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Reviews of Articles

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Reviews of Articles

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Sara Mudd and Andy Havens, "Library Cooperation in the 21st Century: Combining Forces to Achieve More" *NextSpace*, No. 12 (June 2009): 4-9.

While the challenges facing libraries may at times be daunting, such challenges can lead to cooperative solutions. A case in point, "The Farmington Plan," devised in the United States under the shadow of shortages and rationing during World War II, brought about a remarkable transformation in libraries. Competitive postures were replaced by collective action resulting in greatly expanded collections of international materials and enhanced access to resources. Based on a long tradition of sharing, libraries in the 21st century continue to be well positioned to model not just library cooperation but also cooperation needed in the community at large. Challenges, however, need to be overcome.

Diverse geographic location, once a prohibitive factor in effective collaboration, has become generally irrelevant with today's web-based technology and wide scale digitization of materials. While the communication tools have overcome the physical barriers, care still needs to be given to building and maintaining the relationships needed for collaboration across the physical boundaries.

Cultural gaps between community groups represent a stronger challenge to collaboration, especially where differences in values, communication, traditions and so forth, largely define a group's identity. Libraries that serve both a school constituency and the general public, for instance, realize all too well the challenges of bridging the cultural gaps between these two very different types of users. Libraries that serve disparate community groups have been slow to de-

velop, but such dual purpose libraries are becoming more common. Another cultural gap may be found between libraries and for-profit agencies. Partnerships that develop between these entities often require both groups in order to broaden their perspectives on the nature of their customers, their potential partners, and the ultimate purpose of libraries.

On the practical level, the organizational structure and processes of the library itself may impede collaboration especially where partnerships affect the internal set-up and workings of a library. These changes may present formidable challenges that involve workflow modification, implementation of new technology and intensive training. Realistically acknowledging such difficulties helps libraries meet these challenges and increases the probability of success.

Financial pressures may be regarded as the most formidable of all challenges facing libraries today. Addressing them collaboratively makes increasing sense. As some believe, "cooperation conquers cost." Cooperation within the library community is common, but cooperative cost saving efforts by libraries could also engage other entities from the business world or from the community at large, especially those organizations providing similar educational, informational and community development services.

See www.oclc.org/nextspace for a copy of the article.

Diane J. Graves, "The Other Sustainability Problem" *Educause Review: Why IT Matters to Higher Education*, Vol. 44, no. 2 (March/April 2009): 72-73.

Graves argues for a new, or a renewed, library-IT collaboration in order to address the crisis emerging in scholarly communication. The crisis is one of sustainability due to the sometimes extremely high price of scholarly books and journals (the journal, *Brain Research*, reportedly costs \$22,940 per year). With high costs and dwindling library budgets, the system of traditional scholarly communication is in peril.

New models of scholarly communication are being explored and some actually are taking hold. Institutional repositories (IR) have recently emerged that provide open access to research documents for a scholarly community and/or the general public. IRs also meet the requirement of some government agencies that publications resulting from research grants be made available free of charge to the public. On another front, university-based publishers, such as Rice University Press and the University of Southern California's Institute for the Future of the Book, have begun to move toward more online open access publishing and more publishing that incorporates various types of non-print media.

Along with the traditional library mission to identify, acquire, provide access to, and describe the resources that support an institution's teaching, learning, and research needs, a broader mission must be embraced—one that includes providing awareness and guidance for the teaching and research faculty on the changing landscape of scholarly communication. This expansion requires a new commitment to and development of collaborative operations among the library, IT departments, and other campus departments.

Martha M. Yee. "‘Wholly Visionary’: the American Library Association, the Library of Congress, and the Card Distribution Program," *eScholarship Repository*, University of California, <http://repositories.cdlib.org/postprints/3384/> (2009): 68-78.

By the turn of the twentieth century, economic, political and social factors had come into play that brought about a cooperative approach to cataloging, one that in effect led to the creation of a national bibliography for the United States. After a few unsuccessful attempts at creating a stock of catalog records that could be shared nationally, Melvil Dewey proposed in 1877 that Library of Congress be the centralized cataloging agency for the nation and that this "wholly visionary plan" be carried out using standardized cataloging rules. As these rules were being created, the British Library Association requested that a joint Anglo-American code be established. While this resulted in a four year delay in development of the code, by 1908 the newly published code represented widespread agreement on 166 of the 174 cataloging rules.

The creation of the codes came about through a significant degree of cooperation among libraries of the American Library Association, the British Library Association and the Library of Congress. Although some felt that the Library of Congress (LC) considered mainly its own interests in deciding on rules and practices, LC actually was expanding its mission to serve not only the Congress of the United States but to serve as a national library that provided key services to all types of libraries throughout the country. With cataloging rules established and the use of the List of Subject Headings for Dictionary Catalogs in place since 1895, LC, as one of its vital services, expanded its distribution of printed catalog cards.

As much as these developments were a collaborative effort, so too was the creation of the catalog cards itself. By 1902, the Department of Agriculture was asked to contribute catalog cards and by 1910, other depository libraries were asked to provide printed catalog records for materials not held by the Library of Congress.

In effect, then, the creation of this centralized cataloging agency and its tools was a

widespread collaborative effort that produced a national bibliography for the United States. There are a number of reasons for the success of the cataloging program, but the program also generated consternation among some librarians who believed that removing the activities of cataloging from the scope of duties of most librarians would result in a diminished knowledge of library collections and a reduced effectiveness.

With the rise to prominence of Google, Amazon.com, and other search engines of the Web, questions are raised as to the role of a standardized organization of information and mode of access. While the Internet may represent a threat to the creation and support of an informed citizenry (a fundamental mission of libraries in the past), the Internet also can be used to promote cooperative cataloging in more efficient ways, such as may be found in "Semantic Web" and in the uniform resource identifier. Using the web could also expand the scope of collaboration to non-librarians and metadata specialists who are willing to participate in entity identification and who agree to embrace standards for metadata. Yee suggests, "It remains to be seen whether we will use our new tools foolishly, to create a new 'dark ages' in which much of the cultural record is either lost or hidden from view, or wisely, to advance the welfare of humanity and create a world in which all of its people, regardless of socioeconomic level, enjoy and make use of humanity's entire cultural record." (76)