

Minutes for Collection Development Discussion Group  
Midwinter 2008-01-22 January 13, 2008

1. Welcome to the thirty-three attendees from Convener Faye Christenberry and introductions.

2. Announcements

Helene Williams is the Project Manager for Alexander Street Press's new database, L. A. Theatre Works, a collection of audio plays. L. A. Theatre Works has a Mellon Foundation grant to do deep semantic indexing to make these plays useful in interdisciplinary ways. Anyone interested in participating in the deep indexing should get in touch with Helene at [helenew@isomedia.com](mailto:helenew@isomedia.com) or call her at (206) 883-5111. Indexing will involve listening to the play a few times, indexing track by track and working with a dramaturg to discuss themes. The database will include 300-350 plays when completed; launch is set for this summer with 80-90 plays.

3. Budget constraints: How is it possible to continue cutting back on book purchases and/or canceling serials when all the "easy" options have been exhausted? How are people making choices with fewer and fewer dollars?

This topic, a contentious and popular one, elicited the suggestion of crying and depression as librarian responses. The plunge of the dollar has meant a hit in collections budgets for many libraries. How can one build a world-class literary collection or statewide resource without the funding to buy monographs? One librarian at a major research collection described a "festival of cuts" applied to the monograph budget while the serials budget was unscathed. Fundraising ideas: at the University of Illinois, the basketball team sells wristbands; proceeds go to the library: ([http://store.cstv.com/marketplace/store\\_contents.cfm?store\\_id=180&product\\_id=66615](http://store.cstv.com/marketplace/store_contents.cfm?store_id=180&product_id=66615)). Athletic departments are supportive at other institutions too, so it's wise to have development officers seek their support for the library. The University of Oregon set up a Coaches Fund; development started with the coach with the deepest pockets, got a generous donation, and then went to the other coaches. Athletic departments can benefit from their association with libraries. Some universities levy special library and/or technological fees; showing the students the benefits is a good way of maintaining their support. To a question about charging alums or community users who want to use licensed databases in the library, no one replied that their library was doing so. Alums at many libraries are asking for access to licensed databases. ProQuest can arrange for some databases for alumni association members, but they charge based on the number of members. At some institutions, much of the money raised by development is going to Special Collections. One library has created an e-book plate for donors of e-books. Setting up endowments to support the collections is crucial; ideally, these should have as few restrictions as possible.

Consortia can help mitigate budget cuts: look at what other members have when weeding or making purchase decisions. Members of OhioLINK cannot buy titles if several members have already ordered it. Such membership rules save space and collections money. Borrowing through OhioLINK is fast; users can borrow for 3 weeks and have up to 5 renewals, effectively a semester. Only the owning library can recall the book.

Illinois has I-Share, the result of Hugh Atkinson's "one state with many locations" idea of libraries. San Diego Libraries have The Circuit, a consortium of public and private libraries whose members include academic and public libraries. Link Plus is a consortium of 31 public and university libraries in California and Nevada. Members may borrow books even if they own the titles. Users have a lot of flexibility; they can order a title at one library, pick it up at another, and return at a third.

One problem with relying on interlibrary loan is that faculty want a title longer than 2 or 3 weeks. Some faculty refuse to return loans on time so that librarians must warn them against "becoming an anecdote" of an uncooperative patron. Librarians need to do user education with faculty;

talking to new faculty is especially important. The carrot and stick approach is useful: the carrot is getting to borrow books not found at the home library, the stick is a \$150 charge if the book is not returned. Some universities allow their library interlibrary loan department to block non-cooperative users, even faculty, from borrowing any books at all, even from the home institution. Michigan State's literature librarian copes with budget shortfalls by buying almost no fiction and accepts little as gifts, instead sending these titles to be sold, a nice segue into our next topic.

4. Gift Collections: How are gifts handled at different institutions? Do people spend a lot of time selecting gifts for their collections? Can gifts be a viable supplement to the ever-decreasing monographic budget?

