The Charleston Conference: Hot Topics

This year’s Charleston Conference welcomed over 650 attendees, representing libraries, publishing houses, and vendor institutions from across the U.S. and internationally. Discussions were wide ranging and lively, and a number of themes emerged:

- **We’re in it together.** Old animosities often expressed at the Charleston Conference were missing this year. Vendors, libraries and publishers seem to be recognizing the need to work together to serve users, in part for fear that if we fail to do so, the Net will do it in our place.

- **E-books have arrived.** Dominating the conference with no less than three separate sessions, e-books have clearly arrived, though there were many definitions of an e-book: a product, a database, a negotiating right? End users are content, though, as many speakers confirmed that library users are happiest when everything is electronic, full-text, and delivered to the desktop. At least one publisher expressed optimism, saying that e-books are “bringing back the monograph.”

- **Electronic formats are not cheaper.** Both libraries and publishers agreed on the simple fact that electronic versions have not saved money. In fact, publishers seem surprised (and dismayed) at the escalating costs of e-publication. Most were prepared for conversion and other initial costs, but weren’t prepared for the ongoing costs of support, both in personnel and equipment. Library sponsored e-publishing experiments, such as SPARC, so far are adding to costs as they introduce new journals while failing to reduce expenditures for existing journals which cannot yet be cancelled.

- **Consolidation must continue.** In recognition of the above, there is a recognition that consolidation will and must continue, particularly on the vendor and publisher sides, in order to gain economies of scale. John Secor (Yankee Book), in particular, called for a new approach to pricing in which libraries recognize the true cost of vendor services and share in them. John announced that he will open a series of discussions this coming year with library customers, looking for an acceptable means to move to a “restructuring of the library book vendor.”

Libraries on the Move

The Boston Public Library will receive $15 million in flood funds to help improve the main library and replace materials lost in a 1998 flood. According to BPL President Bernard Margolis, planned improvements to the 104-year-old library will include more computers, air conditioning, and wiring for the Internet. *American Libraries*, October 1999.

The Canadian Foundation for Innovation will provide $20 million over three years to fund the Canadian National Site Licensing Project (CNSLP). The project is headed by the Canadian Association of Research Libraries (CARL) which will negotiate national site licenses with journal publishers and vendors for electronic versions of scholarly journals on behalf of 64 Canadian universities. The project will be administered by the University of Ottawa. *ARL Bi-monthly Report*, August 1999.

A 33% increase in the Oregon State Library's budget for children's reading programs was signed by the governor in late August. The legislation had been unanimously approved by both the Oregon House and Senate in July and boosts funding to local libraries for “Ready to Read” grants from $.75 to $1 per child over the next two years. The total budget for the program is now over $1,400,000. First grants are expected to be distributed by the end of this year. *American Libraries*, October 1999.

The New York State Library received a $7.7 million grant from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation to provide computers, Internet access, and technical training for public libraries across the state. Funds are targeted to libraries serving low-income communities in New York State. Separately, Microsoft Corporation will donate $5 million worth of software to libraries receiving the grants. *PRNewswire*, October 20, 1999.

Mergers and Acquisitions: Advice from One Librarian

Nancy Stanley, Head of Acquisitions for Pennsylvania State University Libraries, offered the following advice to companies who are acquiring others when dealing with library customers:

1. **Send a survey**—ask customers about current service levels.
2. **Pay attention** to current customer service relationships — get to know the “people to people” connections which exist and are working well.
3. If possible, **provide financial statements** and reassurance to library customers.

Stanley counseled acquirers to remember that “to your customers, fewer companies = fewer choices.” Most libraries will take a “wait and see” attitude and will watch “price/cost” changes as indicative of the approach of the new owner.

Summarized from a presentation as part of the “Mergers” panel at this year’s Charleston Conference, November 4-6, 1999.
Short Takes

"Failing gracefully" counts in the Web environment, according to Cormac Foster, an analyst with Jupiter Communications in New York. Amazon.com is cited as a good example in this category, flashing messages of apology and sending e-mail to customers when its site is running again after a system or network failure. Discounts of $5 to $10 have also become popular among retail Web sites when trying to apologize to customers. *Denver Post*, November 30, 1999.

