

Expanding the Collection through Bibliographic Control of Institution Desk References

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According to legend, there is an ancient curse which says, "May you live in interesting times," and these certainly seem to be interesting times for libraries of all kinds: public, academic and special. This, of course, includes marine science libraries, whatever their sponsoring organization. With budgets held static by tight economic conditions, and materials costs, especially serials, soaring at higher-than-inflation rates, libraries are caught in a squeeze play as they try to meet their patrons' information needs. The squeeze is even worse in science libraries because the prices of science serials are among the fastest rising, and the number of science serials continues to increase exponentially. In addition, with the proliferation of computers, library automation, and international computer networking, librarians and patrons can now search the catalogs of libraries on the other side of the globe as easily as they can their own, thus becoming aware of a wealth of material to which they want immediate access.

The combination of shrinking ability to obtain everything for one's own collection "just in case" together with increased awareness of available resources elsewhere is pushing libraries to increased reliance on interlibrary loan and document delivery services to meet information needs "just-in-time." Via internet gateways, libraries are providing easy patron access to other library catalogs around the world as easily as choosing an item off a menu on the computer screen. Although one's own collection may be shrinking (or at least not growing as rapidly as it once did), this alleviates the problem somewhat by expanding the accessible collection and creating something called a "virtual library."

The term "virtual" is a computer science term meaning "appearing to be, rather than actually being" (Webster's, p.402). It is used in terms such as "virtual memory," which is computer memory managed in such a way as to appear to the user that there is a great deal more than there actually is (Webster's, p.403). Thus a virtual library is one which appears to the patron to be much larger than it actually is. This is similar to the concept of the "library without walls" where the functional library is perceived to extend beyond the walls of the physical library itself. It is in this way that the term "virtual library" is most often used. The library is not just what it owns, but also what it can provide access to (Gregor & Mandel). The ultimate goal is to bring all types of information resources to the patron, regardless of the location of either party (DeCandido & Rogers). This is one of the guiding ideas behind the creation in the United States of NREN, the National Research and Education Network, a nationwide

computer network which is still in the planning stages.

This is the usual concept of the "virtual library." To create it requires vast computer networks and sophisticated library automation software. This is also almost the only concept to be found in the published literature of library science. However, there is another type of virtual library which is smaller in size and requires much less sophistication. It extends the library's collection, but on a smaller scale, by reaching into the offices and laboratories of the parent organization. The library becomes contiguous, not with the world, but with its own organization, and for many libraries, this can be a significant increase in size. It is this concept of the "virtual library," one more easily implemented in an environment of tight budgets, which this paper will discuss.

In most organizations, the library is not the only unit purchasing books and subscriptions. While the library is the main depository, there undoubtedly will be other collections of books, journals, maps and other materials in staff offices around the institution. Bought with funds from department and individual office budgets, these materials are often more specialized than might be appropriate for the general library collection, or they may be required for daily reference and to provide "ready access to information for current awareness, browsing and direct support of scientific research" (Stevens). Often these materials will be found in a small departmental collection or reading room used for frequent consultation and browsing.

In most institutions, these materials are acquired directly by the individual departments or staff members and no bibliographic record exists except that which may be kept by the purchaser. Bought or subscribed to a title or two at a time, these materials may add up over the course of a year to a significant level of expenditure. Stevens reports that in 1989/1990 at the University of Connecticut, expenditures for books and subscriptions exclusive of library purchases amounted to the equivalent of almost seventeen percent of the library's acquisitions budget.² This is a significant amount of material which is inaccessible to the University as a whole. It is neither accessible for use, nor are those responsible for collection development (and subscription cancellation decisions) able to take account of these resources in their planning. Except to those staff in whose department or office the materials are located, they might as well be at another institution. However, if that were the case, the materials would actually be more accessible to others because they would be part of the "virtual library" of network accessible catalogs and national interlibrary loan resources.

