feels deep inside, but they do pick up on what bubbles to the surface. Thus, what a person allows others to see is important. Yeomans' research has shown that people who listen to tapes of themselves in conversation and meetings are horrified at the amount of negative thinking they do. Librarians must learn to look at each new situation and manage their reactions to it. Changing one's outlook doesn't happen overnight; it is something that an individual has to work on every day. Also, having a positive attitude does not mean that you have to accept everything that comes along without complaint. It does mean you look at each situation and pick the best way to react to it (Yeomans 1985).

Having a good attitude affects the first impressions one makes on others. Obviously, most people are aware of the impact of first impressions in the context of starting a new job or being on a new committee. However, people forget that new "first" impressions are made every day—even if an individual has worked in the same organization for a long period of time. Individuals have opportunities every day to make good first impressions: when they meet with someone they have not worked closely with before or have not worked with for a long time; when they work with someone who is new to the library; when they work with someone who has taken on new responsibilities; and when they take on new responsibilities themselves. People form opinions very quickly and those opinions might be hard to change later (Yeomans 1985). That is exactly why first impressions are important: they persist longer than later experiences that might serve to refute them.

Controlling reactions and managing first impressions is stressful; the inevitable next problem is how to control and manage the stress that all of this brings to bear. The first rule of stress is that it is normal and can be energizing if used correctly. The second rule of stress is that while it might be good for helping individuals to work better than they do in ordinary situations, it also can be downright disabling. The third rule of stress is that when something goes wrong, it is likely that five or six more things will also go wrong at the same time, driving stress to intolerable levels. The prescription for dealing with these three rules is to attack the outside forces that cause stress, to change the personal habits that contribute to stress, and to improve the ways in which individuals react to stress.

To manage stress, individuals must accept that stress exists. Moreover, they must remember that not all stress is bad when they are planning strategies for dealing with stress. Managers must learn to be—and then remember that they are—good stress managers. To do this, individuals can remind themselves how they have handled similar situations before. It helps to remember that stress usually ends and the duration is not too long. Managers must remember that they are not perfect and should not be too hard on themselves. Admitting that one is stressed to others might be a useful strategy. Another exercise is to ask oneself what could be the worst thing that could happen. During a stressful situation, it is important to decide on a course of action; and after the stressful situation is over, reward oneself (Yeomans 1985).

In a couple of other contexts, I have considered ways to assess the performance of one's department, but let's extend that discussion to talking about ways of assessing the individual's performance. If managers really want to improve, they should not lie to themselves. Managers
need to recognize their strengths and weaknesses. For example, managers should recognize that strengths include meeting deadlines, using all available resources to get the job done, basing reports on actual results or concrete information, and presenting solutions as well as problems to their supervisors. Common weaknesses include being unprepared for meetings, panicking easily, or leaving projects unfinished. To identify strengths and weaknesses, managers need to ask themselves probing questions about how they behave on the job and whether their actions meet organizational expectations. Typical questions focus on the relationship that managers have with their supervisors, how managers respond to crises, how they prepare reports, and whether they finish assignments and projects on time. Such questions will elicit information that will increase self-awareness. However, self-perception is only half of the equation. Managers must also seek out the perceptions of others about their work and performance. Self-perception and the perceptions of others usually vary and both sets of observations are needed to form a rounded picture.

Finally, the last personal skill is the use of power. Carson, Crason, and Phillips (1995, 26) assert that:

Simply stated, power is what managers use to influence others. When employees are cooperative, influence is easily accomplished. At other times, however, a manager might need staff members to do things against their will. It is in these cases that the use of power must be carefully considered. . . . The challenge facing the library manager is to effectively use power in a manner that minimizes resentment, hostility, and vengeful reactions.

Of the five types of power, the first three—power to reward, power to punish, and authority—come with the job and, thus, are less useful and more punitive types of power. The higher in an organization you are, the more of these types of power you have. The last two types of power—expertise and referent power—are the most valuable types of power for leaders because they are positive types of power and have the potential to influence the actions of more people than the others. The power associated with expertise occurs when the leader is perceived to possess special knowledge, unique expertise, or rare skills. Referent power results when staff identify with and are attracted to the library manager. This latter type of power "... attaches to a leader because people admire him, want to be like him, or are wowed by his integrity, charisma or charm." . . . The better the leader . . . the more likely he is to rely on the personal sources of power. . . . Really effective leaders almost never have to put the screws to someone" (Sonnenberg 1994). Expertise and charisma undergird vision, ideas, and direction, all of which leaders need to lead. Vision and direction have a greater effect on a larger number of people than a leader expects to reward or punish directly. This is the kind of power to which acquisitions librarians should aspire.

These personal skills are important for acquisitions librarians for a number of reasons. In today's library and the library of the future, the primary role of acquisitions librarians will be managerial. They will continue to collaborate with internal partners, such as librarians in the automation, collection development, and cataloging departments. They will negotiate contracts with vendors, evaluate performance on outsourcing arrangements, and design and coordinate new projects and approaches to operations. The personal skills discussed above are essential components in the successful fulfillment of those responsibilities.

**Conclusion**

Today's library environment is a catalyst for significant change. The future of libraries is characterized by a high level of uncertainty where there are not many precedents on which to base decisions. Decisions and courses of action will be made more quickly than ever before and with fewer reliable facts on which to base the decision. In addition, there will be multiple avenues to pursue or several
plausible options to consider.

Acquisitions librarians who have a vision and are able to set and achieve goals will be valued managers. Managers will be expected to use creativity and innovation to promote information access and delivery such as successful negotiation of licenses for electronic products. There will be greater demand for the rapid delivery of material to users. Acquisitions librarians can play a part in this through adoption of new services and tactics, such as outsourcing, to expedite the delivery and processing of materials. Acquisitions librarians have many skills that will continue to be valuable in the library world of the future. It is imperative that they continue to expand and broaden their skills in management and business as well as develop personal skills to cope with an ever changing environment.

