

ACRL National Conference a hit with academic and research librarians

Nearly 4,000 attendees from every state and 15 countries joined ACRL at its 12th National Conference in Minneapolis last month. The conference, "Currents and convergence: Navigating the rivers of change," not only set attendance records (approximately 3,500 people attended the 2003 National Conference in Charlotte), but also broke records for the most first-time attendees (1,059) and the most conference scholarship recipients (94). Those who were unable to make it to Minneapolis were able to register for the Virtual National Conference, a first-time effort that offered live Webcasts of select programs, blogs, discussion boards, and access to presenter materials.

Programs covered a broad range of issues and topics affecting academic and research libraries, including open access to research, the first-year experience, and new technologies. Audio CDs or cassettes of conference programs are available for sale at www.acrl.org/minneapolis and proceedings can be purchased through ACRL's online bookstore at www.acrl.org/publications. The online conference community will be available to registrants for one year at home. learningtimes.net/acrl.

Penn creates Office of Digital Publishing

The Pennsylvania State University Libraries have partnered with Penn State Press to create an Office of Digital Scholarly Publishing at Penn State. The primary mission of the office will be to use new media technology to advance scholarly communication at Penn State and the larger academic community. Through projects sponsored by the office, the libraries and press will be able to clarify the costs associated with electronic publishing and assess the long-term benefits to the scholarly communication system. The work of the office will also directly involve the Penn State community in managing the changes to the benefit of the faculty and their research goals. The libraries bring to the project expertise in programming, digiti-

zation, Web site development, and access to mechanisms such as indexing and metadata. The press brings expertise in editorial matters ranging from peer review to copyediting and developmental editing. A goal of the Office of Digital Scholarly Publishing is to make research publications available online by moving existing print journals and monographs to a digital environment.

Thomson Gale launches Borges archive

Thomson Gale has launched *The Life and Works of Jorge Luis Borges: A Digital Database*, which features rare information from the Jorge Luis Borges Collection and Documentation Center of the Fundacion San Telmo. The database is the first to provide access to a wide range of materials on Borges (1899–1986), including those that are rare or have appeared in unindexed national and provincial newspapers and journals. More information is available at www.gale.com/pdf/facts/JorgeBorges.pdf.

NISO developing metasearch documents

The National Information Standards Organization's (NISO) Metasearch Initiative is preparing to roll out documents on technical solutions to the challenge of providing metasearch services. A "Best Practices for Metasearch" document is scheduled for release as a free download in June. Also slated for June are draft standards for trial use with accompanying implementation guidelines describing, for example, the minimum content providers and database providers can do to make their content more visible as it is channeled into the library community. Participants in the initiative focus their work in the areas of access management, collection description, and search and retrieval.

Foundation preserves Keller legacy

The American Foundation for the Blind (AFB) has completed archival categorization and preservation of its Helen Keller Archive, the largest collection of Keller's writings and photographs in the world. AFB has been re-

sponsible for the Keller materials since the 1960s, when it was selected by Keller as the repository of her papers. Documents and photos from the archive have been cataloged in a specialized database, which is available to researchers and the general public online at www.afb.org/ead and is fully accessible to people with disabilities.

Old Testament Abstracts now online

EBSCO Publishing has expanded its collection of databases pertaining to religious studies with the release of Old Testament Abstract Online, available through EBSCOhost. The information in the database, a product of a partnership between the American Theological Library Association and the Catholic Biblical Association, was previously available only in print and in a CD-ROM database. It includes indexing and abstracts for journal articles, monographs, multiauthor works, and software related to Old Testament studies. Coverage dates back to 1978.

Univ. of Miami opens new music library, technology center

The University of Miami opened its Marta and Austin Weeks Music Library and Tech-

nology Center in April. The 22,000-square-foot Weeks Music Library houses 22,000 books, 71,000 scores, 46,000 sound recordings, and important collections of musical theater archives, musical manuscripts, research collections, and e-resources. The holdings were previously housed in multiple locations across campus. The 5,934-square-foot Technology Center is home to advanced music production labs, including a multimedia instruction and learning lab, music engineering technology lab, and electronic music lab.

Dynix launches Corinthian ILS for academic, research market

Dynix has launched a fourth-generation integrated library system (ILS), Corinthian, designed specifically for academic and research libraries. Development began in 2002, with Dynix employees logging thousands of hours with library directors, system administrators, and staff members from leading academic and research institutions. The system includes native Oracle support and is able to integrate with other campus technologies such as LDAP, uPortal, Kerberos, Shibboleth, eCommerce,

Visit the Newberry Library during the ALA Annual Conference

A number of events will be happening at the Newberry Library in Chicago during the ALA Annual Conference. The library, featured on our cover, is a private research library open to the public.

Tours

Free tours of the Newberry Library are offered Thursdays at 3:00 p.m. and Saturdays at 10:30 a.m. Reservations for groups are required and may be scheduled through the library's Office of Events (312-255-3595). Self-guided tours will be available at the information kiosk in the lobby of the library throughout the ALA Annual Conference, with the exception of Sunday and Monday.

Exhibitions

Two exhibits are on display at the library through July 16. "Disbound and Dispersed: The Leaf Book Considered," featuring 60

leaf books by noted typographers, can be viewed in the Hermon Dunlap Smith Gallery (more information is available at www.newberry.org/programs/LeafBooks.html) and "Marie Antoinette" is located in the R. R. Donnelley Exhibit Gallery.

Reading rooms

The library's reading rooms are open Tuesday through Thursday, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m., and Friday and Saturday, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. A reader's card (free of charge) is required for admittance to the reading rooms. The following items are required to register for a reader's card: a photo ID, proof of current address (driver's license, check, bill, etc.), and a research topic that can be supported by the Newberry Library collections.

