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Rebalancing the Investment in Collections

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Editor's note: The author presented this paper on October 14, 2011, at the ARL-CNI Fall Forum on "21st-Century Collections and the Urgency of Collaborative Action," held in Washington, DC. Audio recordings of the forum sessions are available on the ARL website at http://www.arl.org/resources/pubs/fallforumproceedings/forum11.shtml.

Good morning, it is a pleasure to be here today and have a chance to contribute to this rich dialogue regarding the research library collection of the 21st century. To lay the groundwork for my presentation, I will talk briefly about the nature of preserved information and how this contributed to shaping the research library collection of the 19th and 20th centuries. Then, while I will say a few things about my views regarding the nature of tomorrow's collection, I recognize that you have heard during the last 24 hours compelling presentations and comments regarding the various elements comprising this future. In my remarks, I will focus on two information types—visualized data and special collections—that I feel are evocative of my general position that it is not just the information itself that determines the value of tomorrow's collection, but also where and how the information is and can be used.

I will then turn to the effort to delineate a new holistic framework for analyzing the aggregations of information presently available, and I will suggest steps to assist in positioning us to make reasoned decisions regarding current and future planning. I hope to introduce a new prism through which we can view the information universe and the portions of that universe we make explicit efforts to support the use of. This holistic approach includes an understanding of the full spectrum of information available to scholars and students and the technological capabilities, rights of use, and services necessary for full utilization of these resources. The holistic framework's raison d'être is

knowledge creation—from inspiration to information, to analysis, synthesis and dissemination.

In concluding, I will turn to John Lombardi to advise us on how this new framework and the other thoughts and ideas he has heard here can be best employed in serving principal needs of our universities. He will also advise us on how to present this new vision to senior university administrators and how they might envision supporting our transformation.[1]

The Nature of the Collection

First, a quick review of what the collection was and is. I suggest that the viewpoint commonly expressed regarding the comprehensive research library collection of the recent past fails to incorporate extensive shortcomings. Working as an archivist and special collections administrator for nearly 20 years, I am aware of the extent to which our preserved record of the past is remarkably incomplete and that we have limited knowledge of how and why and to what extent it is incomplete. Sumerian archaic cuneiform script is generally considered the oldest known writing system, beginning in the early Bronze Age, ca. 3100 BC, but to what degree is this knowledge uniquely based on the survival of the clay tablets on which it was recorded? And since some tablets were reused rather than preserved and preservation was restricted to those tablets that were fired, either in kilns or perhaps sometimes when cities were burned by invading armies, what portion of that record do we hold? This paradigm of highly selective preservation can be applied often, and how have regional climates impacted the preservation of document forms?

Many of our libraries hold medieval manuscripts produced in Latin by monastic scribes, but do we hold any of the 700,000 "Timbuktu manuscripts," produced in Arabic script or Africanized versions of Arabic from as early as the 13th century? I know that the Library of Congress does and an increasing number are now available on the web. In the modern day, we are aware that in some places, access to printing presses was restricted, thus shaping the early printed record. We are fully aware of the difference between the record of the conquerors and the conquered, the haves and the have-nots, aboriginal and non-indigenous populations, women and men, gay and straight. And of course, we have almost no record of those numerous societies for whom their principal transfer of history, science, and literature was verbal.

So what is a comprehensive research library collection? We thought we knew during the golden age of collection building, from the mid-19th century to the last quarter of the 20th century. During that period we built and preserved marvelous collections, often through the work of "the great bookmen" and generous collectors, and then increasingly through routinized organizational structures, professional practice and processes of selection and purchase conducted systematically, and continuously supported through the expenditure of the "collections budget." And the organized competition around the size of this annual budget or special collections endowments has been intense, and we have worked hard to convince our universities that maintenance and growth of this sum was what guaranteed the quality of research and education in our universities. And for many years, this was true. It remains true in part, but it is not the same.

A prescient elaboration of the coming change appeared in 1984 in an article written by F. Gerald Ham, then State Archivist of Wisconsin, "Archival Choices: Managing the Historical Record in the Age of Abundance."[2] Ham identified that computer-generated information would change the archival challenge from pursuing information to confronting a confusing wealth of information.

