
SLA in Anaheim, 1987

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A report on the 78th Annual Conference of the Special Libraries Association.

The Special Libraries Association's 78th Annual Conference in Anaheim, June 6–11, 1987, had as its theme, "Global Information Access—Expanding Our World." Many sessions stressed international aspects of Librarianship and information service. With over 100 programs and more than 330 exhibit booths, the conference attracted 4,200 attendees.

The Anaheim location encouraged participants to bring their families and visit Disneyland, but left a void as far as nearby cultural activities was concerned. This was more than compensated for by official and unofficial tours of libraries, museums, and information centers.

The opening general session featured Dr. Arno Penzias, Nobel Prize-winning vice president of research and development at AT&T's Bell Labs. Penzias described information and the new technologies in terms of their impact on how we think, work, and provide information services, and he stressed the need for information specialists who analyze data, as well as retrieve it; but he asked frankly whether we can trust our complex systems and the attitudes we have developed about them. A panel of regional specialists then presented papers on aspects of information service and access in various parts of the world.

A significant feature was a day-long program on CD-ROM, which covered everything from the most elementary concepts of the technology, through inventories of available products, hardware trends, costs, potential future applications, and standards. A reception at which vendors dem-

onstrated CD-ROM products allowed participants to try systems out with their own hands.

The SLA Presidential Task Force on the Value of the Information Professional made a presentation at the President's Luncheon Program. Jim Matarazzo reported on several interesting attempts to place a dollar value on information in terms of time and money saved because of the availability of information, or because of automation. Further work in this area is being encouraged.

Several sessions dealt with public relations, as special librarians asked themselves, "how do we make ourselves indispensable?" and answered: by increasing our credibility, promoting ourselves, understanding the political environment. In the area of management, sessions dealt with leadership: the need for vision, originality, assertiveness, decisiveness, fairness, and ethical behavior. Entrepreneurs were introduced to the idea of developing a business plan and a financial plan, dealing with banks, contracts, and promotional concepts, before quitting their present jobs.

Integrity and ethics were key elements in several presentations; there is a growing interest in this area. Sessions dealing with library education stressed the concept that what one learns in library school *is* important, that graduates need to understand basic skills and work behavior even more than specifics of technology, which changes faster than any curriculum can.

A breakfast meeting of the Professional Development Committee focused on the role of SLA in the accrediting process for library schools. A prolonged

study period in which SLA took part resulted in the realization on the part of many library associations of the tremendous cost involved in accrediting library education. Panelists agreed that SLA should accept its part in the funding of the accreditation activity.

An active continuing education program attracted 920 participants to 21 courses before and after the main conference activities.

At the annual meeting the entire board was on the dais as official reports of the state of the association were presented by the president, the executive director, and the treasurer. The results of the election were announced. Joe Ann Clifton, Litton Industries, is president-elect, and new board members include: M. Kay Mowrey, Chapter Cabinet chair-elect; Carolyn Hardnett, Division Cabinet chair-elect; and directors-at-large Mary Jane Miller and James E. Tchobanoff. Emily Mobley, associate librarian at Purdue, also an ACRL member, concluded the program with her inaugural ad-

dress. She challenged the association to move away from "an outmoded nomenclature that no longer communicates the content or functions of our profession any more than the materials with which we work."

Trends and issues of the conference and the special library profession in 1987 were:

- integrity and ethics;
- value of information and of librarians' services;
- leadership, management, and the differences between them;
- internationalism;
- improving the image;
- risk and change.

The last point was underscored by Rowland O.W. Brown, president of OCLC, who was asked a question about the risk implicit in change early in the conference. His response: the only risk is *not* to change. ■■

International Conference on Computer-Assisted Learning in Post-Secondary Education

The first in what will become a series of International Conferences on Computer-Assisted Learning in Post-Secondary Education was held at the University of Calgary, May 5-7, 1987, under the sponsorship of the Institute for Computer-Assisted Learning. Over 300 registrants came from Austria, Canada, England, France, Germany, Malaysia, The Netherlands, Scotland, South Africa, and the United States.

It was the intention of the conference to provide a forum that would address a wide array of issues associated with the development and implementation of CAL in the post-secondary environment. This was reflected in the keynote speeches, invited papers, and submitted papers. The keynote speakers included Brian Gaines, Norman Wagner from the University of Calgary, Gail Robinson from the Centre for Language and Crosscultural Skills, Alan Kay (an Apple Fellow), and Don Bitzer from the University of Illinois.

The invited papers also reflected the breadth of the topic of the conference. Charles Findley and Jo-Anne Wyer of Digital Equipment Corporation spoke on "Learning in the Information Age." Hermann Maurer of the Technical University of Graz described a CAL system currently being developed with support of the Austrian government that will permit the delivery of CAL to low-cost microcomputers. Gordon McCalla from the University of Saskatchewan addressed the promise of artificial

intelligence for computer-assisted learning, and Joseph Scandura of the University of Pennsylvania described the system which he has developed, an intelligent ruletutor.