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Electronic Journals in the Online Catalog: Selection and Bibliographic Control

Pamela Simpson and Robert Seeds

As the publishing of electronic journals increases, so does user demand for access to these items. Librarians are faced with the tasks of selecting, acquiring, and providing access to electronic journals. Principles of selection used for materials in other formats should be the foundation for selecting electronic journals as well, but selectors must also be aware of unique aspects of these items, such as licensing agreements and hardware or software required to use them. Acquiring and cataloging electronic journals poses challenges in processes that were created to process items housed in physical carriers. Cataloging of these journals requires decision making at several different levels; these decisions include choosing the number of records to be used and the content of those records. Procedures for ordering and cataloging electronic journals at the University Park Campus of the Pennsylvania State University Libraries are described. Successfully integrating electronic journals into the collection and the catalog requires close cooperation between selectors, reference librarians, and catalogers.

The number of electronic journals being published continues to skyrocket. According to the Association of Research Libraries (ARL), in 1996 alone there was a 257% increase (ARL 1996). In the 7th edition of the ARL Directory of Electronic Journals, Newsletters, and Discussion Lists, published in 1997, there are twice as many journals listed as there were in 1996. The proliferation of these new journals is occurring not only in the sciences (which make up 29% of the total listings), but across all disciplines. Journals in the arts and humanities and the social sciences comprise 42% of the total listings (ARL 1998). In a series of focus groups conducted by the Pennsylvania State University Libraries (PSUL), participants (faculty, staff, and students of all levels) "discussed investment in electronic resources in highly positive terms," "uniformly agreed that electronic resources are a good thing," "want more electronic resources—full-text in particular," and "want to be able to do more [with them] from their home or offices" (Avery 1996, 2).

The rapid growth in electronic publi-
cations, together with user demands for better access to more online information, is pushing librarians to focus on these resources. How do we select which electronic titles to acquire for our libraries and then how do we handle their bibliographic control once we do? In this article, we describe the emerging model for selection, ordering, and bibliographic control of electronic journals at PSUL.

**BACKGROUND**

Penn State employs a highly dispersed model of selection. Almost all 52 librarians working at the University Park Campus have responsibility for one or more subject funds. Individual selectors participate in selection groups, including literature, humanities, social sciences, and sciences. These groups are led by experienced selectors and share responsibility for some general subject funds. The selection process is overseen by the coordinator for collection development.

In February 1996, the coordinator for collection development asked a group of librarians and staff to participate in a task force that was charged with developing procedures for ordering and cataloging electronic journals. The task force conducted its business via e-mail to avoid the difficulties of scheduling face-to-face meetings. Prior to the formation of this task force, the catalog included fewer than 50 records for Internet resources—mostly for U.S. and international government documents and for databases and reference works Penn State accessed through CIC (Committee on Institutional Cooperation) consortial purchases. However, several selectors were interested in ordering electronic journals through their individual subject accounts and we had no procedures in place for doing so. The selector for mathematics and computer science was particularly interested in access to four journals published by the American Mathematical Society. The task force conducted a pilot project by following the processing of these four journals and discussing the issues that arose as they were selected, acquired, cataloged, and linked on the PSUL Web page. The task force then produced a set of procedures (see figure 1).

**PROCEDURES AND PROBLEMS**

Since the completion of this pilot project, Penn State has placed orders for and cataloged approximately 135 additional electronic journals. Steps 1–3 of our process have worked smoothly. We have found, however, that problems sometimes occur with the confirmation of access in Step 4. Because no physical issues arrive, verifying that we have “received” an Internet resource can be difficult. Several publishers have failed to inform us that we have access, so we must keep a file of pending items and inquire repeatedly to determine whether the subscription has gone through. Conversely, we have on occasion received notification that our payment had been processed and our access was arranged, only to find that, in fact, we could not access the item.

Both acquisitions and cataloging processes have traditionally been built around the movement of physical volumes through physical space. It is difficult for both our procedures and our people to adapt to the change from tracking physical volumes to tracking access to an item via Internet. Physical volumes can be seen on trucks or desks, and it is obvious when they have moved from one person’s area to another and clear when they have been placed on the public shelves. Orders and requests for cataloging for remotely accessed publications can get lost more easily, and staff must be diligent and persistent to track receipt and processing of these items.

We have not experienced any procedural difficulties with steps 5–6. At this time, all cataloging of electronic journals is done by Simpson. We anticipate, however, that in the near future the increase in workflow will warrant training at least one staff person to do copy cataloging of electronic journals. At that time, more detailed cataloging procedures will be required.

As for step 7 of our procedures, selectors make links on one or more of the
The selector is directed to handle such subscriptions on a case-by-case basis with the Collection Development Coordinator.

**Step 1** The selector identifies the desired electronic journal, contacts the supplier, and ascertains whether or not the supplier will filter licensed access by IP address.

**Step 2** If the supplier will filter by IP address, the selector contacts the Acquisitions Team and provides all pertinent information including title, cost, and fund information (if payment is required), and the URL.

**Step 3** The Acquisitions Team "acquires" the journal by providing the supplier with the necessary IP addresses and payment, if required.

**Step 4** Upon confirmation of access, the Acquisitions Team contacts the Serials and Electronic Resources Cataloging Librarian and the Libraries' Internal Webmaster and provides them with all the pertinent information including title, URL, and name of the selector.

**Step 5** The Serials and Electronic Resources Cataloging Librarian creates a bibliographic record in the catalog and the Libraries' Internal Webmaster makes the necessary links on the Staff or Faculty Web page.

**Step 6** The Cataloging Librarian contacts the selector and confirms that the Web journal is cataloged and available.

**Step 7** The selector is then responsible for adding or linking the Web journal to any pertinent public Web pages. Additionally, the selector is responsible for contacting Cataloging and the Libraries' Internal Webmaster when and if the title, URL, or other significant attributes of the product change.

**Figure 1.** Procedures for Ordering Electronic Journals at the Pennsylvania State University, University Park Campus.

PSUL Web pages as they see fit. Not enough time has passed to determine how effectively individual selectors will be able to monitor the Uniform Resource Locators (URLs) and titles of electronic journals. With the loss of the check-in function, we have lost the forced opportunity to examine each issue as it arrives. For print publications and for computer files acquired in a physical carrier, alert check-in staff catch changes in title or frequency, or the appearance of corporate bodies that require additional access points. While it is theoretically possible for check-in staff to begin monitoring the arrival of each issue of electronic journals, so far we have not deemed this a wise use of staff time. Some libraries use special software programs to check URLs, with varying results. It is foreseeable that better programs will be developed for URL checking, or that standards such as the Persistent Uniform Resource Locators (PURL) or the Uniform Resource Name (URN) will solve the problem of changing locations of remote resources. It is unlikely, however, that there will be machine solutions for the need to monitor other changes in these journals, such as in content, file format, or title.