In some institutions, procedures have been instituted which facilitate access to these non-library "library" materials. Stevens, for example, advocates that the library be designated as the purchasing agent for all institutional books and subscriptions, thus

² \$628,761 compared to approximately \$3,700,000.

enabling the library to "list in its records the location of expensive and/or unique material in order to limit duplication and increase accessibility"(Stevens). He also recommends expanding the library's online public access catalog to include these materials. Procedures similar to these are already followed in a number of organizations, including the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution (Woods Hole, Massachusetts), the National Geographic Society (Washington, D.C.) and Raytheon Company's Submarine Signal Division (Portsmouth, Rhode Island). The methods that these three organizations use to make their entire facility a "virtual library", provide examples which could be implemented in many organizations to increase access to previously unknown library-type materials.

As Acquisitions Librarian for the Office of the Research Librarian at the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution, the author is already familiar with the policies and procedures which enable the library to have knowledge of, and provide access to, the "library" resources housed in personal and departmental collections throughout the Institution. In order to obtain information about the two other institutions which also serve as examples, the author sent questionnaires to librarians within their organizations. Written responses were received from the National Geographic Society from both the Library Director (Canby) and the Acquisitions Analyst (Heintz). These responses supplemented an earlier interview with an Assistant Director of the Library (Briscoe). To obtain information regarding Raytheon Company practices, the written questionnaire was first sent by mail to the Technical Information Center Librarian and then used as the basis for a structured follow-up interview by telephone (Baldwin). A copy of the text of the questionnaire will be found in Appendix I.

All three of the organizations discussed maintain library control over individual and departmental purchases of books and subscriptions. This control at time of purchase is then used to provide a database of these items which can be used for later access. At the Oceanographic Institution, books and subscriptions may be purchased with funds budgeted by an individual department, center or administrative office, or with funds included in an individual scientist's research grant budget. Referred to as "desk references," these are items which are needed for frequent reference, which may need to be taken out of the Woods Hole area to the data-gathering site, or to which instant access will be needed without the delay of going to the library and perhaps waiting for the item to be recalled from another user. This includes not only books, but also subscriptions to journals and magazines which are needed at "deskside." At Raytheon, control is maintained only of items purchased with funds from departmental budgets. Very few items are bought with individual contract funds and they tend to be extremely specialized. Departmental collections are somewhat more general and tend to fall in the ready reference category. In all three organizations all purchases of books and subscriptions must be approved by the library prior to actual purchase³.

³ On occasion, staff will be reimbursed after the fact for purchases of work-related materials made with personal funds. Such reimbursement requests must also be approved by the library.

The rationale for this approval process varies among the organizations; however, three elements predominate. First is the necessity to be accountable for company funds. Whether one is ultimately accountable to government funding agencies, stock holders or members, company moneys should only be spent on items specifically related to the mission of the organization, no matter whether it is the library buying materials relevant to the entire institution or an individual or department requesting materials relevant to a more narrow task. Having the library approve the request helps maintain control over these purchases by requiring someone outside the immediate office who has expertise in the bibliographic field to review the request. In addition, this approval process emphasizes that the funds are, indeed, company and not personal funds and that the materials purchased are institutional property.

A second rationale is that of utilizing the library's acquisitions expertise. Passing all purchase requests for books and subscriptions through the library allows the library's specialized acquisitions skills to be extended beyond the regular library purchases and brought to bear on departmental purchases as well. This includes pre-order bibliographic verification of the item requested, which is sometimes a considerable task, and selection of the appropriate vendor to both obtain the item promptly and get the best possible price. By having the library provide this service for all units purchasing books and subscriptions, this special knowledge does not need to be duplicated in the institution's purchasing department, and the unit requesting the materials gets better service and price.

The third rationale, and the most important to the institution's "virtual library," is that of avoiding duplication. All three organizations surveyed use the approval procedure to keep track of what is being requested and require further justification of purchases which would duplicate materials already in the library collection. Also, if the relevant departments have already purchased copies of a particular book, the library may choose not to duplicate the purchase. In addition, in all three organizations, library may offer to substitute its funds for an item originally requested for departmental purchase and place it in a library collection if the item has general relevance to the entire organization.