The University of Washington has staff dedicated to handling gifts. Last year 53,000 items were donated and 21,000 were added to the collection. One trend is an increase in international donations by people using the library's catalog from other countries. Librarians review the donations and select which items should go into the collection. Libraries have various ways to handle gifts. Problems arise when a would-be donor, often a retiring professor, wants to "gift" the library with his/her collection. Often the titles are duplicates, paperbacks, well-used, or older editions, all of which make the gift less than desirable. Some faculty retirees may have collections of unusual materials; the UC San Diego received Quincy Troop's collection when he retired, and it was a "small press bonanza." Some donors want the library to appraise their collections; doing so would create a conflict of interest. Communicating with donors gives librarians an opportunity to exercise their diplomatic skills. One tactic is to ask for a list of titles the donor wishes to give; checking a list is easier than digging through boxes.

To assist potential donors and library staff, the library should have a widely available and detailed policy for gifts. Many libraries maintain lists of professional appraisers for donors to contact. The cost of such an appraisal is deductible. Donors need to be alerted that gifts are accepted with the understanding that they are transferring ownership of the gift so that the library becomes the owner of the material and may add to the collection, sent to other institutions or sold.

On the topic of whether librarians solicit faculty for review copies or copies of their own publications, discussion showed that practice varies from library to library. Some libraries get review copies from journal editors at their local campus. One gets copies from the local NPR station. Libraries that maintain special faculty collections may solicit copies from faculty for that collection.

Disposing of unwanted gifts: one library sells on eBay, another uses Better World Books, which donates back a percentage of the selling price (<http://www.betterworldbooks.com/>).

5. Selections Tools: How are people making selections in a technology-driven world? Has the process changed? Is it easier or more time-consuming?

Many librarians use vendor-produced notification. Many do not buy British publications when the price is listed in pounds because of the expense; instead, they wait for U.S. distribution. Some libraries have dispensed with paper slips and rely on the vendor database. YBP and Blackwell databases allow librarians to create folders to store titles. Some librarians find the YBP core lists useful selection tools. One librarian mentioned YBP's Academic Essentials as being helpful in making selections (<http://www.ybp.com/acad/EssentialsCover.htm>). The nature of academic research is interdisciplinary, and paper slips often go only to one selector. Exploring new books through the vendor's database allows a selector to range through a variety of call numbers outside his/her normal range. Other selection tools:

- *New York Times Book Review* (free online but registration required): <http://www.nytimes.com/pages/books/review/index.html>

- *Bookforum* <http://www.bookforum.com/>
- *New York Review of Books* <http://www.nybooks.com/> even though it's not the most current resource
- *New Yorker*
- *Guardian* <http://books.guardian.co.uk/>
- *Observer*
- *TLS*
- Small Press Distribution <http://www.spdbooks.org/>
- online publisher catalogs, especially from small presses

Some librarians have staff and/or student help to do assist in developing the collection; others do not. On the topic of training students, one librarian instructs the students to check broadly because the interests of the English department are interdisciplinary. Some librarians wait a while before checking the TLS or NYTBR to see if their vendor will send the books.

E-Books present certain difficulties because of making them available through interlibrary loan. Some vendors will allow lending; others do not. Additional considerations include printing and downloading restrictions. Often students object to reading books online or to the restrictions. The University of Southern California selector tends to use e-books as a copy 2. We may be misjudging the online abilities of Generation Y since many of them demand print books. E-book reference books are widely popular, but the technology presents certain challenges since vendors may take away older editions even though librarians find that material essential for reference. Librarians worry that students miss context when they use e-books; the conceptual piece of knowledge is lost when they view only a snippet or few paragraphs and they may not catch the entire argument. Faculty and librarians conversation is important to discern faculty standards for student research.

6. End of the Department: How are liaisons dealing with the interdisciplinary nature of English/literature departments? What effect does this change in focus have on collection development decisions/procedures and instructional services?

Interdisciplinarity is the direction of university research with much cross-hiring being done. Some universities have done away with departments and instead group by learning clusters or centers. Libraries need to consider having interdisciplinary or general funds to pay for materials to support research. Librarians need to gather evidence of how much such a fund is needed. Freud and Lacan are often not bought by psychology but are used in other fields. One library has collaborative funds (arts and humanities, social studies, etc.); such a structure may be cumbersome to use but necessary. Some departments resist the trend. Librarians need to pay attention to class descriptions, MLA session descriptions, conference proposals, book review sources from other areas, lectures.

Discussion on leisure reading collections and plagiarized monographs was postponed for the next meeting in Anaheim.