**Electronic Journal Selection**

The most obvious starting point for selection of electronic journals is to apply the same criteria a selector would utilize when choosing to initiate a print journal subscription. Qualitative measures include: whether the title is refereed; the reputation of the editorial board; the
reputation of the publisher; and whether the articles are fitting, thorough, and well executed. Appropriateness indicators include: interest in the title at the institution, recommendations from constituents, user inquiries, and document delivery requests. Cost factors include: affordability, cost-benefit balance, and support requirements. If most of these questions are answered in the affirmative, then the selector will most likely subscribe to the publication.

Selectors must be wary of the novelty factor in this situation. Publishing via the Internet, especially the World Wide Web, is still so new that it is tempting for selectors to suspend normal judgement and rush into adding these resources to library collections, perhaps just to get experience with them and demonstrate innovation to their clientele. We must remember that even "free subscriptions" ultimately carry a price for the library including cataloging, curating, maintaining, providing technical support, and educating users about a title.

Some titles that are available at no charge offer full-text articles, but many others offer only abstracts or tables of contents. In the latter case, online versions of abstracts and contents are often made available before the print versions, which makes them attractive to some users. However, while abstracts and tables of contents alone are useful for some researchers, these products often seem to function largely as promotions for the print version of those titles. In general, we have found that our users are better served by abstracting and indexing databases that provide such information in a more systematic fashion. For this reason, Penn State has chosen not to catalog electronic serials that include only abstracts or tables of contents, though a note and an electronic link can be added to the record for the print item informing users of the existence of the electronic item.

**Bibliographic Control**

As electronic journals are selected for a collection, questions of bibliographic control must be addressed. Library catalogs have traditionally existed to provide descriptions of items that the library owns and houses in a physical location. With the rise of remotely accessed Internet publications, catalogs have entered into an identity crisis. Some of our users are increasingly using Internet-based search engines and, depending on their respective subject fields, may prefer the convenience and timeliness of information gathered through this method over the more coherent organization and predictable retrieval of library catalogs.

A separation in the bibliographic universe is evolving, with items purchased in a physical carrier (whether print, CD-ROM, videocassette, etc.) in one file—the library catalog—and remotely accessed resources in another—the World Wide Web (Hillmann 1996). As libraries develop subject-based Web pages as tools for organizing and providing access to remote resources, some argue that it is redundant to include them in the library catalog. We would counter that the purpose of the library catalog must now be extended beyond the traditional inventory of physically held items to include remotely accessed items that have been selected by the subject bibliographer as appropriate for the particular collection. By providing a link to a given item on a Web page endorsed by the library, selectors are, in a very real sense, selecting that item and making it available by placing it on a virtual shelf. There follows from this a kind of "truth in advertising" principle: If a library takes steps to provide access to a resource, then it should also publicize to its clientele that it is available in the same way it does for other material, by including it in the catalog. We believe that in most cases if a library provides a Web link to an Internet publication, a corresponding catalog record should also be provided. The catalog record will, therefore, promote use of Internet resources by library constituents, thus maximizing the cost benefit to the institution.

Another benefit of including records for electronic journals in the library catalog is the prevention of unnecessary text procurement attempts, whether via inter-library loan, document delivery, or per-
sonal network, when, in fact, the library already “has” the item (i.e., is providing access to it). This will save money, time, and frustration for both the scholar and the library, thus improving everyone’s productivity.

Users should be able to find remotely accessed items in the library catalog in the same way they find items held in physical formats. Mandel and Wolven have discussed Cutter’s objectives for the catalog in light of the World Wide Web, cautioning us to “distinguish these goals from the traditional means used to achieve them” (Mandel and Wolven 1996, 30). Just as Cutter (1904) declared that the purpose of the catalog was to enable a person to find a book of which either the author, the title, or the subject is known, so should it enable a person to find an electronic publication of which any of those three attributes are known. Whereas Cutter’s objectives focused on showing what the library has by a given author, on a given subject, or in a given kind of literature, we now must expand these objectives to include showing what the library has selected that meet these criteria.

While we advocate moving beyond a mentality of strict physical inventory, certainly those titles for which we pay subscription or license fees are the first choice to receive cataloging. Even if users are not yet accustomed to searching the online catalog for electronic journals, the library needs, for its own purposes, a reliable inventory of all titles for which it is expending funds. This is true whether the library has acted on its own or has shared the cost of a purchase through a consortium.

**BIBLIOGRAPHIC RECORDS**

Although there are currently no procedural problems at Penn State with cataloging electronic titles, there are, of course, many complex issues involved in the actual content of the bibliographic record. Cataloging any item requires a series of decisions regarding treatment, description, main entry, added access points, and appropriate subject headings. Catalogers are guided in these decisions by the cataloging rules and other documentation. Because the bibliographic nature of serial publications is dynamic, serials catalogers must often make decisions for situations that are not covered explicitly by cataloging rules, even for traditional print serials. Items published on the Internet pose even more challenging questions from the very beginning of the cataloging process. In order to make these cataloging decisions, Simpson worked closely with selectors as she began cataloging Internet resources.

The first question to be addressed when cataloging an Internet resource is, What is the work to be cataloged? In some cases this is readily apparent, as when we have subscribed to a straightforward journal whose publication pattern mimics closely that of a print publication, with a discrete title and clearly designated issues. In other cases, the resource might be embedded in a Web site of related material. Print publications arrive physically on the cataloger’s desk, and while questions of treatment and access can occasionally require a conversation with a selector, usually it is clear from the beginning what is being cataloged. Internet publications by their very nature can be linked to other items and might not be organized into discrete bibliographic units. The selector might prefer that the bibliographic record point the user to the entire site rather than to a journal on the site. Catalogers cannot intuitively know how selectors envision a given resource will be used, nor can they tell by looking at a Web site which part of it users are likely to request by name. Selectors and catalogers must sit down and look at a site together in order to ensure that the cataloger understands what the selector is selecting.