AOL and Hewlett Packard have announced plans to develop a service to simplify the printing of Web pages and other Internet information. The new service will allow users to format Web pages for printing according to individual preferences. *Wall Street Journal*, November 30, 1999.

Communication and information sharing are among the most valuable benefits of membership in a library consortium, according to a recent analysis of one such group in Rhode Island conducted by Eric Shoaf, head of the Preservation Department at Brown University Library. *Library Administration & Management*, v.13, no.4, Fall 1999.

People tend to visit their favorite Web sites rather than exploring, according to Alexa Internet, a Web archiving company. 70% of Web traffic is concentrated on fewer than 4,500 sites. *U.S. News & World Report*, November 15, 1999.

Mark Your Calendars: Charleston Advisor PLA Preconference

If you missed last month's *Charleston Advisor* Practical Preconference on "Evaluating, Selecting and Acquiring Electronic Resources," held in conjunction with the Charleston Conference, don't despair! A second offering of this popular session is already scheduled to coincide with the upcoming Public Library Association national meeting.

Details: March 29, 2000, 8:30 a.m. – 1:00 p.m., Adams Mark Hotel, Charlotte (3 blocks from the Convention Center).

Join us for the public library perspective on this important topic. Register via e-mail to rlenzini@charlestonco.com. Or call 303-282-9706 for more details. Cost is $80 for PLA members; $95 for others.

By the Numbers

4 million... of AOL's 19 million subscribers made online purchases during Thanksgiving week, triple the number from one year ago. Of note, 600,000 were first-time online buyers. *Wall Street Journal*, November 30, 1999.

15% discounts... or more, are needed to get the attention of the California State University Chancellor's Office, according to Evan Reader, who coordinates cooperative purchasing for the CSU. Reader has achieved savings of over 25% on the electronic products currently purchased. His office takes a 5% fee for administrative costs. *Charleston Preconference on "Evaluating, Selecting and Purchasing Electronic Products,"* November 3, 1999.


$500,000... has been awarded to the Association of American University Presses (AAUP) by the Andrew Mellon Foundation to examine the entire system of scholarly communications. Chief investigator for the program is Colin Day, director of the University of Michigan Press. *Publishers Weekly*, September 27, 1999.

67%... of 1997 high school graduates are now enrolled in college, vs. 45% of those in 1960. Total college enrollment for 2005 is projected to be 15,516,000. *USA Today*, November 8, 1999.

Online Book Ordering in Libraries

A recent *Library Journal* review of book vendors and their online ordering systems is a "don't miss" for TCR readers. Anne Heller, Manager of Technical Services at Tacoma Public Library and Elizabeth Lorenzen, Acquisitions Librarian at Indiana State University, profile and review the following vendor systems:

- Ingram's iPage
- B&T's TitleSource II
- Brodart's Bibz.com
- Blackwell's Collection Manager
- Yankee Book Peddler's GOBI
- Midwest Library Service's Interacq
- Emery-Pratt

In addition, amazon.com and barnesandnoble.com are both reviewed. Each profile includes a database description, notes on searching capabilities, critical reviews and suggestions for improvements.

The authors state that Ingram's iPage and B&T's TitleSource II are the most heavily used Web-based ordering systems in public libraries. Executives from the companies profiled are also interviewed in the article. Many discuss the complexities and costs associated with the new Web-based systems and conclude that the return on investment is not yet significant.

The President of Emery-Pratt poses the following comment and question, which echoes the statements made by John Secor of Yankee Book at the Charleston Conference (see Hot Topics on page 1 of this issue): “Today we see libraries sending orders to electronic ‘bookstores’ that operate at a huge loss while providing few, if any, library services. It raises questions about the viability of those services. Are they still important?”

