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CASE STUDY: Organizing for Change

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In November 1994, the Dean of University Libraries, Jim Neal, appointed two IU librarians, Julie Bobay and Carolyn Sherayko, to a new unit the Dean called "CBRST: Computer-based Resources and Services Team." In his announcement, Dean Neal stated, "The Bloomington Libraries are facing an increasingly more complex electronic information environment, requiring a campus focus for the development, service, access, and training elements of digital and networked information programs... the Computer-Based Resources and Services Team (CBRST) will coordinate closely with the Automation Office and technology staffs in library units, and will establish strong relationships with academic units involved in electronic information content and service activities."

In his announcement, Dean Neal listed several electronic initiatives on which the IUB Libraries needed to focus: "design and content of [IUB Libraries] gopher/www/campus information systems, training of librarians and staff in the use of digital and networked information, user interface and screen design, access to bibliographic and textual databases, electronic services use studies, bibliographic control of digital documents and networked resources, coordination of electronic services projects with other libraries, indexing strategies for library digitizing projects, educational programs for faculty and students, and change agent/leadership for electronic services."

CBRST is an experiment on several levels. It is an organizational experiment, capitalizing on the decreased

hierarchy and increased flexibility of the IUB Libraries, as reorganized over the past two years. Instead of having distinctive position titles like "reference librarian" or "cataloger," we are "team members." We expect that our jobs will change as rapidly as the environment we're trying to organize. Our mission is to provide support and focus for critical IUB Libraries electronic initiatives that span departments, units and individuals, such as WWW development and access to electronic databases and journals. We are rovers, connecting individuals and units, alerting units to important changes or issues, helping work through issues that impact multiple units, putting in place supporting structures for librarians and staff, and developing central services like IUB Libraries homepage for the World Wide Web. We have no specific authority to accomplish these things; our role is to identify, articulate and coordinate electronic initiatives that span library departments, and to lead the design of central services.

CBRST is also a technical experiment. New electronic information technologies, (World Wide Web and gopher,) are empowering technologies. For the first time, tools for distributing access to information are, in a large part, within the technical grasp of librarians and non-technologists. Librarians can use these tools to deliver critical library services in new, innovative and, hopefully, improved ways, interweaving our knowledge and expertise about information content with technical systems for delivery.

In order to take part in the electronic information discussion, librarians must acquire technical skills to create and maintain electronic information, and to influence the development of information systems. Technologists, faced with creating and maintaining content-rich information systems, need to augment their hardware and software expertise with knowledge about delivering content. Our comfortable dichotomy on which we have based librarians' and technologists' roles, that of separable and discrete functions of "content" and "technology," becomes less clear in this environment of distributed access to technology. In this environment, where librarians are doing technical work and technologists are involved in content decisions, it is no longer clear where the boundaries between "content" and "technology" lie.

The blurring of the line between content and technology is shifting work and responsibility for electronic services among technical and non-technical units. Making images, text, menus and systems appear in the right way, at the right time, on the right monitor, requires specialized knowledge and skill, ("Tying color to information is as elementary and straightforward as color technique in art, 'to paint well is simply this: to put the right color in the right place.'" (1)) It also requires a tremendous amount of work. Much of the technical work now asked of librarians was done before by technologists; the potential benefits of accepting these new work demands are increased authority, control, and potential for creativity and innovation in delivering electronic library services.

The stakes for accepting or rejecting this new "opportunity" are high. Many view this as the only role for librarians in the near future; they believe rejecting this opportunity to participate in electronic information discussions will seal the fate of librarianship as a dying profession. Others, however, question whether librarians can realistically add this new role to an already overly-full agenda that spans print and electronic publication. The worst response would be to claim a role in the electronic information arena without investing resources to enable librarians and staff to succeed.

CBRST is a response to these changing demands on librarians. Instead of looking to technology units to provide all technical support, CBRST is trying to put into place support mechanisms to empower librarians to learn new tools such as WWW. As we began thinking about

supports needed to empower librarians to become WWW information providers, we quickly realized that many elements must exist in order for librarians to contribute their expertise and perspective to this "window" on library electronic services. In order to participate, librarians and staff need equipment, many need training, the Libraries need an overall WWW structure, standards/guidelines, etc. In an organization as big and complex as the IUB Libraries, these infrastructure elements require a large investment.

Thus far, CBRST has held open meetings, formed working groups, (technical implementation, training, and home page design groups,) and is in the process of designing a prototype IUB Libraries' home page. We are working out details of account management and technical support with UCS, and are contributing to campus efforts to establish standards and guidelines for electronic information providers. We have worked through AIE migration strategies. We have developed timetables for establishing an IUB Libraries Home Page. In addition to developing WWW resources, CBRST is involved in supporting electronic database access, and articulating the many issues surrounding access to electronic journals.

CBRST, in its attempt to focus resources and energies on electronic information, is just one example of changes in librarians' roles and responsibilities in the Information Age.

1. Klee, Paul. *Notebooks: The Thinking Eye*. translated by Ralph Manheim. London, 1961. Basel, 1956. volume I, p. 39, n.1. Quoted in Tufte, Edward R. 1990. *Envisioning Information*. Cheshire, CT: Graphics Press, 89.

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Excerpted from:

The Goal and Reward of Librarianship: Service

Beau David Case, 1995 InULA SLIS Scholarship Award Winner

When I first sat down to write this "philosophy" for some reason I immediately thought of Cardinal Newman's philosophical tract, the *Apologia*, undoubtedly brought to mind due to my work in Victorian literature at the University of California, Los Angeles. Among the countless autobiographies written in the western world since St. Augustine's *Confessions*, and among the small number with which I am familiar, I am fortunate that this title came to mind, as I find myself in a similar position: to account for my past and to justify the direction in which I will take myself in the future.