All three organizations also keep library records of all items purchased with project or departmental funds after they are received. It is these records which form the basis of the in-house "virtual library." The degree of control over the materials maintained by the library varies among the three organizations. Raytheon maintains the most bibliographic control, cataloging all items purchased by Raytheon regardless of the budget source of the funds and then checking out department purchases to that department. Raytheon still maintains its catalog on cards and OCLC card sets are purchased for departmental books, just as they are for items purchased with library funds. If a patron finds an item in the card catalog which has been purchased with departmental funds and checked out to the department, it is recalled and checked out to the requester on the same basis as would be any other book. The only difference in access is that new items purchased with departmental funds are not included in the periodic list of new accessions published by the Technical Information Center. All

materials purchased with Raytheon funds are considered to be the property of the Technical Information Center and must be accounted for when the departmental staff member who has custody of them leaves the company.

The National Geographic Society Library has a computerized catalog using NOTIS.⁴ Items purchased with non-library funds are cataloged and included in the NOTIS database, but they are tagged in such a way that they do not appear in a patron search, but are accessible only in the mode in which the library staff use the system. Thus, a staff member searching for materials in the library on a particular topic would have departmental items included in the search results, while a library patron, an ordinary Geographic Society staff member, would not. When such items are found, the patron is usually referred to the particular department. While a full cataloging record of the material is maintained, physical control of the materials is not maintained as tightly as at Raytheon. The patron is referred to the department with the caveat that the material may not be readily available.

The Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution does not include departmental or individual purchases in the catalogs of any of the institution collections. Records are maintained using dBase III Plus on a personal computer in the acquisitions office. The records for monographs are interfiled in the same database with all other WHOI-purchased monographs, no matter what the final destination. Subject access is not provided, but the database may be searched by all other bibliographic access points and also by the name and department of the original requester. The computer files are separated by year. An integrated physical card file in alphabetical order by title is also maintained. Subscription records are filed by title in a payment history card file, integrated with all other WHOI-purchased serial titles. In addition, a database of current "desk reference" subscriptions is maintained in dBase. Serial issues are mailed directly to the requester and do not pass through the library. Monographic items pass through the library office on receipt and are stamped as Institution property before being forwarded to the requester. Staff are expected to return the books to the library for reassignment when they leave the Institution, but there is no strong effort made to enforce this policy. Staff are not expected to replace items for which they are unable to account, as is the case at Raytheon.

In all three organizations there are small ready reference and browsing collections maintained in some of the departments. At National Geographic and Raytheon, items for these reading rooms are purchased by the departments in the same way as purchases are made on behalf of individuals. Departmental funds are used and the items are included in the library's catalog in either the regular module or in staff mode, as is the case for other "desk reference" purchases. At the

⁴ NOTIS is an integrated library automation system which runs on an IBM mainframe computer. Originally developed by the Northwestern University Library, it is now being developed and marketed by NOTIS Systems, Inc. This company was recently sold by Northwestern University to Ameritech Information Systems.

Oceanographic Institution, the departmental reading rooms are handled differently. These collections are probably more highly developed at WHOI than at the other institutions, due at least in part to its location on two physically-separated campuses and to major disciplinary differences among the various departments. While some of the materials for the departmental reading room collections are purchased using the departmental budgets, most of the purchases utilize library, or library-controlled, funding, thus putting these materials directly under the control of the Office of the Research Librarian. Desk reference materials purchased with individual project budgets will undoubtedly never be included in the main library catalog at WHOI. However, as the online catalog becomes more comprehensive and more readily available to individual staff via the WHOI local area computer network, at least some of the departmental reading room collections will likely be inventoried, barcoded, and brought into the regular patron access catalog. This will greatly improve the accessibility of the reading room materials, even within the home department, since as of now only one of the reading rooms has an author-title card catalog, and none have any subject classification. This process will be made much easier because of the existence of the historical acquisitions records for the collections.

At Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution, although not at the other two organizations examined, there are also several desk reference collections which are fairly extensive and which cover subject areas only tangentially related to marine science research. These are areas not well covered by any of the library or departmental collections, but which are important to support functions at the Institution. The diving program has a very large collection which has been accumulating for almost forty years (Rioux, 1987a). The Staff Training and Development Coordinator in the Personnel Department and the User Services Coordinator in the Information Processing and Communications Laboratory⁵ have also developed large reference collections related to their specific responsibilities. In each of these cases, ready access to these resources would be extremely useful to the WHOI staff, but as they currently exist, they are relatively unknown except to the collection "owner" and the acquisitions librarian. The ability to bring this type of collection into the organization's "virtual library" and provide easy access both to the "owner" and to the interested patron is one of the benefits of library purchase records which is beginning to bear fruit.

Although work with the other two major collections is in extremely preliminary stages, a great deal of progress has already been made in providing access to the diving officer's collection on scientific diving and diving safety (Rioux, 1987b). Through the use of library computer records, a preliminary inventory was prepared which was then supplemented by a physical inventory. A simple classification scheme was developed which the diving officer could apply himself and all items in the collection were classified using this scheme. Next, using the library's dBase files and programs, author,

⁵ The WHOI computer center.

title and classification code, (i.e. subject) cards were produced for each item. As an ongoing procedure, the acquisitions librarian, as a part of her monthly program to produce cards for her own files on new acquisitions, produces a set of cards for the diving officer for any new acquisitions he has received during the month. This service provides an incentive to the diving officer to report any gift items he may receive, thus giving both the library and the diving program office a complete, though simple, catalog of this collection. A step planned for sometime in the future will be to find a way to include this collection in the main library catalog for ease of access while still restricting knowledge of it to persons within the Oceanographic Institution.⁶ The same type of service has been offered to both the Staff Training and Development Coordinator, who has a large collection of training resources and management books, and to the computer center's User Services Coordinator, who oversees the center's collection of computer reference materials. If these collections can be brought into the library catalog, as well as some of the departmental reading room collections, a readily accessible "virtual library" contiguous with Institution boundaries will take on a very concrete level of reality.

Each of these three institutions has a different level of integrating the outlying parts of the "virtual library" into the physical library. There are probably almost as many policies and procedures for this type of operation as there are organizations attempting it. The most important thing is to realize the size of the unknown bibliographic resources within one's institution. Norman Stevens estimated non-library expenditures at equal to approximately one-sixth of the University of Connecticut Library's 1989/1990 acquisitions budget (Stevens), while at the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution, non-library monographic and serial purchases passing through the library office amounted to the equivalent of about twenty percent of the library's acquisitions expenditures in 1990.

How much bibliographic control can be maintained of these "virtual" resources and how much access can be provided for the library's patrons will vary with the type of institution involved and the way in which it is organized. The level of control which can be achieved in a research and manufacturing private corporation like Raytheon would not be possible in a typical university where the library is only one of many departments and cannot bring the administrative rules quite so heavily to bear on tenured faculty as a corporation can on its employees. However some level of control and accessibility can probably be attained even in the university if the library can offer something in return, perhaps improved access by departmental faculty to their own resources, or the specialized skills of the library's acquisitions staff applied to departmental purchases.

⁶ A necessary restriction since the main catalog serves not only the local scientific community, but also the local community college and some fifteen public libraries.

Whatever can be done to increase awareness and accessibility of the organization's non-library bibliographic resources, it can only serve to improve services to the library's patrons, which will then improve their ability to carry out the mission of the institution itself, whether it is research, education or some other purpose. Access to a book or journal is always going to be faster when it is provided from across the campus instead of across the state or the country, and that helps of the organization's library achieve its main purpose: to provide for the information needs of the organization's members in as timely a manner as possible. By securing bibliographic control of all the bibliographic resources of the institution, the library will be better able to live up to at least the first, second and fourth of S.R. Ranganathan's classic Five Laws of Library Science: "Books are for use," "Every reader his book" and "Save the time of the reader" (Ranganathan, pg. 59,61). A library which can do that well can count itself as a successful one and a major organizational resource.

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