Many of the electronic journals to which we subscribe are also available in print format on our shelves; thus a bibliographic record for the print version already resides in our online catalog. In this case, we must decide whether to catalog the electronic version separately or to include information about the electronic version on the record for the print version. The current CONSER policy requires separate records at the national level, but
allows individual member institutions to use the one-record approach on an experimental basis in their local catalogs (Hirons 1997). While cataloging rules also require separate records for microfilm and print versions of the same item, Penn State, along with many other libraries, has elected to use one record when it has holdings in both print and microform formats. Some of the reasons that this approach is preferred for microform also apply to electronic formats. Catalog users are often confused by search results that include multiple records due to title changes, identical titles with uniform titles qualified by place, or similar titles for other serials and monographs.

It can be argued that adding another record to this mix only makes it harder for users to find what they are seeking. On the other hand, electronic versions of print resources are not strictly reproductions in the same sense that microfilm versions are. Even if an electronic product begins as an exact reproduction of the text of a print product, it usually isn't long before a publisher takes advantage of the inherent flexibility of the online environment by offering added features in the electronic version, such as revisions of articles, regularly updated newsletter sections, or even additional data not available in the print version. It is obviously problematic to consider such an enhanced electronic version to be the same work as the static print version. Some selectors at Penn State are more concerned that the user simply find an appropriate record and get to the resource than they are that we provide detailed, accurate descriptions; these selectors favor the one-record approach. Others feel strongly that the electronic version of a resource often differs from the print version enough that a separate record is essential in order to convey important information about those differences to the user.

We have used both approaches in our catalog on a case-by-case basis, but generally we have preferred to catalog electronic resources separately for the following reasons. First, for acquisitions purposes we need a clearly distinguishable order record. Second, we do not yet have the ability to do automated checking of URLs, and it is easier to do manual maintenance if we can retrieve these records individually. But more importantly, in most cases our selectors have felt that separate records will meet the needs of users more completely. Including a note and a link for an electronic journal on the bibliographic record for the print journal may serve the purpose of leading a user to the electronic resource; but when this approach is used, it cannot be said that the electronic resource has been cataloged. The record describes only the print version and might be based on an issue that does not even exist in electronic form. Users can also be misled by the holdings statements for the print journal, which can differ from the electronic holdings. Often electronic versions of pre-existing print journals begin with the current year, and might or might not expand later to include earlier issues.

Despite the philosophical and practical difficulties of using one record for both paper and electronic versions, it seems clear that changes are needed in the approach we take to describing electronic publications. The Anglo-American Cataloguing Rules, 2d ed. (AARC2), are based on the principle of describing the physical object in hand. Graham (1995) has adeptly described the problems of applying this principle to serials. It is not always easy to describe print serials adequately according to our current cataloging rules, due to the inherent difficulty of using one bibliographic record to describe many items (some or even most of which have yet to be published).

However, at least the issues of a printed serial that are in hand are not prone to change after they have been published. Publications that exist in electronic form might be changed at any time and in any number of ways. For instance, it is currently common for an electronic publication to require a special type of software reader, such as Adobe Acrobat, in order to display or print the file. Catalogers dutifully make a note that such software is required. It is entirely possible that in the near future some other, as yet not invented, reader will be required; how
likely is it that the cataloger will be able to go back and change the notes on all of those records? And is it really necessary to alert the user to this characteristic in the bibliographic record when with a click of the mouse the user will view the resource itself, which in most cases will explain this on the first page and provide instructions for downloading the required software?

We suggest that this and other characteristics of electronic publications warrant a reexamination of the principle of in-depth description of an item. It would perhaps be more useful and efficient to consider briefer records, perhaps similar to those in the International Standard Serial Numbers (ISSN) network database. This database, compiled by approximately 65 national ISSN centers around the world, consists of records whose aim is to identify, rather than fully describe, serials as part of the process of assigning ISSN. Such brief records for Internet resources might be thought of as “access” records, leading users in an online environment directly to a resource, as opposed to an “ownership” or “inventory” record, describing a fixed object in enough detail to tell users whether or not it is worth their trouble to locate the physical object itself.

The questions raised here are being echoed in other forums as well. At the International Conference on the Principles and Future Development of AACR, held October 23–25, 1997, in Toronto, Ontario, Canada, Hirons and Graham (1997) highlighted many problems with the bibliographic control of serials in all formats and of continuing publications, paying particular attention to problems with the bibliographic control of electronic serials. As a result of their paper and the ensuing discussion, there are currently four CONSER task forces at work on revision of the rules for cataloging serials. While it is too soon to predict in detail the outcome of this endeavor, it is very likely that a new definition of serial will emerge—one that will include, for example, continuously updating databases. As publication patterns evolve and as the library community gains more experience with electronic journals, we can expect standards for their bibliographic control to continue to change as well. Whatever the exact form of these standards, librarians must continue the process of selecting and providing access to these materials. The challenges we face in this endeavor will be met much more effectively if selectors, reference librarians, and catalogers work closely together to integrate these materials into our collections and our catalogs.

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The Monographic Series Approval Plan: An Attempt to Refine Purchasing of Books in Series

Heather S. Miller

Librarians often place standing orders for monographic series in order to ensure complete holdings. This can result in the acquisition of inappropriate materials. It is possible to include books in series on a comprehensive approval plan that will permit return rights and still obtain a higher discount. However, some books might not fit the institution’s profile and thus will not be supplied. Some control of the series is also lost. A third alternative is presented here: an approval plan limited to monographic series.

Librarians establish standing orders for monographic series to assure complete holdings. Unfortunately, this completeness can include unneeded, unwanted, or unsuitable materials if publishers broaden, narrow, or otherwise change the scope of a series or include reprints. Even books worthwhile in themselves might be unneeded if the subjects are adequately covered by other materials in the library. Series themselves might have changed focus, yet the materials continue to arrive and be added to the collections. This can be a drain on limited resources.

It is certainly possible for bibliographers to review all incoming standing order books to monitor the quality and suitability of materials, but this does not allow them to reject books already received.

Monographic series might be included in general approval plans, but individual titles will be subject to the parameters of the profile and therefore might not necessarily be supplied. Price limits might also exclude some volumes. A series might move to a publisher excluded from the plan. The profile of an individual volume might simply fail to match and the book will not be supplied.

In this paper, an alternative method of managing the purchase of volumes in monographic series is offered. The purpose is both to ensure comprehensive review of all volumes in specified monographic series and to allow return of volumes not wanted for the library’s collections.

Literature Review
While there is an extensive body of literature on approval plans, studies limited to monographic series in this context are few. Alessi and Goforth (1988), Warzala (1991), and Rouzer (1995) explored the use of approval plans to supply books in series. Along with listing 9 advantages of

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Inclusion on general approval plans based on individual series characteristics.

