



# Association for Library Collections and Technical Services Annual Report 2007–08

By Pamela Bluh, 2007–08 ALCTS President

The past year has been one of contrasts. The nostalgia and excitement of the fiftieth anniversary celebration in the summer of 2007 was followed by period of tranquility throughout the fall and winter, culminating in renewed energy and enthusiasm in the spring of 2008.

## Future of Bibliographic Control

Throughout 2007–08, attention was focused on activities related to the Library of Congress Working Group (LCWG) on the Future of Bibliographic Control, particularly drafting testimony for the working group's public hearings and preparing a detailed response to the final report *On the Record* on behalf of the American Library Association (ALA). In the spring of 2008, a task group appointed by the Association for Library Collections and Technical Services (ALCTS) board analyzed the recommendations in the Working Group's report and identified and prioritized those recommendations that ALCTS is best suited to address.<sup>1</sup> A second task group will continue the work by overseeing the implementation of these recommendations in the coming year.

## Non-English Access

A steering committee appointed to oversee the implementation of recommendations made by the Task Force on Non-English Access began its work in the summer of 2007. The work is complex and time-consuming and requires collaboration and consultation with numerous groups within ALCTS as well as in the information community at large. An implementation plan developed by the committee provides structure and focus and has helped clarify the committee's role within the community. An electronic discussion list (NonEnglish@ala.org), initially designed to facilitate discussion among steering committee members, is now open to the entire library community and has greatly enhanced the committee's visibility.

## Organizational Effectiveness

"The role of libraries is certainly in a state of transformation . . . [as is] the change in library user expectations."<sup>2</sup> Recognizing the validity of this statement, the

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ALCTS Board of Directors surveyed the membership using *The 7 Measures of Success: What Remarkable Associations Do That Others Don't*.<sup>3</sup> Response was outstanding and revealed that the members consider ALCTS to be a remarkably successful organization. The survey pointed out, however, that improvements in the areas of communication, effective utilization of data, and organizational adaptability are highly desirable.

To address the concerns that were voiced about communication, an electronic discussion forum (alcts-eforum@ala.org) was launched to give members and nonmembers a vehicle where topics of immediate interest could be discussed for brief periods of time. The inaugural discussion, on communication, attracted 112 subscribers and indicated very clearly that perceptions about the suitability and effectiveness of the association's communication channels differ widely and there is a definite need for different forms of communication depending on the audience. Nearly two hundred subscribers have registered for the e-forum and a second discussion on the use of vendor- and publisher-supplied cataloging records generated enthusiastic responses. New discussion topics will be featured on a regular basis and will be announced in advance.

After a careful review of the association's organizational structure, the Organization and Bylaws Committee submitted a ballot proposal to convert all discussion groups to interest groups. The proposal was approved by an overwhelming margin, a clear indication that ALCTS members are eager to support changes that will create a more nimble organization where emerging issues and changing industry conditions can be addressed spontaneously.

### Legislative Affairs

Throughout 2007–08, ALCTS was invited to comment on a variety of matters of national significance, ranging from the ALA Preservation Policy to increased funding for cataloging at the Library of Congress to support for shared regional depositories. Opportunities such as these raise the association's profile and underscore the value of cooperation in the legislative arena.

### Strategic Planning

In January 2008, the highly anticipated strategic planning Web site ([www.ala.org/cfapps/alcts/planning/plan\\_home.cfm](http://www.ala.org/cfapps/alcts/planning/plan_home.cfm)) was inaugurated. Designed so members and staff can easily track the scope and range of the association's work, the database facilitates collaboration among individuals and groups. Members are responsible for recording initiatives, relating them to the association's strategic plan, and track-

ing their progress. Action items are identified for planning, budgeting, and programmatic development and will be used to assess progress toward the goals outlined in the strategic plan.

### Fiscal Planning

Although remarkably successful programmatically, fiscal year (FY) 2007 (which ended on August 31, 2007) was an anomaly from the budget perspective. Higher costs and lower than anticipated registration for the fiftieth anniversary celebration resulted in a deficit at the end of the fiscal year. A combination of conservative budgeting, trimming expenses, and more accurate revenue forecasting have helped mitigate this situation in FY 2008 and made it possible to begin to rebuild the association's reserves. The dues increase for personal and institutional members implemented in the fall of 2007 was based on a detailed analysis of revenues and expenditures and in response to an anticipated increase of 3 percent in administrative costs over the next three years. The additional funds generated by the dues increase will help to offset inflation and support the association's administrative services as well as establish a solid foundation for new initiatives and project development.

### Sections and Services

One of ALCTS' most significant characteristics is the diversity of its members. They are affiliated with libraries of all types and sizes and include library staff at all ranks. Mentoring members and offering them support, encouragement, and opportunities to excel professionally are high priorities for ALCTS. This means reaching out to various constituencies, understanding their professional requirements, and creating products and services that address those special needs. During 2007–08, ALCTS focused particular attention on its public library members and made a concerted effort to engage them in association activities through both actual and virtual committee membership and by reflecting the public library perspective in program content when appropriate.

