

Library Notes

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IN THIS ISSUE

- LIBRARY PRIORITIES
- HEALTH SMARTLIBRARY
- LIBQUAL+ FEEDBACK
- G.V. BLACK PROJECT
- LIBRARY NEWS AND NOTES
- ART COMES TO THE GALTER LIBRARY

PRESERVATION VS. ACCESS: WHAT SHOULD OUR PRIORITY BE?

James Shedlock, A.M.L.S., Director, j-shedlock@northwestern.edu

Galter librarians will be making a major strategic decision this fall when the library's journal subscriptions come up for renewal. While we have had limited experience so far with canceling print journals in favor of purchasing a license to a title's electronic format, we plan to make a major cancellation of all our Elsevier subscriptions in favor of their electronic version. Such a decision should save the library 10% or more of the cost of the print format. This savings can then be applied toward other library acquisitions. In addition, with limited shelf space in the library, slowing down the acquisition of print volumes will be a benefit as well.

Preservation - continued on pg. 2

GRANT PROJECTS UPDATE: HEALTH SMARTLIBRARY

The Health SmartLibrary (HSL) project is reaching the point where testing will begin some time this Fall. The HSL is designed as a series of tools to personalize the library's web site. Users will be able to create their own Galter Library or register for a generic version of the web site based on their discipline. A meta search engine tool and a personal database tool are both designed to assist users in finding and managing their own information. The meta search engine will allow users to select a range of Galter resources and search by keyword to find which resource has the information desired. The personal database or filing cabinet will let users store online information on library servers and let them organize it the way they want. Another key tool is a current awareness service. Users will receive assistance if they need it to formulate a topical search of databases where they would like to see the literature as soon as it is available. The search results will be stored in their personal Galter Library, which they will see anytime they go to the web, or they can get an email message sent alerting them to the literature. Whenever possible, links to the full-text will be a click away. Another option is to receive the search results from 'hot topics' in their particular discipline. Users will get these search results based on their discipline profile provided at the time of registration.



- 3 The goal in the HSL project is to try and save users time. We are designing these tools to push the scholarly literature to users before they need it. We will be demonstrating the HSL to groups of users, asking for feedback as they 'test drive' this new product. Watch the News feature on the Galter Library web site for future announcements.

Since this action is what many users want – more and more convenient access to more and more journals – the decision appears to be relatively easy. However, a word of caution is in order. By canceling the print version of any journal title, we may risk losing access to it for good. Print still serves as a reliable preservation format. Storing scholarly information in print has been tested over time (since Guttenberg, right?) and found to be somewhat reliable (with the exception of poor paper manufacturing in the late 1800s and early 1900s and if you don't count fires, floods, earthquakes and other natural and manmade disasters). The longevity of scholarly information in digital formats is promising but has not yet been tested over time.

Another word of caution is necessary about understanding what the library purchases when it places an order for a journal subscription. In the old days of print titles, the library purchased journals that it could keep forever. Libraries made their reputation as guardians of scholarship based on all the purchases it made and the volumes it collected on behalf of the local community. Today, libraries frequently license access to an electronic information product be it book, journal or database (and sometimes it is difficult to make this distinction). A license gives us the right to use something, not to own it. While some licenses guarantee lifetime access to information for the time period of the original license, experience with market forces to date suggest that such guarantees are not as reliable as holding onto print volumes of a scholarly journal.

The point here I am trying to make is that the decision to cancel print journals in favor of their electronic counterpart starts to alter one of the Galter Library's traditional roles, that of preserving scholarly information for future generations. All libraries, no matter what institution they serve, make some commitment to preserving information that is important to the local user community. We will continue to preserve selective pieces of information, notably resources connected to the history of Northwestern's medical and dental schools, but we will begin to rely on other institutions for access to the historical record in the biomedical sciences.

Technology continues to have a tremendous impact on all our professional roles. We in the library believe in taking a reasonable risk to rely on technology to improve not only access to current information but also to historic materials as well. We believe that the need to focus on access to as much current journal literature as possible is what is good for the school. Our primary role then is to acquire and organize the current literature so users have easy and efficient access to the best biomedical scholarship available. We believe this is the right action to take, even if it means sacrificing some of our traditional role in preserving information for the future.

