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IATUL 2002

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Julia Gelfand

The annual meeting of the International Association of Technological University Libraries (IATUL) took place in Kansas City, Missouri, 2-6 June, 2002 and was hosted by the Linda Hall Library (www.lhl.mo.us/) and the University of Missouri, Kansas City (www.umkc.edu/library/). The theme of the conference was "Partnerships, Consortia, & 21st Century Library Services," and about 125 persons attended from nearly 30 countries. In the 30 years of IATUL's history, this was the third time the group has met in North America, when the last time was in 1996. If one works with engineering and technology resources or users of those collections and thinks more globally than locally, this was the conference for you to be at this year.

This year there were several invited keynote speakers and several tracks of concurrent papers and poster sessions. The first keynote session was on scholarly communication issues in a global context, "Libraries, publishers and publishers." The first speaker was Ken Frazier, University Librarian at the University of Wisconsin, and known for his strong beliefs that change is needed within the library community on pricing limits to extravagant journal costs, and that most importantly, libraries should be empowered to make decisions about the content they acquire. His message to IATUL was that Wisconsin had trimmed a large number of high-priced commercial journals and the staff is trying to create a more affordable method of access based on document delivery options and responding to case in need instead of perpetual shelf-life or pricey licensing. Importantly, the perception that undergraduates are "choking on excessive use of information," but that engineering students appeared to be open to new models of collection development and information delivery. By promoting portals technology such as what Fretwell Downing is now offering a pilot group of academic libraries with the creation of institutional digital repositories there are many new ways that scholarly communication can be transformed. Use data collected at Wisconsin Engineering Library indicated that there was not universal interest in all content offered by all packages that consortia are considering and thus the campus has rejected committing to all such offers, but instead relies upon a more independent course of action that supports a more rationale approach to information access.

Karen Hunter, Executive Vice-President of Elsevier Science addressed the group with a clever presentation, "Chicken Little was wrong." She covered four major themes that described Elsevier's current activities:

1. continued innovation with the premise that commercial publishers were just at the start of even more heavily investing in innovation to pave the future;
2. the next initiatives will be in books and the Elsevier experience of absorbing a large book publisher such as Harcourt certainly points in this direction and suggests that with the medical interests of Harcourt Health Sciences, providing appropriate information content for PDAs and other devices is coming along soon;

3. digital archiving – this is "taken very seriously"; and
4. introducing new business models for commercial publishing directions and for libraries to choose from when they decide how to provide information to their readers.

Fred Friend, Director of Scholarly Communication at University College London, informed the audience of the efforts underway to advance SPARC Europe and the differences between the two SPARC entities. The Association of Research Libraries' (ARL) Scholarly Publishing and Academic Resources Coalition (SPARC) has certainly gone global. The library and publishing communities in Europe are embracing the "create change" concept that will introduce a more competitive and library-friendly platform for the scholarly publishing marketplace in Europe and position librarians to lead that cause. Friend also placed in a larger context the role of consortia, e-print services, the Open Archives Initiatives, the Public Library of Science and the Budapest Open Access Initiative. For additional information, one should visit www.sparceurope.org and <http://www.arl.org/sparc/home/index.asp?page=0>

The final speaker in this session was Heather Joseph, from BioOne (<http://www.bioone.org/bioone/>). She shared the evolution of that project into its successful collaborative publishing venture that benefits both libraries and society publishers by providing content in the life sciences in an economic and strategic model that perhaps can be replicated in different disciplines.

The second day's keynote sessions began with a joint session that focused on "International models for library service." Adrian Alexander, Executive Director of the Great Western Library Consortium shared the podium with Paul Ghermann, University Librarian at Vanderbilt. They explored different approaches to collaboration and how new models of cooperation are being practiced in virtual and physical storage, collection development, digital archives and virtual reference services.

Susan Ardis from the University of Texas Science Libraries requested partners to expand her institution's Web-based multimedia tutorials in basic science reference tools in different libraries. Proven to be effective for the many international students who enroll in science and engineering programs and in distance education applications, currently there have been Spanish and Japanese editions. She hopes that the program will grow with Korean, Arabic and Chinese versions as new institutional partners join the efforts. One can visit the project at www.lib.utexas.edu/engin

From the Council of Australian Universities, Executive Director Diane Costello shared what the priorities of her member libraries were for cooperation, sharing resources and digital depositories, such as the Australian Digital Theses program. Hazel Woodward, University Librarian and Director of the Cranfield University Press and Libraries shared numerous collaborative projects her library is currently involved in. These include: the European Initiative on Libraries and Information in Aerospace; the Research Discovery Network that has data provided by five hubs and is cross-disciplinary reflecting health, engineering, humanities, the physical sciences, social sciences, business and law, with new portals being

added soon for education and teaching content; and Managing Access to Grey Literature (MAGIC) with many diverse partners involved.

The final day of keynote speakers was first a medley of international resource coordination from national library leaders. Winston Tabb from the Library of Congress led the lineup; and Yoshitaka Ikuhara from the National Diet Library in Tokyo was followed by Eleanore Frierson, Acting Director of the US National Agricultural Library, and Naomi Krym from Canada's CISTI did the final honors as she described the global document delivery program for which her institution is so well known. The issues covered in this session were more focused on services and resource sharing than on technology and infrastructure. Obviously technology is what drives many of these new programs such as virtual reference, large scale digital projects, preservation efforts, etc.