Excerpted with permission from *Library Journal*, September 1, 1999.
Case Study Shows the Power of Publicity for Capital Campaigns

A recent report to public relations professionals describes an award-winning publicity campaign celebrating the completion of the restoration of the Rose Main Reading Room at the New York Public Library, a project funded by the Rose family's $15-million gift. The architectural firm, Davis Brody Bond, worked hand in hand with the Library's publicity staff to tell a story that went beyond architecture. Their aim was to seize national attention in support of the library's $500 million capital campaign, but the story ended up appealing to larger themes, including:

- A passion for books and reading.
- Respect for historical spaces.
- The importance of free, democratic access to information.

The effort began with an analysis of a series of 1997 studies of public perceptions of the Library, based on 4,000 questionnaires distributed to Library users and on three focus groups. The 1997 series revealed that the Library was seen as "a museum that serves professionals, not people." Further research revealed other misconceptions, specifically that the Library was government-supported and that individuals "provide no essential income."

Based on the research findings, the Library's public relations office resolved to turn the restoration into a national news story. Using a budget of only $17,000, the campaign was able to place more than 350 stories, including features in The New York Times, The New Yorker, and Architectural Digest. In addition, the project was featured on 60 Minutes, Martha Stewart Living, CNN, and National Public Radio's All Things Considered.

Library usage rose as a result of the publicity. Among the results: attendance at library exhibitions rose 38% after opening day; tour attendance rose by 200%; library shop sales rose 23% and use of the Library’s general research division rose by 35%. In addition, the volume of donations of $40 or more grew 1.5 times the pre-opening rate and the publicity led to other major gifts to the Library, including two private donations for $15 million, and more than $25 million from corporate and foundation sources.


ARL/OCLC Keystone Principles

On September 24-25 1999, 80 academic library leaders gathered in Keystone, Colorado, for the first ARL/OCLC Strategic Issues Forum for Academic Library Directors. Discussions were centered around future roles and contributions of academic libraries, and led to the creation of a set of principles to guide future joint actions among the group.

**Principle One:** Access to Information as a Public Good.
Scholarly and government information is a "public good" and must be available free of marketing bias, commercial motives, and cost to the individual user.

**Principle Two:** Need for Bias-free Systems and for Libraries to Create These New Systems.
Libraries are responsible for creating innovative information systems for the dissemination and preservation of information and new knowledge regardless of format.

**Principle Three:** Affirm the Idea of the Library as a Nexus for Learning and the Sharing of Knowledge
The academic library is the intellectual commons for the community where people and ideas interact in both the real and virtual environments to expand learning and facilitate the creation of new knowledge.

A list of "Action Items" follows each principle. Among those of particular interest to TCR readers are the group's determination to challenge unfair licensing and copyright restrictions aggressively, to establish buying consortia, to create a more competitive information environment in order to reduce the cost of commercial information, and to direct resources from traditional library budgets for the purposes of creating a digital publishing capability and new access systems.

The complete report is available at [www.arl.org/training/keystone.html](http://www.arl.org/training/keystone.html).

Latest E-Rate Commitments

E-Rate ("education rate") funding is designed to subsidize the costs of expanding Internet connections to more classrooms and libraries in the U.S. Grants have been awarded over the past two years by the Schools and Libraries Division (SLD) of the Universal Service Administration. Libraries have scrambled to get a piece of this action.

In the eighth and latest funding wave, the SLD issued commitments amounting to more than $105 million. Commitments for the second year of the program currently total $584 million. 1,476 Wave Eight E-rate funding commitment letters have been distributed. The total of Year Two letters is 16,081.

Separately, the American Library Association has recently urged libraries to continue applying for the E-rate discounts, even though pending Congressional bills would require Internet filters as a condition of receiving funds.


Readers React to E-Books

How do students react to e-books? According to Nancy Gibbs, Head of Acquisitions at North Carolina State University Libraries, "they want more titles." A recent survey of students who had used e-books provided by the Library produced the following reactions:

- Readers liked the "Softbook" system for serious works but preferred "Rocketbook" for fiction.
- Undergraduate students loved the ability to increase font sizes and to read in low light. They also loved the ability to look up words in the dictionary on the same device.
- Graduate students and scholars felt the technology was best applied to reference and out of print books.