The Newberry Library is located at 60 West Walton Street in Chicago. More information about the library is available online at www.newberry.org.

Linux, Unicode, Java/J2EE, architecture and others.

IEEE offers full-text search

All of the more than 1.1 million online technology documents from IEEE are now full-text searchable for members and subscribers through the online delivery system, IEEE Xplore 2.0. The system powers IEEE online subscriptions for organizations and individuals and contains documents from IEEE journals, magazines, transactions, and conferences as well as all active IEEE standards and journals and conference proceedings from Europe's Institution for Electrical Engineers. Xplore 2.0 also allows nonsubscribing guest researchers to conduct free keyword searches of abstracts.

IMLS has new home

The Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) relocated in late April. The new offices are located at 1800 M Street NW, 9th Floor, Washington, D.C., 20036-5841. E-mail and Web site addresses remain the same, however telephone and fax numbers have changed. Updated contact information is available on the IMLS Web site at www.imls.gov/about/abt_staf.htm.

"Fun Run" benefits Univ. of Tennessee libraries

More than 130 runners turned out to support the University of Tennessee (UT) Libraries in February by participating in the 13th annual "Love Your Libraries Fun Run." The race, sponsored by UT's Graduate Student Senate, attracts serious competitors who run a 3.1-mile course, as well as other library supporters who pay the race fee and participate in a one-mile "Fun Walk." The Fun Run benefits the libraries, with proceeds this year being used to purchase materials with an environmental focus—a tie-in with UT's "Environmental Semester," during which environmental issues were a central theme in classes and campus events.

SciFinder Scholar expands reach

SciFinder Scholar, a product of the Chemical Abstracts Service (CAS), has exceeded an installed user base of 1,000 college and universities worldwide. The 1,000-institution mark was surpassed with the signing of agree-

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ments with academic consortia in Brazil and Chile covering 100 universities whose combined enrollment totals more than 1 million students. SciFinder Scholar provides access to CAS databases containing bibliographic information for chemistry-related literature and patents back to the beginning of the 20th century, plus a large chemical substance database, the CAS Registry. CAS is a division of the American Chemical Society.

Innovative announces institutional repository system

Innovative Interfaces has announced that it will be offering an Open Archives Initiative (OAI)-compliant institutional repository system. The system, Symposia, will help librarians become more engaged with campus communities and support content creators, such as academic faculty or public officials that desire to or are mandated to make their work available to the widest group possible. Content creators will be able to submit both "born-digital" and converted documents to the repository and create online communities that mirror the departments, committees, and outreach partnerships to which they belong. Each group can establish its own levels of permissions for participating contributors or library staff members. The system will include a Web-based submission form as well as a search tool for public access. Symposia was developed in partnership with Northeastern University Libraries, which is currently using the system to build its digital institutional repository. *zz*

Letter to the editor

Dear Editor:

Your January 2005 article, "Considering RFID: Benefits, limitations, and best practices," by Laura J. Smart, both overstates RFID's supposed benefits and minimizes RFID's disastrous downsides and the strong, articulate opposition to RFID use in libraries.

The article identifies numerous individual proponents of RFID, yet does not name any individual opposition spokespersons and does not provide any detail about, or summary of, the specific objections raised by opponents. These include concerns strongly expressed by the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) and Electronic Frontier Foundation (EFF) about the surveillance society that each RFID implementation is helping to advance. The issue of potential health risks to library users and staff from Radio Frequency Radiation utilized by RFID wireless scanners is not addressed, nor does the article consider how existing "best practices" do not satisfactorily address privacy threats.

The article asserts RFID's supposed "potential to reduce repetitive stress injuries [RSI] for circulation staff," citing what was said by one library at "recent public hearings"—but omits the questions that have been raised about the lack of documented evidence of a connection between existing checkout methods and RSI, and the lack of hard evidence that RFID systems have reduced RSI. Converting to self-service checkout can be done with existing bar code technology, if desired, without converting to RFID.

Regarding another claimed benefit, the article does not disclose the proponent's vendor connection, even though the cited Web site clearly does so, stating, "Birgit Lindl, from Bibliotheca RFID Library Systems, reports . . ." Additionally, the article also omits noting that Lindl's claimed 85 percent labor savings at Mastics-Moriches Community Library apparently came from a brief test measuring check-in and check-

out time for media items only—a limited measurement that represents just a small part of RFID-related activities and a fraction of the typical library's circulation.

The article downplays a big downside: a huge RFID security hole. Any library that depends on RFID technology to prevent loss or theft is wide open to massive—and completely undetected—losses. The article states, "Boss reports that some tags can be blocked by wrapping them in household foil." But the actual citation reads, "*Any* item in the RFID system can be compromised if a visitor wraps the protected material in ordinary household foil to block the radio signal." (emphasis added)

When the article asks rhetorically, "If only the bar code information is there, how could the adversary violate a patron's freedom to read?" it unfortunately ignores the refutation provided by some of the author's own sources. Tracking a tag's presence at selected points, and the presumably associated person, can be accomplished with existing portable or doorway readers *without knowing the title of the book*, and the connection between bar code and title or borrower can be made in a variety of ways, certainly by government entities legally able to access library databases/records.

Perhaps most egregiously, the article does not seriously consider the option of librarians rejecting RFID outright and standing with the growing number of organizations like the ACLU and EFF in their efforts to protect against the very real threats posed by this technology. The RFID "controversy" does not stem alone from the "*potential* of RFID technologies to erode privacy and civil liberties," as stated, but from RFID's actual ability to do so, right now, using existing, commercially available technology.

Your readers deserve a fuller and more open discussion of this important issue.—
Peter Warfield, executive director, Library Users Association