

Research Incentive Fund Report

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During the spring of 2016 I applied for and was awarded funding in the amount of \$500.00 to attend “Connecting Uses, Pushing Limits: An Aeon Symposium” sponsored by Atlas Systems and held at the University of Michigan from June 15-17, 2016. Since the symposium offered free registration, I used the funds to cover my lodging and travel expenses.

Aeon is a special collections circulation and workflow software which is now used by approximately fifty libraries in the United States. The Lilly Library implemented Aeon in January of 2016, making our institution one of the newcomers to the use of this system. During the symposium I had the opportunity to discuss Aeon with staff from libraries who have used Aeon for many years and with those who are interested in implementing Aeon in the future. The symposium brought together about 80 people from 37 institutions. We had a lot to talk about including our experiences with implementation and our challenges moving forward.

One of the most valuable aspects of the symposium was the opportunity to hear reports from other Public Services departments about how they have utilized Aeon to streamline Reading Room procedures, handle patron requests, and manage class activities. Some of our greatest challenges at the Lilly Library stem from the popularity of our collections and the large number of class sessions we hold every year. It was interesting to hear other librarians speak about the ways they manage to record classroom usage through Aeon and the work-arounds they have developed for managing multiple, simultaneous requests for the same item. It is gratifying to learn that other institutions have experienced many of the same challenges and it’s useful to brainstorm about solutions with people who know exactly what I’m talking about. In addition to speaking with numerous librarians, I also had the opportunity to discuss usability issues with members of the Aeon team. We even began working on a solution to a longstanding issue with our local configuration.

I learned about innovative ways that other libraries are pushing the limits of Aeon. For example, the Houghton Library, which implemented Aeon in 2010, has adopted the Class Request Tool which interacts with Aeon to allow faculty to request classroom visits at the library and place requests on their own through the system. In the workshop “Reports from the Trenches” I learned about the multitude of ways that librarians can utilize the circulation data gathered through Aeon in order to create beautiful, meaningful reports on special collections usage.

The Aeon Symposium allowed me to look beyond the microcosm of the Lilly Library in order to study the bigger picture. The presenters and participants posed significant questions about how those of us who work with rare books, special collections, and archives can harness the Aeon data we gather about our collections and patrons in order to provide better service to our constituents.

Thank you for providing the funds which made my attendance at the Aeon Symposium possible. Participating in conversations with the larger community of librarians using Aeon has helped me progress toward my goal of becoming a true expert user of this system.