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Editorial

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Happy New Year – another volume year and this makes our seventh year as co-editors as we inaugurate Volume 23! It remains fun for us and we thank our contributing editors for staying with us and being a part of this forum on applications in library technologies. We know readers have competing options of where to go for their information but we try and keep LHTN relevant and timely.

The first issue of each volume year calls us to pause and reflect considering what was important in the last year and then to speculate as to what is likely to emerge in the coming year. 2005 seriously affected libraries. Exactly a year ago as we go to press, the tsunami hit the southern hemisphere damaging much of Sri Lanka and Thailand. Hurricane Katrina hit the US Gulf region leveling and damaging many libraries in four states. The earthquake and flooding in Pakistan later in the year was again devastating. Human life was lost, routines and experiences forever changed, favorite haunts were destroyed and technology allowed us to connect with those in need fast and share resources however best we could. Libraries are being rebuilt in all those affected areas but some collections can not be replaced and good things never happen as fast as those that dampen the spirits and cause difficulties.

It has also been the year of Google. It was about a year ago when Google announced plans to digitally scan books in the public domain from five major research libraries and make them searchable over the web. Since that ambitious announcement subsequent other initiatives have been announced by Yahoo!, the European Union, Amazon.com and Microsoft each expecting to revolutionize information delivery in some unique way. It is also the year of the "MySpace Generation" and creating new products and services for a generation of users who were born in an online era – as BusinessWeek says on a recent cover, "They live online, they buy online" and what this means for libraries is that they expect to find everything online and communicate for help online. How this will change the role of libraries and librarians remains to be seen, but the potential to access information has never been so great. The fiscal concerns hitting libraries is keenly felt as costs for materials continue to soar, telecommunication, postal rates and taxes go one direction and hiring freezes are more common when new staff is needed than one remembers.

But still technology is dictating new directions in libraries around the globe. Revitalizing the library as place, adding new software and integrating mixed media, engaging in more instruction about how to use technology for learning and teaching, improving literacy, spatial analysis and critical thinking skills, confirms that libraries are vital organizations in all communities and workplaces.

In this issue, you will learn from conference reports more about technology in educational enterprises as reported from ASIST and Educause; celebrate a quarter of a century of the bonding relationship between librarians, publishers, information providers, aggregators, vendors and agents as reflections of the Charleston conference had a big birthday party; see what is causing the blurring of grey literature as open access begs for attention at the Seventh

International Conference on Grey Literature took place in France; and how the Coalition of Networked Information speeds ahead with its purposeful agenda. Our colleagues in Nigeria share another experience in ICT training and their ambitions in how to better compete in a global marketplace. A cross purpose library/aquarium/museum is the site of our "Around the World" column to a newly birthed library in the Los Angeles Public Library System at a community aquarium in San Pedro, California. Think of being a librarian there and read about the experiences of a librarian on her first year on the job there. There are many new books released on library technology applications and a fascinating New & Noteworthy column telling all that is happening in the information industry – not just gossip, important details of programs and products entering our workplaces!

Yes, keep reading and telling us what you like and prefer in LHTN. If you know someone who is a real mover and shaker in library technology circles, let us know, we want to conduct an interview with them, find out what is pushing their buttons. We are happiest when our readers gain new insights and we look forward to another volume full of exciting news and content.

With best wishes for 2006 and we look forward to seeing you at conferences.

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