Rouzer (1995) conducted another study of approval plan versus standing order for books in series at the Eisenhower Library at Johns Hopkins University. Titles published outside the United States were found to be supplied more quickly by standing order, whereas most United States university press titles were supplied more rapidly on approval. Two-hundred sixteen series standing orders were canceled and allowed to come in on the library's comprehensive approval plan. The Acquisitions Department tracked 50 series for which bibliographers wanted all volumes and firm ordered any volumes not supplied on approval. He concluded that "...a well-profiled approval plan was a better selection tool than a standing order" (p. 401).

The conclusions reached by these authors point to the well-known advantages of approval plans for acquiring books for which the subject is relevant to the library's subject profile and standing orders for comprehensive coverage. However, there is little reported on the "approval standing order," which combines comprehensive receipt with the flexibility to return those volumes not deemed essential to the library's collection.

**Project Definition**

At the State University of New York at Albany Libraries, monographic series standing orders were perceived as an area of acquisition that had taken on a life of its own due to its ongoing nature and lack of periodic review. In an attempt to save acquisitions dollars and gain control over the situation, the library staff embarked on an experiment: the monographic series approval plan would be set up entirely separately from the library’s general approval plan. Neither the literature search nor discussion with vendors revealed any indication that an arrangement quite like this had been reported before. Thus, it was an experiment for both the library and the vendor, who saw this as an opportunity to work with the library to develop a service that might be useful to others. In 1993,
a monographic series approval plan was designed to function as an approval plan for specified monographic series, which until then were acquired on standing order.

**SETTING UP THE PLAN**

Nine of 15 bibliographers expressed interest in this experiment, with participation being entirely voluntary. Only one vendor, Academic Book Center (not the library's general approval plan supplier), was interested. A list was generated showing all 1,496 monographic series titles on standing order. It was then broken out by fund code. All bibliographers received lists of monographic series being obtained on each fund code they managed. Some felt no need to review and possibly return the individual volumes in these series, but others selected certain titles that they wished to receive on an approval basis. Each bibliographer assigned appropriate weight to the following criteria: perceived quality of the publications, overall amount of material received for a given subject, usage of volumes already held by the library, relevance to the curriculum or research, and price. Bibliographers were particularly likely to select series titles where experience has shown that not all volumes in a series were relevant to the library collection. Of the 111 titles selected by the bibliographers, 20 were eliminated because they were received on a membership or subscription basis, or were not distributed in the United States. The resulting list of 91 titles (6% of the total) was sent to Academic Book Center for inspection. A representative of the vendor visited the library and met with acquisitions and collection development personnel to outline the proposed plan, which was to include only the monographic series specified on the final list. A 12% discount and free shipping were to be offered along with return privileges.

Prior to implementation, it was necessary to cancel existing standing orders for the included titles. This was done by Academic Book Center, using the library's letterhead. The Acquisitions Department provided the vendor with an accurate list of titles, purchase order numbers, and current suppliers. The cancellation letters requested that written confirmation be sent to the library with a note of the last volume to be supplied on the standing order. It was also necessary to continue to block these titles on other existing approval plans.

To no one's great surprise, several months passed and the library received only a handful of confirmations, with none indicating the last volume. Prodding by librarians eventually resulted in receipt of all of the cancellations over the next several months. In addition, the new vendor indicated a number of additional titles that could not be supplied on an approval basis. The list was shrinking and the project was going nowhere.

Another difficulty was encountered with some cancellations. Some suppliers reserve as much as 90 days after cancellation during which material already in process must be accepted by the library. There was some disagreement as to when the 90-day period began—at the date of the letter, the receipt of the letter, or several weeks later when the canceling vendor finally dealt with the cancellations. The determination, for each series, of the beginning volume on the approval plan was fraught with difficulties relative to the grace periods, especially materials sent even after the end of the grace period.

Online records were updated. Each online record carries a two-part order code to the vendor record containing full vendor information. This code was changed as necessary to reflect the approval vendor. It was decided not to change the fund code, but to continue using the standing order fund codes already in these records because they might become standing orders again. Moreover, no one thought of these as anything other than standing orders albeit with return privileges. Last, records for those titles that the bibliographers requested on approval, but which the
vendor could not supply, were annotated and the reason for nonsupply recorded.

**DEVELOPING PROCEDURES**

It was decided that staff in the Serials Unit would handle this material even though other approval plans are handled in the Monographs Unit. This was done to continue existing check-in procedures done in the Serials Unit. Serials check-in differs from monograph check-in in the library's online system and allows the easy building of a series volume holding record. A unique ship-to address was created for these items for easy identification upon receipt. Procedures were also established for notifying bibliographers when books were received for their review. In September 1994, more than a year after exploration of the concept had begun, the library received its first shipment of books. The plan was finally operational.

**INITIAL RESULTS**

Overall, we considered the plan successful. We evaluated the plan first on the security of knowing that all books in a series were being sent and second on the flexibility offered for returning books not wanted. The ability to return books not wanted led to dollar savings in the acquisitions budget as well as to a collection not burdened with books considered not relevant. For the 58 series titles on the plan, volumes came quickly and reliably. Bibliographers had the opportunity to reject items, which they did at an overall return rate of 42%.

Unfortunately, it was less successful for the supplier. Seven months after the plan started, the vendor stated that returns were so high that money was being lost on every book. The library's figures showed that return rates by series title ranged from 0% to 100%. The discount was discontinued. Free shipping remained in place due to New York state contract requirements.

**FINE-TUNING THE PLAN**

Several options were discussed with the supplier: moving some or all titles to the library's regular approval plan, moving more regular standing orders to the monographic series approval plan supplier, receiving notification slips instead of books for titles with the highest return rates, and canceling titles with the highest return rates. Moving standing orders to the supplier was considered by the library, but ultimately not pursued, both because of the amount of work involved and the fact that these orders were being successfully serviced by other vendors. The bibliographers expressed interest in receiving slips, but were not eager to cancel titles with high return rates or to merge this plan into the general approval plan. To start the process, the vendor provided a list of seven titles with 50% or higher return rates and suggested that they be canceled. The bibliographers did not agree, although two of these titles eventually were changed to notification slips once that phase of the plan became operational. Meanwhile, the library canceled two other titles that also had high return rates.

