

**ACRL Literatures in English Section
Collections Discussion Group
ALA Annual Meeting
Sunday, June 27, 2010, 10:30-noon
Washington Plaza, Washington Room**

1. Welcome from Convener Kristina DeVoe and introductions.

Discussion Topic1: Getting to know/Re-assessing your users' needs

Whether beginning a new position or receiving a new liaison area, understanding the collection needs of our users is critical. What are some best practices in discovering and prioritizing our users' immediate and evolving needs?

Even when doing the same job at a different institution, a librarian must find ways to connect. Useful techniques: asking for time at faculty meetings, and getting to know faculty through printing out their web pages and looking at their faces and research and teaching interests before meeting them in person. Some departments have liaisons to the library, and these faculty members can be crucial contacts. Establishing personal relationships is important as is marketing yourself in person and also through the Internet. Make sure the faculty know their librarian and follow up initial contacts with an email message that contains something of research interest to the faculty member or perhaps information about setting up an STD. Then the faculty start to trust you. Talk to instructors before and after doing instruction for their classes.

Many lecturers are being laid off, but they may be hired back when times are better. Help them whenever possible. Tutorials are one way to keep them current with resources and how to use them; they can go to public or nearby libraries to use the materials.

Instruction: break into three 20-minute sessions rather than one longer session: give an overview in the first, then discuss using the catalog and finally talk about individual projects. Students learn and retain more in shorter sessions. The librarian should be "in their face" and offering help.

Each department has different needs. Try to join the department's listserv, take part in the orientation of new faculty, meet with faculty before doing a class instruction session. Issue a newsletter, either in print or electronic; one librarian posts her newsletter to the departmental listserv and gets feedback on it.

Faculty collection needs may require differentiation and prioritization. Honoring all faculty requests for purchase is the ideal, but library collection budgets may not permit. Some ways to prioritize: innovative projects backed by the department, research and teaching requests from new faculty, junior faculty research since they are struggling to achieve tenure and least able to afford to purchase materials. Of course the librarian must juggle competing needs, always keeping in mind requests from superstars, though these well-known faculty may be able to get special funding from the university to meet their needs. Librarians should urge superstar faculty to ask the provost for funding and ask faculty writing grants to include funding for library resources. Some libraries get a percentage of grant funds; libraries should find ways to get to this source of funding. Be honest with your faculty: you're tenured and the library supported your research, now it's time for you to give back. When librarians are tenured faculty, it's easier to say no when the institution cannot afford a subscription or materials needed by faculty members.

Faculty research interests often change over the years, and librarians need to be involved in the early stages of these developments to make sure the faculty can get the research materials they require. Once a faculty member is tenured, that person may turn to research of more personal interest. Tenured faculty set the research interests for their graduate students. Librarians can

develop new areas in the collections that will attract research. Newsletters about current faculty research are good sources of information.

Librarians must work with donors. One librarian went to the faculty who made donations to keep certain subscriptions. Electronic bookplates, so the donor's name is in the catalog, make public the donor's generosity. Faculty can be persuaded to donate personal copies; one challenge will be whether they can donate e-books.

Discussion Topic 2: E-books and e-journals and e-readers, oh my!

Electronic collections are now a core element of library holdings, yet the business models and management of these collections – and now devices - make selection, payment, cataloging, searching, and reviewing extremely complex. How have our collection policies adapted? How do we reconcile changing purchase options (e.g. consortial arrangements, bundled packages, patron-driven, multi-user charges, platform fees, etc.) with access issues (e.g. convenience, searchability, duplication, embargoes, etc.)? What kinds of assessment are needed?

We are at a critical but complex time in choosing and assessing e-collections. Are collection policies changing to reflect these changes?