> So what is a comprehensive research library collection? We thought we knew during the golden age of collection building…

In preparation for this session, I spoke with my co-presenter John Lombardi. He referred to this change as when the system "broke." I countered that perhaps "disrupted" was a better word, but since our conversation, the word "broke" has stuck in my mind. As suggested by yesterday's speaker, Rick Anderson, in his recent guest editorial in the *Journal of Academic Librarianship*, in spite of our embrace of the digital environment, "we hold many of our traditional organizational structures, practices, and mindsets in an increasingly desperate death-grip."[3] Well, that system is broken. John Lombardi knows it, and we do too.

So if we accept that our current collections model does not align well with the digital environment in which we and our users live, how do we reframe the dialogue. Several information types that effectively illustrate our dramatically changing environment have been engagingly described by previous speakers. I will speak to a couple of additional areas, suggesting concepts instrumental to a holistic model of knowledge creation and use.

The Emerging Field of Visualized Data and Visual Analytics

Dynamic, real-time dissemination of content makes demands on our capacity to offer real-time visualization.

Today on our campuses, students and scholars are investigating and analyzing natural phenomena and human-initiated activities as they are occurring in real time. Disease outbreaks; political events tweeted and tracked in social media; astronomy events like sunspots, meteors, and aurora borealis; particle physics experimentation; neural surgery—all these forms of research phenomena are being created, visualized, and studied dynamically. Or in the field of cultural expression, "live" artistic and cultural performance visualization offers the potential for creating multi-site interactive presentation. All of these forms of real-time, interactive data challenge our current notions of information display, capture, management, authenticity, ownership, and preservation—indeed the very notion of "collecting" itself.

Data visualization will increasingly impact many areas of information use, ranging from real-time financial trading data to the boundless universe of spatial research data, the value of which is often dependent on comparative data overlays.

Describing this new environment of which we are a part, Natasha Singer wrote in the *New York Times*:

> In an uncharted world of boundless data, information designers are our new navigators. They are computer scientists, statisticians, graphic designers, producers and cartographers who map entire oceans of data and turn them into innovative visual displays, like rich graphs and charts, that help both companies and consumers cut through the clutter. These gurus of visual analytics are making interactive data synonymous with attractive data….
>
> Visual analytics play off the idea that the brain is more attracted to and able to process dynamic images than long lists of numbers. But the goal of information visualization is not simply to represent millions of bits of data as illustrations. It is to prompt visceral comprehension, moments of insight that make viewers want to learn more."[4]

Most libraries are not yet fully prepared to manage and provide access to these dynamic forms of knowledge. But clearly they are here, challenging our thinking and our technical capacity.

Special Collections

The second information type I would like to address as evoking a holistic framework is special collections.

Most of our collections funding is devoted to licensing electronic publications, and most of those publications are academic journals. And most of what we buy is being bought by everyone. And this often extends far beyond ARL libraries. In Canada, the Canadian Research Knowledge Network collaborative acquires a similar selection for every institution of substantive size. State and provincial cooperatives extend access to core journals even further. Approval plans address most selection for undergraduate study in most fields, and they do it better and more economically than we can, and we all achieve similar results. Our archives and special collections remain our opportunity for playing a distinctive role in documenting culture, science, industry, government, and the human experience.

> Special collections can become an increasingly central element of our libraries—but special collections must first become a central element of our libraries.

Important changes in both curatorial practice and teaching and research interest have increased the educational value of these holdings, and digital technologies have provided a means to extend our impact worldwide. ARL has in recent time endorsed the value of this component of our collection, and there has been expressed interest in increased support within our institutions. This may not yet have happened frequently, in part because traditional managerial autonomy and distinctive practice has impeded the kind of synergies to which we would aspire.