Some of the topics for the paper presentations were intelligent CAL, administration of CAL, CAL applications development, courseware development, CAL in the humanities, engineering applications of CAL, artificial intelligence, CAL in language teaching, CAL applications in learning effectiveness, delivery of CAL, and video applications. There were also two symposia, "The Near Future of Computer-Based Education" and "Computer-Managed Learning"; two panel sessions, "Vendors' view of CAL in Education," and "Implementing CAL: The Facts of LIFE"; and a special presentation by Rosalyn Gerstein of The Public Works, Inc., on "Reconfigurable Video Marital Fracture: An Interactive Video Case Study for the Social Sciences."

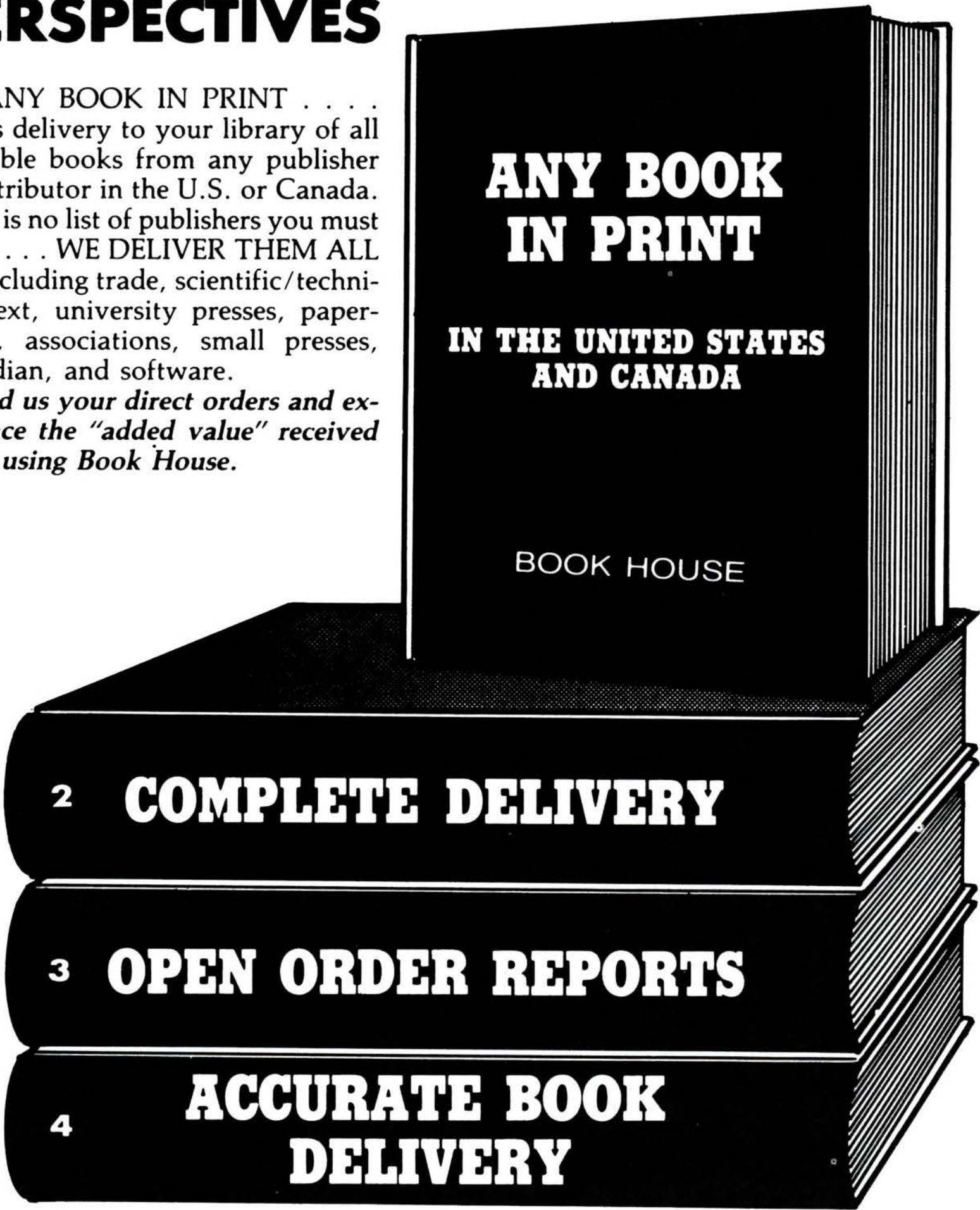
An International Advisory Committee has been formed to coordinate subsequent conferences on the same topic. The next International Conference on Computer-Assisted Learning in Post-Secondary Education will be held in 1989 in Dallas, Texas.

Copies of the 1987 Conference Proceedings are available for \$35.00, plus \$2.00 shipping, from: Institute for Computer-Assisted Learning, University of Calgary, 2500 University Drive N.W., Calgary, Alberta, Canada T2N 1N4; (403) 270-3303. ■■

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