The final session could not have been predicted to be more successful. The triad of speakers and the dynamic between them captivated the entire audience and discussion could have extended for hours. Clifford Lynch returned to address IATUL in his role as executive director of the Coalition of Networked Information (CNI). He offered a glimpse of what the next decade may present on the technology horizon for information production and distribution, by qualifying his premise as being heavily science/technology driven or biased towards those disciplines. With a call for better "data stewardship," Lynch suggested that more retrospective publishing will be presented and there will be more of a trend of the scholarly managing their own outputs rather than depending on commercial publishers. The new trends libraries will debut are likely to have a more visible service presence and be both a collaboratory environment and a social activities hub. There will be stronger partners in teaching as distance education grows and with greater blurring between scholarly practice and publishing. Storage will become even cheaper and more portable, the pervasive wireless will continue to develop. According to Lynch, "the Internet is a nasty place," thus the integrity of digital data will be challenged. With this, he concludes that libraries will be asked to step up to the plate and become more critical partners to achieve the service models and to maintain the collections they want.

James Michalko, Executive Director of the Research Libraries Group (RLG) emphasized the human element of research and expectations and introduced Howard Bloom, in a tape of how one scholar expects new knowledge to be created with accessibility the key – everything online is his goal.

Finally, Gary Houk from OCLC addressed the transformation process of knowledge management. Everyone present was forced to live in the future by a few years and imagine what the coming years will offer and what the concept of a digital library will mean then. "Technology is the enabler," says Houk and the relationship of library catalogs to the Web is a combination of transformation and reformation. We will probably see more third party cataloging; that the OPAC is used for both inventory control and discovery; and we will ask whether complete bibliographic description is necessary or if metadata harvested by different sources will be sufficient to describe content. Those are the issues Houk sees playing out in coming years as we migrate from local place to more digital space. He

concludes with encouraging everyone to read *Content Critical: Gaining Competitive Advantage through High-quality Web Content* (McGovern and Norton, 2002).

Themes of the concurrent sessions varied widely but clearly examined methods of how libraries are engaged in incredibly innovative and thoughtful collaborations with a variety of partners. Some relationships were consortia-centered; others were with publishers, agencies, other libraries in different parts of the globe, etc. Some experiences involved staff, some emphasized collections and resources. We learned about measurement and quality control, assessment and aggregation; interdisciplinarity and special collections, site licensing, new instrumentation, Web site design and service parameters. Virtually, no library activity was amiss in this smorgasbord of papers and poster sessions. The scales of operation equally varied and the customs and practices of the user communities were probably more homogenous than we could have expected.

Among the most interesting papers, this attendant heard, was one from Helsinki University of Technology. It explored "the library in your pocket" concept of how cell phones are so central to many people and how this library has developed a short message service or SMS of digital mobile networks to compliment other Web-based services. Other papers that attracted significant audiences included: one, from the Illinois Institute of Technology where it was shared how they fast-tracked a new Web presence and distributed the work among the staff once the design was done without a formal Webmaster coordinating the effort, with the clever name, "We are all Webmasters." Another paper from the University of New Mexico described the ISTE project with outreach to libraries in South and Central America with plans to expand to the Caribbean. Many digital initiatives have been successfully deployed with ISTE.

IATUL is a fully inclusive conference that runs for four days including a one-day field trip to area libraries. The choice was to join a tour to either the Harry Truman Presidential Library in nearby Independence, Missouri or the Kansas State University Library in Manhattan, Kansas, both about 90 minutes outside of Kansas City. I chose to take the latter tour and invite you to visit the KSU libraries on a virtual tour at www.lib.ksu.edu where one can see two new library facilities, the Fiedler Engineering Library and the Hale University Library. The full-day tour introduced the research and instructional programs of the School of Engineering and library services and was capped by a stop to see buffalo at the Konza Prairie Research site run by the KSU division of biology.

The social aspects of IATUL are nearly as important as the academic reasons to attend. Local hosts really introduce all attendees to different local cultural opportunities. There were receptions at and tours to the new Stowers Institute for Medical Research (<http://www.stowers-institute.org/>); the American Jazz Museum (<http://www.americanjazzmuseum.com/MuseumPageOne.asp>); the Negro Leagues Baseball Museum (<http://www.nlbm.com/intro.html>); the Nelson Atkins Museum of Art where the *Eternal Egypt* selective exhibition from the British Museum was on loan and to a rodeo where a good time Bar-B-Q was held. The final event of the conference was a grand banquet at the Linda Hall Library.

IATUL 2003 will be held at the Middle East Technical University, Ankara, Turkey, 2-5 June, 2003. Watch the IATUL homepage at www.iatul.org for future announcements.

Reference McGovern, G. and Norton, R. (2002), *Content Critical: Gaining Competitive Advantage through High-quality Web Content*, Prentice-Hall, Englewood Cliffs, NJ.

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