

LES Collections Discussion Group
ALA Midwinter
Sunday, January 21, 2007
8:00 am – 10:00 am
Renaissance Seattle Hotel: North Room

Present: Tammy Voelker, Marc Cormier, Russel Whitaker, Peg Knight, Kristine Anderson, Shawn Martin, Frank Gravier, Tara Schmidt, Sarah Fass, Melissa Van Vuuren, Millie Jackson, Sophie Lesinska, Annette Keogh, Sara Seten Berghausen, Kathy Johnson, Faye Christenberry.

Topic 1: Ebook Collections & Licenses

The first discussion focused on the use of ebooks and the challenges facing libraries in purchasing them, as well as providing access to them. Limitations with ebook licenses are extremely problematic—NetLibrary's one user at a time and other copyright restrictions make e-reserves or classroom use impractical. No one had experience with Ebrary to share at this point, although apparently Ebrary books may be used by multiple people simultaneously. The ACLS History E-Book Project was mentioned as a better model for multi-user access: <http://www.historyebook.org/intro.html>. Several people noted that faculty still prefer paper format over electronic. One person mentioned that online anthologies of primary literature are heavily used in lower-level writing classes. The group agreed that, perhaps with the advent of better portable readers, ebooks will become more feasible in the future.

Topic 2: Gale Literary Criticism Online Archive

Representatives from Gale spoke briefly to the group about the electronic archive that is currently in production. Gale's goal is to have the content from its entire line of literary criticism series available online. Libraries will then have the option of retaining or weeding their print collections. Pricing has not been determined yet, but should be available soon.

Topic 3: Institutional Repositories & Humanities Research

There was an interesting discussion of the use of institutional repositories by humanities faculty, as well as librarians' experience in working with faculty on research projects appropriate for institutional repositories. Most felt that there was little activity among humanities scholars in this area to date, possibly due to the nature of humanities scholarship, or due to the lack of infrastructure required to support digital scholarship. Shawn mentioned the importance of the NSF Cyberinfrastructure report and its potential implications on digital repositories (http://www.nsf.gov/od/oci/ci_v5.pdf). Faye mentioned the recent MLA report on Evaluating Scholarship for Tenure & Promotion (http://www.mla.org/tenure_promotion) as being evidence of genuine barriers to faculty involvement in the creation of digital scholarship. The results of a survey taken by department chairs of language & literature departments indicates that digital scholarship is not considered legitimate scholarship for the promotion & tenure process.

Topic 4: Duplicate & Missing Serial Volumes/Serial Exchange

There was a brief discussion on various methods employed to obtain missing issues of serials. The idea of using the LES group and/or list as a serials exchange venue was mentioned, although it was noted that some institutions are restricted by state laws that would prohibit the exchange to take place.

Other Issues:

a) Targets for spending collection budgets – who has them?:

Many institutions have designated spending targets throughout the course of fiscal year. Some institutions will take away unspent funds if they are still available during a certain point of the budget cycle. Other institutions simply use the targets to encourage more evenly distributed spending.

b) Endowments/Foundations for collections – how restrictive are they?

The answer to this question seemed to vary from institution to institution. Some institutions' development offices discourage donors from placing overly narrow requirements on gift funding, while others do not.

c) Time slot for Collections Discussion Group meeting:

Several people mentioned there was a problem having a meeting at 8:00 am. Among other things, there is an Alexander Street Press breakfast that conflicts with this meeting time. The group briefly discussed the possibility of moving the meeting time back to 9:00 am at some point in the future.

Minutes submitted by Faye Christenberry.
