

Continuing Education

Some Thoughts on ONLINE '80, San Francisco, November 12-14

We are told this is year 10 EE (Electronic Era). In the past ten years we have grown accustomed to an online landscape of modems, CRT's and printers, have learned to interface and be interactive, have met and conversed with Dialog, Medline, RLIN, OCLC, and other electronic species. Although we do not always feel quite at home in it and often have trouble distinguishing "full-face" from "line-by-line" and bauds from bytes, on the whole exploring the new world has been pleasurable. Its unfamiliarity is, of course, an essential ingredient in the enjoyment of the expedition.

But even the most adventurous of us were not quite prepared for the sudden thrust into the lush, tropical and luxuriant flowering of microprocessors, floppy disks, videodiscs (why this coexistence of disks with discs, videotext with videotex?), and the confrontation with Nexis, Viewtron, the Source, the Qube, and other dazzling and exhibitionistic characters, clamoring for attention.

Even the information industry recognizes that something is amiss with all this runaway technology. Typically, they have coined an expression for it. They call it the software crunch. What they are saying is that they have invented solutions for which we have no problems as yet. Technology for technology's sake may be as valid as art for art's sake—although certainly harder to contemplate for a layman, especially a humanities-nurtured one.

Let's look at some other neologisms, such as the emergence of the word "utilities" to designate cooperative online cataloging systems. In spite of its initial onerous sound, it is accurate in describing the centrifugal nature of the distributed flow of information. But it fails somehow to convey that there is a reciprocal centripetal force from the outskirts to the hub, operating simultaneously. Libraries do not consume cataloging like gas, they also generate it.

At the same time as it is getting harder to understand the new technology, it is also becoming easier to use, thanks to "intelligent terminals" which can translate diverse commands into a uniform language; "optical character recognition" which should ease the burden of coding; vastly improved storage facilities which allow a faster response time; and simplified information packages aimed at the end-user which bypass the librarian-intermediary.

Already one hears again the cry of "deprofessionalization" which was so prevalent in the early days of automation. Perhaps we should remind ourselves that in the not-so-distant pre-electronic age the library's *raison d'être* was to be "user-friendly" and that librarians did not feel threatened by the fact that some people bought their own books in bookstores instead of borrowing them from libraries, that library catalogs were often self-explanatory, and that some adventurous researchers even ventured to unravel the intricacies of the *Philosophers Index* without any instruction from us.—*Simone Klugman*.

Editor's Note: Simone Klugman is a reference and collection development librarian at the Main Library, University of California, Berkeley. Her contribution originally appeared in that library's CU News for January 17. ■■

Call for Papers

The Publication Committee of the Reproduction of Library Materials Section of ALA's Resources and Technical Services Division seeks compilers for volumes in the *RLMS Microfile Series*. The series, which began in 1973 and now numbers five volumes, has the objective of providing a forum for communication of policies, techniques, equipment, and problems related to various aspects of reprography.

The series is unique in that its purpose is to publish informal, unpolished documents. The intention is to present information to the profession "as is."

Most volumes are on one sheet of positive, silver halide microfiche or in the form of unbound electrostatic positive prints.

Persons interested in publishing research in the *RLMS Microfile Series* in any area related to reprography are requested to contact: Douglas K. Freeman, Chair, RLMS Publication Committee, University of Tennessee Library, Knoxville, TN 37916.

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MULTITYPE NETWORKING AND THE ACADEMIC LIBRARY


Some sixty public and academic librarians jammed a meeting room at the Ramada Inn in East Brunswick, New Jersey, for an October 22 program on "Multitype Networking and the Academic Library" sponsored by the New Jersey ACRL Chapter.

Keynote speaker Melvin George, dean of libraries and learning resources at Northeastern Illinois University, provided a detailed explanation of the state of networking in Illinois as a case history in the development of multitype library cooperation. As a multitype networking environment emerges in New Jersey, librarians expect to grapple with many of the same problems faced by Illinois, particularly those involving funding, governance and membership. According to George, the time for informal cooperative activities is almost past. Automation and dwindling financial resources require the development of new and formal arrangements for the delivery of library services.