In May 1995, the Acquisitions Department sent additional standing order series titles for potential inclusion to the vendor and learned that about half of the titles could be supplied on this approval plan. In mid-September, a memo was sent to bibliographers with a list of these titles for them to indicate which should be added to the plan. Responses were slow to arrive from the bibliographers, which was understandable given the shrinking staff and increasing workload experienced by everyone in the library. Nearly a year went by before those lists that were in hand were dealt with. Responses included requests to cancel titles, to add titles to the approval arrangement, to return several to regular standing order status, and, for various reasons, to change some fund codes in the library's system. It was at this point that the vendor's suggestion of receiving notification slips was first seriously explored.

In September 1996, a letter was sent to the vendor specifying changes and additions to the plan. Seventeen titles could not be supplied on an approval basis after all, which was a disappointment felt more
keenly perhaps because of the small size of the plan, and because of the way titles included in the plan were individually selected by bibliographers. Notification slips were then added to the plan. Ultimately, only 14 of the 24 requested series titles were workable as notification slips because the publishers were not included in the vendor's approval plan.

Once again, it took time to affect changes, and it was March 1997 when the first notification slips were received. Like the physical volumes, the slips now are handled by the Serials Unit. Individual records for the monographs continued to be made for all items, including those represented by notification slips. Online files are searched carefully and duplication or potential duplication dealt with immediately. Slips for unique titles are then sent to appropriate bibliographers with cover notes identifying the slips (to make clear that these differ from other notification slips with different procedures) and asking them to indicate whether the books are wanted.

We do not foresee further major adjustments because all series that the bibliographers wish to receive by this means, and that the vendor is able to supply, are on the plan.

**ANALYSIS**

Our evaluation of the plan took into consideration a number of factors: the time frame, the opportunity to examine and return books, the opportunity for cost savings to the acquisitions budget, the chance for a more relevant collection, and the staff time invested in establishing the plan and its ongoing operation. It took much longer to establish a functioning plan than had been hoped. This was due to lengthy delays (largely on the library's part), the number of steps that had to be taken, and the press of other work in the Acquisitions Department. The bibliographers involved are very happy with the plan. They find it useful and enlightening to examine the books in these particular series. Many books were being returned, both saving money and refining the content of the collections. However, the vendor has been less than happy for the very same reason. The basic problem encountered was a fundamental difference in the bibliographers' approach to this plan compared to the vendor's approach. The bibliographers' ability to return books resulted in a far higher return rate than the vendor had anticipated.

A fair amount of time was invested in this project by staff both at the library and the supplier. Staff at the library did so in the hope of saving acquisitions money, as in fact it did (see table 1). During the period from September 1994 through August 1996, books in 44 series were shipped. Four series were discontinued by the publisher after being set up for approval. Eight others were included in the plan, but had no activity. Two-hundred sixteen books that would otherwise have been accepted on standing order and worth a total of $26,680.02 were returned. These books came from 33 series titles from 19 publishers. All but three of the series were in the science, technology, or medical (STM) subject areas. The three non-STM areas accounted for only $299.48 in returned books. Prices of returned books ranged from a high of $590.00 to a low of $27.72, with an average of $123.52. Twenty-seven books from eight publishers were priced over $200. There were 5 series for which the one and only book shipped was returned, for a

| TABLE 1 |
| **SUMMARY OF ACTIVITY ON THE MONOGRAPIC SERIES APPROVAL PLAN** |
| **SEPT. 1, 1994–AUG. 31, 1996** |
| **No.** | **%** | **$** |
| Books returned | 216 | 42 | 26,680.20 |
| Books kept | 294 | 58 | 31,590.85 |
| **Total** | 510 | 100 | **$58,271.05** |
return rate of 100%. Nevertheless, these series remain in place on the plan in order to receive and review future volumes as published.

During this period, the library retained slightly more books than were returned. There were 294 books kept for a total of $31,590.85, with an average price of $107.45. Of course, the loss of discount some months into the plan increased the total cost of the retained books by an estimated $2,000-3,000, but did not negate the overall savings. Thus, of the books shipped, 58% were kept and 42% were returned. Nine series from five different non-STM publishers had no returns, for an acceptance rate of 100%. In 7 of these cases, only 1 to 3 books were shipped, but in two cases 14 and 22 books were shipped. The series with 14 shipped and kept has since been returned to regular standing order status, but the other 8 series remain on the monographic series approval plan.

Has it been worthwhile? If staff time and shipping costs (for returning unwanted books) were calculated, one might very well doubt that it has. However, in an institution where salaries, postage, and acquisitions funds are inviolably separate, some staff cost is deemed worthwhile in order to save acquisitions funds. It becomes a question of what staff would have done otherwise with the time spent on establishing this project—in economic terms, the opportunity cost. The primary goal was to save acquisitions money and to refine collection content. Salaries and shipping costs are not part of the acquisitions budget and were considered in qualitative terms. As it was, both were absorbed without major effects. Perhaps more claiming might have been done, and perhaps more people might have stayed late. In fact, much of the time spent in establishing the plan was done by professional people whose workdays go on until they choose to end them. They absorbed tasks related to the plan without consciously omitting other responsibilities.

Although the long time frame was frustrating on one level, the fact that the work was spread over two years and interspersed among other tasks meant that the project had little impact on daily work-flow. Some tasks, such as adding notes to records, were made quick and nearly automatic by the use of programmed function keys.

In several instances, the time spent on this project served more than one purpose. Acquisitions staff, in working on the records for these series, did general maintenance work on the records they encountered. By placing series books in the approval context, the monographic series approval plan provided bibliographers with a convenient, familiar venue for reviewing a type of material that had been receiving little oversight in recent years. In effect, all standing orders for monographic series were reviewed. Those standing orders that now remain are known to be appropriate (with some exceptions for subscription orders not transferable to the approval plan). Although at the end of two years only 5 standing orders (0.334% of the entire list of 1,496 titles) were canceled, 68 titles (4.5% of the entire list) were transferred to the approval plan to receive regular scrutiny.