Special collections can become an increasingly central element of our libraries—but special collections must first become a central element of our libraries. A new alignment is necessary, incorporating special collections, staffing, and expertise into the common asset base of the library. First, mission alignment both with the broader library and with the university mandate as well is needed. Procedurally, unified discovery is essential. Regardless of the description methods or systems employed, we owe our users the capacity to find related materials within our holdings, whether published, unpublished,

art, artifact, digital collection, or new media. This unified broadly accessible information is also essential to library colleagues who should be knowledgeable in promoting primary resources in their liaison roles along with the latest new database licensed. And I will add here that, surprisingly, it is not just our archivists and special collections librarians who have trouble stepping across existing dividing lines. For that reason, new organizational structures may prove essential in bring humanities librarians and archivists together to pursue common outcomes. With the growing need to evolve policies and functional support for acquiring, managing, and supporting the use of society's born-digital record, differing aggregations of technology and archival staffing will be necessary. This will position archives and special collections in a role as an integral leader in shaping the evolving 21st-century collection—but it will be as a component activity contributing to broad institutional goals.

Reframing Our Thinking in a Holistic Way

Now we turn to the challenge of reframing our thinking in shaping the collection of the 21st century in an unbounded information universe, in which the applicability of the paradigm I have described is limited. Patron-driven selection and innumerable other changes are rewriting the means and, as Rick Anderson describes, the comprehensive and well-crafted collection is no longer an end in itself. We now must create a new, broadly inclusive framework that incorporates a dynamic environment of multiple interdependencies and expanding potential for collective action.

How do we establish a new prism through which to evaluate the choices available to us today? An important step is to substantially alter the existing concept of the collections budget. This suggestion is not an explicit recommendation that any institution spend such funds differently, and doing this is not a solution in and of itself. Re-conceptualizing how we manage this funding is a means to remove one of the barriers to evolving a new way of looking at the collection that exists and that our users use, as opposed to viewing it only as the items we purchase via this budget. In an age of HathiTrust, Google Books, the Internet Archive, the Digital Public Library of America, Open Access and Open Data, digital special collections, Wikipedia, and other wonders of the open Net, the collections budget can establish an artificial context, compelling us to view success in a manner that may fail to realistically incorporate the way in which our users pursue information and the sources they employ.

The collections budget began painting us into a corner nearly two decades ago, and as a result, some institutions began to spend these funds in ways we would not have found broadly "permissible" a decade earlier. I am not criticizing those expenditures specifically, but has it led us to choose to make certain expenditures because they can be paid for from the collections budget, rather than their being subjected to the competitive light of day?

More importantly, however, has the current concept of the collections budget produced imbalances in our expenditures, reducing our ability to add new skill sets and to invest in technologies needed to enable 21st-century knowledge creation? Has it established adversarial divisions among our managers? Does it limit our capacity to pursue cooperative solutions that have the capacity to enhance the resources of many universities? And perhaps most importantly, does it prevent us from being able to tell our university administrators how we could truly enhance our contribution to university success if we had appropriate funding?

Conclusion

During this forum, you have heard provocative descriptions of the information universe in which we live and bold suggestions regarding steps necessary in creating a 21st-century environment for knowledge creation. Embracing collaborative solutions and involving a broad spectrum of expertise within and beyond the library, we have tough choices to make. But they are very exciting choices. It is a moment in which we can choose to serve our institutions in new and critical ways, achieving resonance with the principal goals and aspirations of our universities and creating roles essential to tomorrow's success.

[1] An audio recording of the complete session, including the author's and John Lombardi's remarks, is available on the ARL website at
http://www.arl.org/resources/pubs/fallforumproceedings/forum11.shtml.

[2] F. Gerald Ham, "Archival Choices: Managing the Historical Record in an Age of Abundance," *American Archivist* 47, no. 1 (Winter 1984), 11–22.

[3] Rick Anderson, "The Crisis in Research Librarianship," *Journal of Academic Librarianship* 37, no. 4 (July 2011), 289–290. Also listen to the audio recording of Rick Anderson's presentation at the ARL-CNI Fall Forum, available on the ARL website at
http://www.arl.org/resources/pubs/fallforumproceedings/forum11.shtml.

[4] Natasha Singer, "When the Data Struts Its Stuff," *New York Times*, April 2, 2011,
http://www.nytimes.com/2011/04/03/business/03stream.html.

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Experimenting with Strategies for Crowdsourcing Manuscript Transcription

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Introduction

Crowdsourcing—soliciting the public's help to perform a task—is a creative way to garner a workforce to help transcribe, annotate, measure, and rectify archival materials. Social media tools are making this possible on the necessary scale, something prohibitively expensive by conventional means. This public engagement not only results in free labor for libraries, but it allows users to interact with library materials in a whole new way. Citizen contributors can follow the stories revealed by historic documents. Some become invested in those stories or motivated by furthering the mission of research by enhancing access to important historic documents.