In this context, Toni Kuzma, director of learning resources at Somerset County College in Somerville, New Jersey, reported on the estab-

lishment of a local multitype network consisting of the county library and the libraries of a vocational-technical school and the county college. Named the Somerset County Information Resources Consortium (SCIRC), SCIRC is an inter-institutional group of libraries which have voluntarily associated to extend each library's capacity to provide resources and services to its constituents. The Consortium emphasizes common law goals and objectives and capitalizes on the differences basic to each collection to the mutual benefit of the libraries and their users. One of the main points made by Kuzma was that careful analysis, especially of the potential benefits/savings to be gained by each library, was necessary for successfully convincing boards of trustees to back the network. Attendees felt that with funds now becoming available for inter-institutional cooperative ventures, the time is opportune for following Kuzma's example.

Joseph Ravelli, from the New Jersey Department of Higher Education, provided background to the current relations between academic libraries and his department, whose responsibility is to coordinate and approve academic programs. Its relation then in most cases is through the parent institution; an office for libraries does not even exist currently in the Department. Possibilities for multitype development and funding therefore will be through the State Library and its parent agency, the Department of Education. Ravelli



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also discussed library aspects of the new Master Plan for Higher Education in New Jersey, the main thrusts of which are to encourage networking and new technology where possible but to insist that each library not avoid the responsibility to satisfy the basic needs of its local constituency through its own resources.

Additional information on the emergence of the academic library's role in multitype networking in New Jersey may be found in John M. Cohn, "Community Colleges and Networking in New Jersey," *C&RL News*, November 1980, p.305.—*Michael B. Binder, Director of Library, Fairleigh Dickinson University, Rutherford, New Jersey, and President, ACRL New Jersey Chapter.* ■■

RARE BOOKS AND ILLUSTRATIONS RECOVERED

Rare books and illustrations valued in the thousands of dollars, apparently stolen from university libraries, are being held by University of Illinois police who are seeking the owners. Over \$84,000 worth of material has already been returned to six institutions who discovered the loss.

The items were recovered when police apprehended a Texas man who was subsequently convicted of stealing books from the University of Illinois Library, Champaign. Robert Kindred of Garland, Texas, identified by police as the owner of the Antique Print Shop in Dallas, was arrested last June as he picked up stolen books concealed behind a hedge near the university library.

University police have recovered \$38,000 worth of items taken from the University of Illinois Library, and another \$46,000 worth of material from the libraries of Loyola University of New Orleans, Oklahoma University at Stillwater, Rice University at Houston, Texas A&M University at College Station, and the University of Maryland at College Park.

Items reported missing from the libraries of Harvard, Michigan State, and Ohio State University may be among the other goods recovered. Police believe that other university libraries also may have been theft victims. Many of the lithographs, plates, and pages discovered were neatly cut from rare books with a sharp blade. Because many of the illustrations bear no indication of what book they were taken from, it may take years before librarians or scholars discover the loss.

University of Illinois police investigator Murvin Valentine, Jr., is holding the unclaimed items in the hope that more libraries checking their rare collections may identify and recover their property. ■■

NATIONAL RESEARCH AGENDA FOR THE 80's

Cuadra Associates, Inc., in Santa Monica, California, has been awarded a contract for the development of a national agenda of promising library and information science research projects for the 1980s. The project is sponsored by the Department of Education's Office of Libraries and Learning Technologies (OLLT). The firm's recommendations will assist policymakers in OLLT, other federal agencies, state and local governments, professional organizations, and library and information science professionals to plan their future research and support programs.

Two key elements in the project are the preparation of an inventory of promising research programs by leading experts in the field, and a three-day meeting involving approximately 25 leading researchers and practitioners to review and rank in order of importance the proposed research projects.

According to Carlos A. Cuadra, company president and project director, a major research challenge is to "resolve some of the confusion that exists in the relationships between libraries and other information institutions, between library services and non-library information services, and between library science and information science."

The final product of this one-year contract will be a report reflecting the pre-meeting conceptual work of the study team, the papers prepared by the key researchers, and the work of the meeting participants in arriving at and rationalizing the basis for a National Research Agenda.

The national agenda project was originally suggested by the White House Conference on Library and Information Services which President Carter reported to Congress last September (see *C&RL News*, December 1980, p.337). ■■

Grant Semantics

Librarians writing grant proposals might find the following model introduction useful. It first appeared in Herb Caen's column in the *San Francisco Chronicle* for December 8, 1980, and was developed by David Frank of Fresno:

"This proposal is designed to formulate a network of cognitive infrastructures to enhance the issue-policy interfaces which impact the nascent parameters of strategy options available to community inputs and from which meaningful rationales must devolve in order to be effectively integrated."

The model should be maximally effective on bureaucrats easily influenced by orchestrated rhetorical integrity.