

Electronic Resources & Libraries Conference Report

I attended the annual ER&L conference (UCLA, Feb. 9-12, 2009) and participated in the following sessions:

Paper presented

Holistic Budgeting to Improve Electronic Resources and Services (with Mark A. Vargas)

To improve electronic collections and services, libraries need to take a proactive, holistic approach to budgets and collection development. Holistic collection development is a strategy that breaks down the various barriers inherent in conventional budgeting. These barriers segregate development funds and create inefficiencies that prevent acquisition of electronic resources which directly support the curricular, instructional and research priorities of the college or university. Libraries usually rely upon complex allocation formulas and structured budget accounts to make collection development purchasing decisions. Tradition also influences collection development practices which promote acquisition of materials by particular media formats. In this session, participants will see how one library transitioned from the formula-driven, format-oriented budget to a more effective holistic approach, greatly improving its electronic resources as a result.

Sessions attended

In Perpetuity: Institutional and Implementation Challenges with Electronic Resources Librarianship (Lisa Sibert, Julia Gelfand, University of California-Irvine)

The electronic resources librarian's role has quickly surpassed expectations as organizations experience exponential growing pains with electronic collections. The speakers discussed the infrastructure necessary for efficient electronic resources management, workflow successes and challenges, and areas in which they strive to improve the provision of seamless access to electronic resources.

Shelflessness as a Virtue: Preserving Serendipity in an Electronic Reference Collection (Lisa O'Hara, Lyle Ford, University of Manitoba)

The reference collection traditionally rewards serendipity by presenting key resources in a compact group. At the University of Manitoba Libraries, reference collection space is at a premium, and increasingly, electronic versions of reference materials are selected for purchase. However, space saving comes at a cost: patrons can't browse electronic reference materials across various online platforms and miss out on potential serendipitous discoveries. The presenters outlined the problem, examined online reference collections at ARL libraries, and offered possible solutions, including projects the University of Manitoba Libraries are undertaking to address the issue.

E-resource Statistics: What to Do When You Have No Money
(Mary Walker, Wichita State University)

Walker maintains that tracking statistics and cost per use is more important than ever as budgets continue to shrink. ERMS are great, but what if the library can't afford one? Walker demonstrated how spreadsheets can be a practical and economical solution to track e-resource statistics, cost per use, subscription costs, and associated product information.

Use of Electronic Resources in Research and Development in Pakistan: The Use of HEC-Provided Digital Library: A Case Study

(Maqsood Ahmad Shaheen, American Information Resource Center, Pakistan)

Maqsood Shanean reviewed a survey that collected data from a cross section of faculty, students, and researchers at three Pakistani universities, including the Quaid e-Azam University, Islamabad; the Fatima Women's University, Rawalpindi; and the International Islamic University, Islamabad.

I appreciate LIBRAS' support for my attendance at the ER&L conference. The conference provided me with invaluable contacts with colleagues at other academic libraries who are developing new methods for providing access to electronic resources.

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