Your opinion on the issue of journal access is important to us. If you care to comment, please send your remarks to James Shedlock, Director, at j-shedlock@northwestern.edu. We appreciate your feedback. ☞

LIBQUAL+ SURVEY

Preliminary comments from the Spring 2002 survey asking users about the quality of the Galter Library are starting to arrive. The library received a total of 178 comments, approximately 38% of all the users who completed the survey. Feedback centered on such key issues as: improving the journal collection, especially for access to more electronic journals and subscribing to the print version if online is not available; adding more hours that the library is open; and improving the computer situation in the LRC. Other topics addressed problems related to charges for interlibrary borrowing, printing and photocopying. Many favorable comments were received as well about the quality of the library staff and their willingness to help patrons get access to the information they need. Many thanks to all our users who completed the survey and provided feedback. Full survey results are expected in the next few weeks and a summary report will be made for the Library Committee, medical school administration and all Galter users. ☞

G.V. BLACK DIGITIZATION PROJECT

The G.V. Black digitization project will be wrapping up this summer. A web site showing the project's results is anticipated this Fall. In total, 43 manuscripts are planned for digitization from the collected papers of Dr. G.V. Black, second dean of Northwestern's Dental School from 1895-1915. Many of these papers provide insight into Dr. Black's contribution to dentistry as a profession. Dr. Black's papers were chosen for the project because of his prominent role in dental medicine and surgery. Also, the granting agency, the Illinois State Library, is providing support for digitizing projects that are related to Illinois history. This project has been helpful in testing ideas about producing, processing and organizing local digitized materials. Galter staff hope to apply these ideas in future projects involving historical materials in medicine. ☞

SCIENCE MEETS ART AT THE GALTER LIBRARY

Linda Walton, M.L.S., Assoc. Director, ljwalton@northwestern.edu

COMPELLING EVIDENCE

The Galter Health Sciences Library was pleased to be a participant in *Compelling Evidence*, a collaborative video installation at the Northwestern University's Feinberg School of Medicine. The video explored subjectivity and objectivity in science and art. The video was produced by Lisa Boggio, M.D. and David Lachman, M.F.A. A lovely reception unveiling the video was held in the Galter Library's atrium on April 30, 2002. The project was generously sponsored by The Center for Interdisciplinary Research in the Arts, Northwestern University. ☞



One of the many video scenes in the compelling evidence exhibit in the Galter Library's atrium.

LIBRARY NEWS AND LIBRARY NOTES

James Shedlock, AMLS, Director

Library Notes has become less frequent lately. Galter staff have been working diligently on projects and services, always trying to find better ways to serve users. When library news happens, staff report it on the library's homepage as soon as possible, and news items are kept there until their deadline has passed or the news has had sufficient time for most users to absorb and read it. Staff believe keeping the library's News feature updated online is the easiest and fastest way to alert users to new products and services. These messages come and go, and while we store them offline, they do get removed so as not to clutter the online space.

Because it is easier and faster to produce a newsletter online than on paper, users are urged to check the library's web site frequently in order to keep themselves up-to-date on services and products. ☞

STAFF NEWS

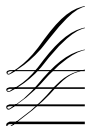
Research Paper Receives Honorable Mention

Several Galter librarians co-authored a paper, "The impact of the web on reference, that received honorable mention under the category of best research paper at the 2002 annual meeting of the Medical Library Association. The authors are Linda Walton, Kurt Munson, Stephanie Kerns, Linda O'Dwyer, Cheryl Powell and James Shedlock. The award was made by the Association's Research Section.

Brian Lauer, Knowledge Management Librarian, is now attending law school at Temple University in Philadelphia. Brian started at Galter in 1999 after graduating from the library science program at the University of Pittsburgh. He was instrumental in helping the library staff maintain the library's web site and develop online services, especially our interlibrary loan request service. As Brian plans to specialize in intellectual property law, his professional degree in library science and his work experience at Galter will greatly assist his future career. Good luck to Brian!

Kristine Hughes, Reference/Education Librarian, left Galter at the end of May, 2002. Kris will be pursuing her career in other venues. Good luck to Kris! ☞

Library Notes IS A PUBLICATION OF THE GALTER HEALTH SCIENCES LIBRARY



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LIBRARY HOURS*

Monday-Thursday
8:00 a.m.-11:00 p.m.
Friday
8:00 a.m.-7:00 p.m.
Saturday
9:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m.
Sunday
12:00 p.m.-10:00 p.m.

*LRC and Circulation always close 15
minutes earlier.

*Photocopy machines are turned off 15
minutes before closing.

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9:00 a.m.-6:00 p.m.
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TELEPHONE NUMBERS

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Interlibrary Loan
312-503-1908
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Reference
312-503-8109

 **GALTER HOMEPAGE** <[HTTP://WWW.GALTER.NORTHWESTERN.EDU](http://www.galter.northwestern.edu)>