User needs and preferences vary. One generalization, not true everywhere, is that faculty prefer books while students prefer e-books. One librarian observed that students so want print books because they don't know how to print from e-books and find them hard to use. Some libraries are experimenting with lending e-book readers. Platforms used by e-book purveyors cannot be used on some e-readers. E-books can be useful replacements for highly-used and often-stolen titles. Many titles used for English and theater research are not available as e-books. Libraries are waiting for good, cheap e-book readers. Other issues with e-books: publishers prohibit off-line reading, authentication problems, compatibility. Many packages lack substantial content for the humanities. Some titles are available only in packages and not for individual purchase. E-books are usually more expensive than print. Libraries must decide whether to buy or rent e-books and not forget to weed them. Librarians noted that their libraries seem to have funding for expensive e-book packages but not for \$85 subscriptions to paper journals.

Forces leading to the purchase of e-books: Campuses with distance learners find e-books very useful for those students. Institutions faced with lack of space mandate the purchase of e-books, but this practice causes problems for English librarians because of the lack of humanities e-books. Patron-driven acquisition can lead to the purchase of titles and formats that faculty say they do not want. Some librarians noticed that titles requested are already available in paper, and one library is tracking the statistics for use of the paper and e-format to discover user preference.

The British Library and Amazon are making 65,000 19th Century titles available as free downloads to Amazon's Kindle and through Amazon's CreateSpace's Print on Demand (<http://www.bl.uk/news/2010/pressrelease20100223a.html>). These titles were originally digitized through the BL's partnership with Microsoft. This development is both exciting and interesting, pointing out the need for more universal readers and raising crucial questions.

Funding the collection: Some libraries have success is persuading departments to contribute to large purchases. Other librarians solicit donations of materials and of money. The librarian must build up a relationship with donors all the while not undercutting library or campus development efforts. Working with the campus or library development office can be fruitful. Librarians developed pamphlets describing their collection needs which the development officer uses with donors. The need to use e-bookplates or paper bookplates to celebrate the donation was emphasized again. It's tricky when the library cancels an e-resource that's been donated. Explaining that the library can afford large databases while canceling smaller ones can also be challenging. Getting other subject areas interested in large purchase is successful tactic: either other subject librarians or even other departments (e.g. at one university, EEBO was desired by both English and medicine). Make sure that EEBO and ECCO aren't niched as being of interest

only to English and other humanities faculty; show the broad scope of these large databases and get other subjects to contribute. At some libraries funding is available for large, multi-subject databases but buying subject-specific resources is difficult.

Without these new resources, faculty cannot compete and the best graduate students won't come, so the institution loses its prestige.

The vanilla collection has long been of concern to collection buildings, and now libraries are in danger of the bland e-collection—many libraries having the same 10 large databases and few having the smaller ones. Assessment is necessary in making selection and retention decisions; however sometimes it appears that library administrations care only about cost per use rather than quality of the collection.

ILL is an issue: can libraries lend these materials? Libraries have had the right to loan to 1 patron at a time. With the Google Books Settlement still in the courts, the future is unclear and much needs to be settled about rights. The old sense of copyright was to protect profit while encouraging the development of ideas. Some university lawyers will push to protect rights. Librarians need to be engaged in the process and find ways to communicate our concerns with those making decisions. Copyright concerns are leading some publishers to refuse book and journal manuscripts with quotations over 1.5 lines and are insisting on paraphrases to avoid any possibility of legal action because they cannot afford the cost of court cases. This risk avoidance is changing the nature of what can be published and stifles the exchange of ideas. What if research can only be done on out of copyright material?

Discussion Topic 3: Defining “standard” editions

Is there a difference between a standard and critical edition? The Modern Language Association's Committee on Scholarly Editions (CSE) maintains a list of approved editions:

http://www.mla.org/resources/documents/rep_scholarly/cse_approved_edition

The need to find the standard edition of Yeats generated this topic; Yeats is not on the CSE list. Given the number of libraries and the number of editions/printings of an author's work, deciding which is standard may be moot and using a pretty good edition may be fine, though scholars feel the need to find an approved edition. Often only one edition is not enough; for such authors as Shakespeare, Donne and Herbert, using various editions is necessary.

Many catalogs allow users to comment on special features of a book and the quality of the edition.

Twenty-two attended this discussion.