While the crowdsourced contributions are free, the projects are by no means without cost, especially in regards to staff time. At the University of Iowa (UI), the Digital Library department reluctantly turned down an initial request from curators to develop a crowdsourcing initiative for transcribing Civil War diaries, citing a lack of sufficient programming expertise. That decision was revisited, however, thanks to creative thinking on the part of key staff members, and the UI's Civil War Diaries and Letters Transcription Project (http://digital.lib.uiowa.edu/cwd/) was launched in the spring of 2011. Six months later the effort is, by many measures, a certified success. Early response was so enthusiastic it crashed the Digital Library server, and today a devoted stable of transcribers continues to contribute to the project.

Wide-Ranging Options

Inspired by international and non-library efforts, libraries in the US are experimenting with a range of crowdsourcing tools. At one end of the spectrum are projects that use free and cloud-based solutions, such as the North Carolina State Library Family History project,[1] which seeks user-generated transcriptions

through Flickr. Oral Roberts University's Written Rummage project[2] to transcribe a Fredrick Douglass diary uses a free Amazon cloud service, Mechanical Turk, to manage the transcription workflow.[3] Other more well-heeled projects have resulted in efforts such as What's on the Menu?,[4] a New York Public Library project to transcribe historic restaurant menus. As of the end of November 2011, there have been 645,517 dishes transcribed from 10,960 menus.

Some projects rely on specialized crowdsourcing software. Among the first to enter this arena was software engineer Ben Brumfield, who built the web-based tool From the Page[5] for transcribing, indexing, and annotating handwritten material. At the time Iowa was starting its project, this was the only open-source solution around. Since then, with the help of grants from the National Endowment for the Humanities Office of Digital Humanities, the Roy Rosenzweig Center for History and New Media has developed an open-source tool Scripto and applied it to transcribe 45,000 papers of the War Department.[6] This solution is gaining momentum, in part because it integrates with existing content management systems.

Libraries considering crowdsourcing should also look to the Australian and European library communities, as well as non-library efforts, for innovative and more seasoned examples of engaging the crowd. The National Library of Australia and the non-profit Distributed Proofreaders have organized extensive projects to correct text images scanned using OCR and enhance access by adding tags and other markup.[7] International university collaborations such as Galaxy Zoo, a Zooniverse Project, ask volunteers to classify millions of photographs of galaxies, while still other projects invite the public to upload their own artifacts and recollections for inclusion in an online collection.

The Iowa Approach

In preparation for the Civil War sesquicentennial beginning in 2011, the UI Libraries conducted a two-year reformatting project to provide comprehensive digital access to the Civil War manuscript materials in its Special Collections department, comprising approximately 50 collections containing more than 20,000 pages of correspondence and diary pages. As the scanning effort was drawing to a close, curators began to discuss ways to promote the resulting digital collection. Most of the items were handwritten and lacking transcriptions (with the exception of a small number provided by the families who donated the materials), so the idea of a transcription crowdsourcing project had strong

appeal. Curatorial staff requested that the Digital Library department investigate options to develop such a project for the diaries, with the twin goals of enhancing the data by enabling full-text search of the content, and engaging the general public by allowing them to interact with the materials in new ways.

The results of initial investigations were not promising. No one in the UI Libraries possessed the programming expertise to develop a software solution

University of Iowa Libraries' Civil War Diaries & Letters Transcription Project, Transcriptionist Interface

from scratch. Systems staff were already so over-tasked with other library initiatives that even implementing an open-source solution was out of the question, and none of the cloud-based projects had yet emerged. Digital initiatives librarians were ready to give up and wait a few years for the technology to become more attainable when the libraries' webmaster suggested collecting submissions through the use of a web form. She wrote some simple PHP code to generate a web page that pulls diary pages from CONTENTdm, the asset management system used to host the digital collection; the page images are paired with a text box for users to type in the transcriptions; and a submit button sends an e-mail message to a departmental inbox. From there, a cataloging staff

member reviews the submission, pastes it into the metadata record in CONTENTdm, and indexes the collection, at which point the transcription is live and available for searching.