Newman provides some amusing, but certainly honest, incidents from his past in order to express to his English Protestant audience that his conversion to Catholicism was inevitable. Newman explains, for instance, that even as a little boy, he had the practice of crossing himself before entering into the dark: "Of course I must have got this practice from some external source or other; but I can make no sort of conjecture whence; and certainly no one had ever spoken to me on the subject of the Catholic religion, which I only knew by name" (22).¹ Perhaps the most interesting revelation of his religious past and present came upon the examination of his personal library:

I was looking over old copybooks of my school days, and I found among them my first Latin verse-book; and in the first page of it there was a device which almost took my breath away with surprise. I have the book before me now, and have just been showing it to others. I have written in the first page, in my school-boy hand, "John H. Newman, February 11th, 1811, Verse Book;" then follow my first Verses. Between "Verse" and "Book" I have

drawn the figure of a solid cross upright, and next to it is, what may indeed be meant for a necklace, but what I cannot make out to be anything else than a set of beads suspended, with a little cross attached. At this time I was not quite ten years old (23).

I could begin along similar, albeit secular, lines—from my favorite childhood pastime of browsing and reading books, and the later cataloging of my personal monographs and serials; to my discussion as a high school freshman with the school librarian about collection security issues; to my repeated attempt as a high school sophomore to find employment in the local shopping-mall franchise of B. Dalton Bookseller (being only 14 years old I had to settle with frying burgers in that same mall); to being chastised by my English teacher as a high school junior upon asking whether or not to throw out a duplicate copy of a well-used book which happened water-damaged ("*never* throw out a book," he carefully articulated to me in syllabic staccatos); to my visit as a college freshman at U.C. Davis to the Student Employment Office to complete a general application, several days after which came my acceptance of a job with the first campus employer to call me: the library. So began my library odyssey.

As a junior in college, after having worked full-time in libraries for three years, one of my friends suggested that I become a librarian, an idea which I not apologetically rejected. Then would come four years of post-baccalaureate and graduate work in classical studies and comparative literature, working full-time at the library in order to support myself, until I finally came to my senses: "why not get an M.L.S. and become a librarian," I thought to myself, "since it's what I really want to do? Why else do I continue to work at the library on the clock, off the clock, until they have to drag me out after turning off the lights, only to then head off to the 24-hour com-

puter lab to enjoy a 'library without walls?'" Seems as if I were indeed predestined for this, despite my best efforts to thwart fate by pursuing graduate degrees in the humanities. Perhaps if I went back to my own old Latin book, as did Cardinal Newman, I would find little sketches of stacks of books and CD-ROM towers?

There is the aphorism that if one begins a career under a good employer, one will eventually become a good employer. More appropriate in our profession would be: if one works under a good librarian, one will become a good librarian. I have seen only good librarians, including the UCLA cataloger several years past the age of retirement who works 40-hour weeks and works countless more hours off the clock on what she loves the most: cataloging "problems;" or the reference librarian who once immediately responded to my e-mail sent after midnight (my excuse for staying up late is that I am a student, while the librarian's excuse for being up late is that she is a librarian, "geeking it up," as her daughter tells her, on Gopher and the World Wide Web when she is not at work, expanding her knowledge of available reference resources). Librarians are faced with incessant queues in front of circulation and reference desks, the incessant flow of materials into cataloging departments, and any number of vital routine functions. But in addition, as if their workload were not enough, librarians seek additional projects on which to work, such as the implementation of electronic systems, retrospective conversion, diversity in resources and services, instruction, any number of countless projects. For instance, I think of the many librarians here in Bloomington who make the time to give tours of the library to incoming freshmen. One librarian who wants to be there, rather than someone who has to be there, has the potential to bring so much energy and excitement to those freshmen that their lives truly can be changed. All of these are examples of the most important aspect of librarianship: service.

The influence of these outstanding librarians and their commitment to service has certainly rubbed off on me. Over the past year I have given those tours, taught as a bibliographic instructor, stayed that extra thirty minutes after my reference desk shift in order to help someone with a difficult question, served on various committees, and volunteered my time whenever an opportunity to serve arose. I also have begun to participate in librarianship on

the national level, having attended the last two ALA Midwinter Conferences, and this summer I plan to run for the Chair of the Classics, Medieval, and Renaissance group of the Western European Specialists Section c ACRL.

There are few rewards in the library profession. All of us knew that prior to entering the field, but we nonetheless welcomed the chance to become librarians. I refer to this desire as the 80-40-20 rule. We all learned about "Trueswell's 80-20 Rule" in library school, which states that 80 percent of a library's circulation is as a result of 20 percent of the items in the collection. In librarianship, however, there is the 80-40-20 rule, which states: a librarian works 80 hours a week, is paid for 40 hours, but at a salary equivalent to 20 hours a week for any other professional. It doesn't add up, but librarians still give that 140 percent. This is our *gloria vitae*.

The rewards are indeed few, which makes this InULA scholarship so unique and important to all of us. Monetary figure aside, what makes this award valuable is that librarians are recognizing potential for success in service to the field, or in other words, they are honoring one of their own.

¹ Newman, John Henry Cardinal. 1956. *Apologia Pro Vita Sua*. A. Dwight Culler, ed. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co.

InULA Announcement

InULA will hold its annual Financial Meeting on Tuesday, April 18, from 10 a.m. to 11:30 a.m., in the Administrative Conference Room of the IUB Main Library. At this meeting the Executive Board will determine committee appropriations for the coming membership year. Interested members are welcome to attend or submit comments (to any Board member, including myself) on the Association's financial arrangements.

Frank Quinn (quinnjf@indiana.edu) InULA President