This discussion also generated interest among the bibliographers in reviewing books arriving on true standing orders and that process has since been reestablished. Some bibliographers find this a useful way to monitor standing orders, determining whether they remain relevant to the collection and are worth the cost, as well as aiding their general knowledge of what is being published and going into the collection. Such reviews had once been in place, but had ceased some years earlier. Moreover, the investment of time in setting up the plan will not be repeated, so its cost will average out over the life of the plan. Ongoing time commitments for Acquisitions Department staff are little different from those required for regular standing orders. Bibliographers’ time spent reviewing the books might be balanced by the reduction or elimination of other approval plans over the past few years. All involved, both acquisitions and collection development personnel, felt that it was a very useful project. Likewise, the vendor, viewing this plan as an experiment, found it worthwhile for the knowledge gained,
despite the difficulty of making a profit. Recent conversations with the vendor indicate a willingness to continue the plan.

**CONCLUSION**

We expect to continue this plan because it provides selectivity combined with the security of knowing that no volumes will be missed. A significant amount of acquisitions money has been, and will continue to be, saved. The lack of a discount has been considered an acceptable cost to pay for the benefits realized. Serials control has been maintained in that the library knows what volumes are published in these series and is able to make and record its acquisition decision for each. Now that the plan is established and functioning smoothly, procedures for the Acquisitions Department are no more taxing than for monographic series on standing order.

Since the inception of the monographic series approval plan, the library's comprehensive approval plan has moved to a different vendor, who has indicated that it might be possible to include specific series in that plan. Interest from another vendor is an encouraging sign for the future viability of the monographic series approval plan and will be pursued.

**WORKS CITED**


Book Reviews

Margaret Rohdy, Editor


The complexity of libraries and other information environments points to an increasing need for structured inquiry into the purposes, operations, and users of those environments. In order to gain the fullest and richest understanding of some aspects of libraries, especially those aspects related to library use and users, qualitative methods may be most applicable. This is the premise of Qualitative Research for the Information Professional.

The authors begin with a statement of purpose: “First, it is aimed specifically at researchers and practitioners in information organizations, whether libraries, archives, records management centres or any other type of information service provider... Second, the work is unashamedly in the ‘how-to-do-it’ mould, with only passing attention to historical and theoretical prolegomena characteristic of many qualitative research texts” (p. 14). The second caveat should not dissuade librarians from using this work as an aid to conducting qualitative research. In fact, the practical nature of the book makes it a very effective companion to a more abstract text. The above statements make it seem that the work is devoid of theoretical context; but in fact, the authors provide a concise background for the application of qualitative methods by discussing the nature of qualitative research: what it seeks to accomplish, when it might be best applied, how it differs from quantitative research, and how it can be employed in information environments. While this discussion is not lengthy, it does assist the reader in placing qualitative methods in the larger scheme of research in general; and it emphasizes the point that, though qualitative methods do not incorporate inferential statistics, they can be sufficiently rigorous to address detailed and complicated research questions. Much of what takes place in information environments is behavioral and social in nature; the methods and techniques described in this book present structured mechanisms for investigating questions that are not easily reduced to statistics.

The authors offer comprehensive suggestions for the design of a research project. Some of these may seem intuitive, but it is essential that each phase of design be explicit. One of their helpful guides covers the construction of a project timetable. This element is important because many researchers, especially those relatively new to qualitative methods, need to be aware of the time required for gaining background information, observation, fieldwork, interpretation, and all of the other steps in a project. A detailed timetable is invaluable in accounting for every phase of the project and estimating how much time each will require. Because much qualitative research takes place in a natural environment rather than in a laboratory or other experimental setting, there are factors external to the researchers and internal to the locus of inquiry to consider. For instance, the authors point out that permissions may be required and waivers obtained before observation can begin.

The book includes a substantial amount of material on the actual con-
duct of qualitative inquiry. In their detailed discussion of direct observation, a frequently used information-gathering technique, the authors offer tips that researchers can use to place themselves in the context of the setting, conduct themselves once in that setting, and record what occurs during observation. With regard to the last, the authors address concerns of reliability and validity in a naturalistic setting. They account for different types of reliability and validity, suggesting ways to ensure both and noting that these concerns may manifest themselves differently in qualitative and quantitative inquiry.

The interview is a principal information-gathering technique in qualitative research. The authors include detailed discussion of various ways individual and group interviews may be designed and conducted. Of special interest is their coverage of how to record interview data and how to ensure full and accurate accounts of the results of interviews. They include advice to the interviewer on how to prepare; what sorts of probes to interject, and when; how to ensure clear understanding of questions asked; and how to elicit responses. Moreover, the authors discuss both the advantages and the shortcomings of this means of information gathering. Not only do they illustrate the strengths of the method; they also point out pitfalls and ways to avoid them.

Perhaps the most helpful element of this book is the inclusion of what the authors call "research scenarios." These concrete examples of project design and the conduct of studies, mostly taken from the authors' own research experiences, describe the steps undertaken in carrying out projects and point out problems and pitfalls. The scenarios place this discussion very clearly in applied settings illustrating the rigor of the methods employed, the importance of planning, and the value of the methods in answering particular questions. These scenarios are interspersed throughout each chapter. Because this book is intended to be a practical guide, its success should be judged according to the practicality of its content. The research scenarios help to make the work a tool that can be used successfully, especially by a less-experienced researcher.

The authors state at the outset that this book is not an academic exercise. Still, there is the need for reference to additional sources that cover in greater detail some of the specific elements of qualitative methods. The authors weave these references into each section of the book by presenting specific examples of the methods and their application, and also by including at the end of each chapter a brief presentation of additional sources and their utility. This is important because no single text can supply everything the aspiring researcher will need to know. The items referred to are very well chosen and complement the discussion of each chapter admirably.

Readers seeking answers to some of the thorny questions that arise in libraries will find this book an excellent guide to qualitative methods of inquiry. There is nothing insular about this work by British authors, published in London by the Library Association; it has applicability to library environments everywhere. Consulting the book can assuredly save a researcher's time and prevent pitfalls in the conduct of any formal research.—John M. Budd (libsmb@shou.me.missouri.edu), School of Information Science and Learning Technologies, University of Missouri--Columbia.


Professional conferences enable the members of an association to share results of current research and keep in touch with developments in the profession. Published proceedings document the events at these conferences and make them available to those unable to attend, as well as to future researchers. Because of their documentary nature, conference proceedings are often difficult to consider in
their entirety; like the conferences they document, proceedings can contain a wide range of papers on diverse topics. The proceedings of the 1997 American Society for Information Science (ASIS) annual conference, which took place November 1–6, 1997, in Washington D.C., follow this pattern to some extent. However, ASIS conferences use a thematic approach, which serves as a focus for the presentations. The theme of the 1997 conference was “Digital Collections: Implications for Users, Funders, Developers and Maintainers.”

