Coalition for Networked Information maps directions

By Thomas J. Michalak

Library Director
Carnegie-Mellon University Libraries

and Thomas Kirk

College Librarian
Berea College

Scholarly publishing system examined.

The Coalition for Networked Information is evolving into the primary forum for discussing development of a national computer network and capabilities for publishing and sharing information electronically. Although the Gore bill for the National Research and Education Network (NREN) died in the last Congress, the legislation will be reintroduced in the present Congress. The Coalition for Networked Information—a joint project of CAUSE, EDUCOM, and ARL—brings together librarians and computer professionals to address issues and technologies relevant to the proposed network that would link scholars to information resources anywhere in the country.

Seven working groups have been organized to achieve the Coalition's objectives. Their assignments are:

- Noncommercial publishing (Peter Lyman and Jerome Yavarkovsky): Explore possibilities of noncommercial publishing of information within universities.
- Commercial publishing (Karen Hunter and William Arms): Explore cooperation in commercial publishing between Coalition members and publishers.
- Architecture and standards (Clifford Lynch and Ron Larsen): Develop standards and protocols for information exchange and delivery in an electronic environment.
- Legislation, codes, policies and practices (Susan Martin and Susan Brynteson): Encourage and track legislation, codes, policies, and practices affecting electronic information, communications, and networking.
- Directories and resource information services (George H. Brett II, Peggy Seiden, and Robert Heterick): Facilitate networking and information exchange by developing resource directories of services available on networks.
- Teaching and learning (Philip Tompkins and Carol Barone): Encourage and facilitate the use of computer networks for teaching and learning at all levels.
- Management and professional and user education (Sheila Creth, Thomas West, and Nancy Cline): Encourage and establish training for professionals in information technology and services as well as users of electronic information and networks.

When the Coalition Task Force met in Washington, D.C. last fall, Karen Hunter, vice-president and assistant to the chairman of Elsevier Science Publishers (and formerly acquisitions librarian at Cornell University), invited participants to examine their assumptions about scholarly publishing. Hunter questioned the distinction between "commercial" and "noncommercial" publishing. The intention to generate revenue in excess of cost is the critical distinction, she said: "It is commercial publishing if there is a desire or intent to make a profit."

Hunter expressed her conviction that universities and publishers need each other and should cooperate with each other. She said that publishers

need to be assured of access to networks and that the economic issues involved have to be viewed globally. For some time to come, she added, publishers will be required to maintain two modes of information delivery. If there is no standard and publishers have to custom produce electronic information for many systems, she warned, costs will escalate, and the system will break down. She also posited a danger that if the scholarly publishing system, which is largely author driven, becomes library driven because of rising costs, the needs of scholars may not be adequately addressed.

M. Stuart Lynn, vice-president for information technologies at Cornell University, responded with some ideas on the ownership of scholarly information in academia and some models for pricing journal information in an academic environment. Higher education, Lynn argued, is losing its intellectual assets because control is relinquished to publishers when authors submit their results to journals. This idea had been raised at the June meeting of the Coalition by Ann Okerson of the Association of Research Libraries. Lynn suggested that the higher education community take charge of its intellectual property and work with publishers to define appropriate economic models for distribution of scholarly information. One model, for example, would allow publishers to recover their fixed costs (editing, layout, design, distribution) by licensing information to franchisers, such as libraries, which would incur the variable costs of indexing, storage, and local distribution.

Lynn suggested that printing on demand on campus systems would facilitate diffusion of the new technology because people would be comfortable with a form of electronic publication which resulted in a printed product, even though they are not comfortable with the concept of electronic journals. The conference's keynote speaker, Stephen C. Hall, director of the Office of Information Technology at Harvard University, had described the CUPID project (Consortium for University Printing and Information Distribution serving the Community of University Publishers and Information Distributors) in which several universities are collaborating with Xerox Corporation to develop a network architecture for on-demand printing applications in university environments.

Among the other salient points discussed at the conference were the need for standards, standards, standards and a bill of rights for electronic information and citizen use.

The Coalition needs more representation from colleges and public institutions. Probably membership will become more affordable, in view of the strong response to the Coalition: there are more than 117 members now. Libraries that want to influence the future of networks and electronic information should seriously consider becoming members.

Ed. note: Michalak and Kirk are ACRL's official representatives to the Coalition for Networked Information. ■■

ACRL
College Libraries Section
seeks survey compilers/authors

ACRL's College Libraries Section is seeking writers for its College Library Information Packet (CLIP) Note series.

The series is designed to provide college and small university libraries with state-of-the-art reviews and current documentation of library policies, practices, and procedures. Compilers develop and distribute surveys on topics of current interest to academic librarians.

Survey compilers are being sought for the following topics: staff development, disaster plans, interlibrary loan, and alternative funding sources.

Performance appraisal, collection development, audiovisual policies, managing student workers, and periodicals are among the topics covered in previous CLIP Notes.

Persons interested in developing surveys on the listed or other topics should submit a one- or two-page description of the idea to: Jonathan Lauer, Chairman, CLIP Notes Committee, Murray LRC, Messiah College, Grantham, PA 17027, or Mary Ellen Davis, Director of Communications, ACRL, 50 E. Huron Street, Chicago, IL 60611.

New undergraduate profile

A new publication from the National Center for Education Statistics, *Profile of Undergraduates in American Postsecondary Institutions,* can help colleges and universities understand the needs of their students. It reports that in 1986 more women than men were enrolled—55% versus 45%. Almost one-fourth of the student body was 30 years of age or older. Only 62% were enrolled full-time. Half of the students came from families with annual incomes of under $30,000. Only 20% of the students lived on campus; 50% lived on their own, and 30% lived with their parents. The report is available from SUDOCS (#065-000-00422-4) for $10.