Throughout the year, the "Spotlight on Sections" column in the *ALCTS Newsletter Online* provided each section an opportunity to highlight its activities. The Serials Section responded to the changing serials landscape by changing its name to Continuing Resources Section (CRS). The Preservation and Reformatting Section (PARS), at the request of ALA, updated the ALA preservation policy and drafted definitions for digital preservation. The Council of Regional Groups (CRG) established a wiki, making it easier for affiliated regional and state organizations to maintain

ties with the national organization. The Cataloging and Classification Section took the lead, on behalf of ALCTS and ALA, in preparing comments for the LCWG and subsequently in analyzing the group's recommendations.

Programs, preconferences, symposia, and forums continue to attract enthusiastic audiences at conferences. In addition, developing continuing education using a variety of platforms and delivery mechanisms, particularly those that deliver content locally and on demand, is being emphasized. Two new Web courses, Fundamentals of Electronic Resources Acquisitions and Fundamentals of Collection Development and Management, were developed this year and will be offered for the first time in late summer and fall 2008. The online Fundamentals of Acquisitions course, a staple of ALCTS continuing education offerings, continues to be offered and is routinely sold out. New online courses that focus on cataloging, including Functional Requirements for Bibliographic Records (FRBR) and Resource Description and Access (RDA) are in the planning stages. A collaboration with the National Information Standards Organization led to the development of "Demystifying Library Standards," a webinar that is the first in a series of Web-based mini programs that will examine the industry standards used in technical services.

A robust publishing program including both traditional and online publications continues to attract attention and accounts for a significant portion of the association's revenue. *Library Resources and Technical Services (LRTS)*, the official journal of the association, celebrated fifty years of publication in 2007. The entire backfile of *LRTS* has been digitized, however only volumes for 2000–06 are presently accessible online. The bimonthly *ALCTS Newsletter Online* provides members with association news, conference reports, and announcements. The *LRTS* Editorial Board and the ALCTS Publications Committee continue to grapple with questions about open access, licensing, and copyright, as well as electronic publishing. A manuscript submission software program acquired by ALA during 2007–08 will expedite acceptance of manuscripts and facilitate the peer review and revision process.

Two new awards were established in 2007–08. The Preservation and Reformatting Section honored the memory of George Cunha and Susan Swartzburg, early leaders in cooperative preservation programming and strong advocates for collaboration in the field of conservation, with the LBI George Cunha and Susan Swartzburg Award. The award, sponsored by the Library Binding Institute, acknowledges and supports cooperative preservation projects or rewards individuals or groups that foster collaboration for preservation goals. The Coutts Award for Innovation in Electronic Resources Management, generously supported by Coutts Information Services, is presented by the Collection Management and Development Section to a librarian who

has demonstrated innovation and excellence in the practice of electronic collection management and development.

## Summary

The past year will be remembered as the year when ALCTS responded to the controversies over bibliographic control and also focused attention on organizational renewal by developing new member services, reaching out to all constituencies, expanding the channels of communication, collaborating with colleagues, and exercising its leadership role in the library and information community.

## References

1. Association for Library Collections & Technical Services, ALCTS Task Group on the LC Working Group Report: *On the Record: The Report of the Library of Congress Working Group on the Future of Bibliographic Control: Recommendations for Action* (Apr. 14, 2008), [www.ala.org/ala/alcts/newslinks/bibcontrol/ALCTSrecs.cfm](http://www.ala.org/ala/alcts/newslinks/bibcontrol/ALCTSrecs.cfm) (accessed June 22, 2008); ALCTS Task Group on the LC Working Group Report: *On the Record: Report of the LC Working Group on the Future of Bibliographic Control: Ten Actions for ALCTS* (Apr. 14, 2008), [www.ala.org/ala/alcts/newslinks/bibcontrol/lwgtop10.cfm](http://www.ala.org/ala/alcts/newslinks/bibcontrol/lwgtop10.cfm) (accessed June 22, 2008).
2. Overview of the Next Steps Document Developed by the Association for Library Collections & Technical Services (ALCTS) Sections (Acquisitions, Cataloging and Classification, Collection Management and Development, Preservation and Reformatting, and Serials) and the ALCTS Council of Regional Groups, [www.ala.org/ala/alctscontent/pubsbucket/bibcontrol/nextsteps2007.pdf](http://www.ala.org/ala/alctscontent/pubsbucket/bibcontrol/nextsteps2007.pdf) (accessed July 10, 2008).
3. Center for Association Leadership, *The 7 Measures of Success: What Remarkable Associations Do That Others Don't* (Washington, D.C.: American Society of Association Executives and the Center for Association Leadership, 2006).