The concept of “digital collections” is drawn broadly here; the perspectives range from case studies of specific digital libraries to theoretical analyses of the effects that digital collections have on the modes and models of library service. The proceedings are divided into “Contributed Papers” (80% of the volume) and “Abstracts of SIG Sessions” (20%). The “Contributed Papers” section provides full texts of 31 papers, arranged into 11 groupings that represent the conference sessions in which they were presented, while the SIG section offers abstracts for over 70 additional presentations. Because of the breadth of material included in the volume, I will highlight, in the order they are presented in the volume, those papers that seem likely to be most useful and informative for today’s technical services librarians.

In the first section, “Theory,” Karla L. Hahn and Natalie A. Schoch outline the use of diffusion theory to explain developments in electronic publishing. They suggest that the introduction of electronic publishing “should be seen, not as representing a single innovation, but rather an innovation cluster” (p. 5), and that this complexity has complicated research into user acceptance of electronic publishing. This research has promise for helping administrators and future researchers analyze the effects and acceptance of new technologies in the field, although the paper included here is too brief to provide readers much more than a hint of what is involved. Christine L. Borgman’s paper titled “Now That We Have Digital Collections, Why Do We Need Libraries?” closes this section with an excellent exploration of the broad implications of digital collections for library professionals and for the library profession at large. She examines the concept of a library and uses this examination to highlight the assumptions in her title question. Borgman leaves the question unanswered, largely because the answer depends so closely on how we define the library field and its institutions. In her discussion, however, Borgman raises numerous issues important for librarians to consider.

In the second section, “Semiotic Approaches,” Jens-Erik Mai uses semiotics to reexamine traditional views of the subject analysis process. Mai assigns the different parts of subject analysis to categories delineated by noted semiotician Charles S. Peirce. This examination offers readers a very different perspective on the subject analysis process and insights relevant to current research in online subject retrieval.

As part of the section titled “Web User Assessment,” William Moen and others describe the method they used to assess parts of the U.S. Government Information Locator Service, an attempt by the federal government to make government documents available electronically. The authors outline a framework for ensuring reliable and thorough evaluation of these resources. This is a well-written background piece for the broader research agenda in which Moen has participated.

The fourth section, “Information Retrieval Interaction,” includes four papers on relevance change in relation to the specifics of the retrieval situation. Hong Xie identifies seven retrieval intentions, which she terms “interaction intentions,” linking these intentions to specific types of actions. This research could have substantial applications in online system design. Amanda Spinks uses a meta-analysis to discover that partially relevant items could be associated with changes in users’ understanding of their information problem. David Robins continues this theme, examining in greater detail the frequency and the role of shifts in end-user focus during the retrieval process. Colleen Cool considers the information retrieval expe-
experience as a social interaction and examines it from the perspective of situation assessment. Taken together, the papers in this section raise many questions about the nature of the information retrieval enterprise, giving us a broader perspective on some of the real-world factors involved.

In the “Academic Use/Special Bibliographies” section, Peiling Wang uses a meta-analysis of user relevance criteria to create a complex document selection model with possible relevance to next-generation catalog designs. Wang’s observations remind us that both the presentation of data in bibliographic systems and the functions of those systems are areas for further study.

“Theory of Structured Approaches” begins with a substantial work by Martin Doerr on methods he has used to manage heterogeneous thesaurus information. Doerr presents a way to model a large body of thesaurus information and manage terminology among different linguistic systems, a task that assumes greater significance in a digital environment where information originates from many different sources. Telko Saracevic outlines a stratified model of information retrieval interaction. The research in this paper is closely related to the papers on situated action in the “Information Retrieval Interaction” section.

In the final section, “Metadata,” Kwong Bor Ng, Soyeon Park, and Kathleen Bernett examine the differences between library science and computer science perspectives on metadata. Nancy M. Ide and C. M. Sperberg-McQueen discuss problems that arise between the need for standardized markup and the need to accommodate a wide variety of document forms. Heting Chu studies the degree to which hyperlinks in Web pages represent the intellectual content of the collections to which they are linked. Each of these papers raises legitimate areas of concern regarding metadata and their use in broad-based digital collections.

This volume presents a broad array of important research. Without a doubt, digital collections have been an area of great concern to library and information science practitioners over the last decade. As computer and network technologies have matured, an increasing number of library professionals have looked for ways to use these technologies to further library services in an environment of dwindling resources. The theme of this conference is both pertinent and timely. However, a number of the papers included have little in common with the concept of digital collections. While their inclusion in the proceedings reflects the diversity of research in our field, it also emphasizes the difficulty in using a thematic approach as an organizing principle for the conference.

It is somewhat disappointing that many of the sessions are represented by only a single abstract. It was explained in the preface that the papers presented in full were refereed; the assumption is that the other presentations were not. The purpose of the abstracts is unclear; presumably, they are included to inform readers of potentially interesting studies that are taking place, so that they might contact researchers directly for further information. An argument could be made that if the research is important enough to be mentioned in the proceedings, it is important enough for the full paper to be included. Certainly, gathering, refereeing, and editing an additional 70 papers would substantially increase both the burden of compiling the proceedings and its physical size. However, the solution offered here is not satisfying and does not seem designed for readers’ needs.

The arrangement of the volume is also problematic in that the 11 sections in the “Contributed Papers” follow the order of their presentation at the conference, while the abstracts portion is arranged alphabetically by session title. This contrast underscores the fact that many of the papers bear little relation to the digital collections theme. The proceedings would have a better overall cohesion if the papers had been organized in relation to the conference theme, though these organizational issues are not substantial in view of the quality of the research presented at the conference.

This volume, with its numerous descriptions of methods of making digital
collections available and useful to end users, will interest many librarians. The authors of many of the papers explore the management of these materials in an ongoing endeavor, making them of interest to collection management librarians. Administrators will find guidance for program development in their organizations. Systems designers will find descriptions of many different methods of designing and evaluating their systems. In short, this volume will be extremely useful to many. The flaws in overall presentation of the material are minor, while the very diversity that makes this volume difficult to summarize adds to its ultimate value.—David H. Thomas (dhthomas@titan.liunet.edu), Long Island University, Brooklyn, N.Y.
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