All agreed that a "user friendly interface" was most important. On a purely physical note, after much experimentation, the Library has decided to check-out e-books in library book bags, so that instructions for use and other peripheral devices (such as power supplies) can be kept together with the e-book reader. Specific titles have been pre-loaded on each reader.

Summarized from a presentation at this year's Charleston Conference, November 4-6, 1999. Watch for complete coverage of this and other sessions in Against the Grain's December 1999 - January 2000 issue.
Buyers Talk
Over 140 literary luminaries converged in Austin Nov. 5-7 for the fourth annual Texas Book Festival. Laura Bush, wife of Governor George W. Bush, served as the event's Honorary Chairman. The Texas Book Festival is a fundraiser for Texas public libraries, and, since 1996, has awarded over $585,000 to 230 Texas public libraries. PRNewswire, October 19, 1999.
A research team from the University of Michigan is now analyzing data gathered from 12 participating institutions over the past 18 months from the PEAK project (Pricing Electronic Access to Knowledge). PEAK was a cooperative effort between Elsevier Science and the university to explore issues of pricing and to examine e-journal product models. Results are expected to be available by Winter 2000. LJ, November 1, 1999.

Don’t Miss This!
Information Today has announced the launch of NewsLink, a free monthly e-newsletter for library and information professionals. Issues will include "Newsbreaks," covering the latest industry happenings, "Conference Connections," the "Bookshelf," and links to featured articles from the latest editions of Information Today, Inc. publications. To subscribe, send a blank e-mail to join-infotoday@lists.infotoday.com.

Who Selects Electronic Resources
Results from a recent survey on the topic of "Selecting and Processing Electronic Resources," compiled by Rob Withers, Electronic Information Services Librarian at Miami University Libraries in Oxford, Ohio, indicate the following:

Who makes the selection decision?
Collection Development Librarians 89%
Reference Librarians 72%
Electronic Resources Librarians 44%
Systems Librarians 16%
Other positions 17%

How often do committees review the selection decision?
University Libraries 72%
Community College Libraries 33%
College Libraries 17%

What factors cause decisions to be reviewed?
Cost 75%
Compatibility with library technology 62%
Cross-disciplinary coverage 55%
Consortial purchases 58%

Of the libraries responding to the survey, 70% had funds specifically devoted to electronic products. Be sure to read the full report on this survey in the December 1999 - January 2000 issue of Against the Grain, or watch for more excerpts in upcoming issues of TCR.

Model E-Journal Licenses Free on the Web
Five leading journal subscription agencies have announced the development of a suite of generic standard licenses for electronic journals. The companies, Blackwell, Dawson, EBSCO, Harrassowitz and Swets, worked with John Cox, of John Cox Associates (John.E.Cox@btinternet.com), an international publishing consultant specializing in licensing and content management. The licenses are now available on the Web at www.licensingmodels.com.
Four model licenses have been developed: for single academic institutions, for academic consortia, for public libraries, and for corporate, government and other research libraries. The licenses are international in application and are based on consultation with librarians, publishers and subscription agents.

Most Popular Kids’ Sites
The Chicago Public Library reports the Internet sites most frequently visited by children using the library are:

- World Wide Federation of Wrestling
- Disney.com
- Nickelodeon
- PBS
- Pokemon
- Fox Kids
- Terra Server (a geography website)
- Macromedia games for kids
- Lycos teen chat
- Song lyrics websites

The library’s own website is also listed. To visit CPL’s website, logon to: www.chipublib.org. Chicago Public Library News Release, September 21, 1999.

Did You Know?

Thanks to Charleston Vendor Showcase Exhibitors
Many thanks to the 34 companies who joined us at this year's First Annual Charleston Advisor Vendor Showcase, which was held November 3, 1999, at the Lightsey Conference Center on the College of Charleston campus. We hope to see everyone back again in 2000!

Coming Next Issue
— Measuring the Cost Effectiveness of Journals
— ALA Midwinter Highlights
— Reading Habits of Teens
— Public Library Ratings