



Notes

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Continuing Education: Expanding Expertise for the Digital Library

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Continuing education-how much that term has changed in meaning and importance to librarians over the years! In the 1950's the term had a laissez-faire definition. After completion of formal library education, "continuing education," meant mild encouragement from one's head librarian to take a class or two, attend relevant workshops, and possibly join local library groups. Or, if you planned to be a "head librarian" yourself one day, you were advised to finish a second degree and join ALA, presenting papers or chairing committees to show you had serious intentions.

In complete contrast, the hard-working, serious members of the Bloomington Library Faculty Council (BLFC) Continuing Education Committee are aware of the reality facing every librarian today: continuing education is a career-long necessity and must be a part of everyday life. Information is now being presented in both physical format-books, journals, and the like, but also in electronic form. Electronic information is presented, refined, incorporated, reconstituted and discarded with kaleidoscopic rapidity, often within months of its origin. Some of that information needs bibliographic control and retention for future users.

This reality is the primary challenge to those of us who work as librarians, train librarians, or wish to become librarians. To help meet this challenge, the Continuing Education Committee has developed a series of meetings on how to merge the physical information found in libraries with electronic information. The first session was January 28, "Integrating the Digital Library: Combining Electronic and Traditional Resources," and featured speakers focusing on four issues: Ann Bristow spoke about "The Generalist's Point of View;" Kenneth D. Crews talked about copyright and licensing; Allan Barclay demonstrated the CIC Healthweb; and Suzanne Thorin suggested ways libraries and librarians should prepare for the future. Follow-up meetings are scheduled for March 11 and April 10 to encourage discussion of the issues raised.

Users of information no longer have to go to a physical location. Information is everywhere. Finding it is a skill librarians already possess. We have no excuse for not expanding that skill to help future users of information.

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