This workflow has obvious drawbacks. Such a mediated system is more costly in staff time than is ideal; and the asynchronous nature of the submission process means that multiple users could work on the same page simultaneously, resulting in duplication of effort. Nevertheless, the pilot moved into the testing phase, where another issue emerged: some staff members voiced concerns about the quality of submissions, questioning whether the public was qualified to do the work. While these concerns do have some validity, the overall consensus was that some imperfect access was better than none, and any staff-side inefficiencies would be worth the trade-off in public outreach benefits.

The Civil War Diaries Transcription Project site was launched in early spring of 2011. Standard promotional tools of press releases and blog posts drew a little attention, but the crowds needed to drive the project proved to be elusive, so the next two months were spent focusing on promotion to historians, Civil War enthusiasts, and genealogists. In early June the project was featured on the American Historical Association blog;[8] from there, it was picked up by reddit.com, a social media news site.[9] The response to the reddit post was enormous; the day it went up, web statistics jumped about 7,000 percent (from typically 1,000 users to about 70,000), and the Digital Library server crashed, remaining out of commission for the next several days until the traffic became more manageable. Since then, response has calmed down quite a bit, but the project still retains a core stable of loyal transcriptionists.

One of these core transcriptionists, Dave Hesketh, is a 69-year-old retiree in the north of England who has currently transcribed 140 pages and is still going strong. Regarding the family whose papers he has spent the most time working with, he says that they "have become almost an extended part of my own:"

> …[T]hese diaries & letters reveal the lives of "ordinary" people…, rather than those of politicians, generals, and the like (whose actions, words, and deeds are generally sanitised for public dissemination). These people come alive; you come to share their hopes, their fears, their everyday concerns—the price of food for themselves, and for their animals, the cost of

doctor's visits, their illnesses, and, sadly, their deaths. Yes—you do become absorbed in the people, and losing one of them is like losing a relative or a friend.[10]

Next Steps

In October, after volunteer transcriptionists had made short work of the original collection of 38 diaries, the project scope expanded to include 80 sets of letters containing over 5800 pages of correspondence. With this additional content, the newly renamed Civil War Diaries and Letters Transcription Project supplements the first-hand accounts of soldiers with those of their families and friends back home, allowing a much fuller view of life during the war.

This winter, the project will expand further with the creation of the Crowdsourcing Collections @ Iowa gateway site, which will provide access to additional opportunities for users to help enhance the UI Libraries' content. Next up is crowdsourcing transcription for items outside of the Civil War materials, including manuscript cookbooks from Special Collections, as well as 19th-century children's diaries held in the UI's Iowa Women's Archives, and in a partner institution, the State Historical Society of Iowa. This spring, the libraries also plan to move a Flickr pilot into production to allow commenting and tagging for historic photographs harvested from the Iowa Digital Library, migrating the user-generated data from Flickr back to the metadata records into the Digital Library. This will follow similar workflows to those developed for the transcript project.

Conclusion

This success of the Civil War project not only confirmed public interest in such endeavors, but was evidence that crowdsourcing efforts can get off the ground without computer programmers, specialized software, or major grant funds. The highly mediated nature of our workflow can lead us to feel a little self-conscious when compared to some of the more high-tech efforts—Iowa's transcription project runs on "peopleware" rather than software—but it makes sense for the institution. Overstaffed with talented, detail-oriented catalogers in technical services and understaffed in IT, Iowa adapted its crowdsourcing plans to fit, in order to "go to war with the army we've got." In the battle for public engagement and value-added collections, the ends have more than justified the means.

1 Government & Heritage Library, State Library of North Carolina, Transcription Project, http://www.flickr.com/photos/statelibrarync/collections/72157628080641877.

2 The Frederick Douglass Diary—A Written Rummage Project, http://frederickdouglassdiary.wikispaces.com/.

3 Andrew S.I.D. Lang and Joshua Rio-Ross, "Using Amazon Mechanical Turk to Transcribe Historical Handwritten Documents," *Code4Lib Journal*, no. 15 (October 31, 2011), http://journal.code4lib.org/articles/6004.

4 New York Public Library, What's on the Menu?, http://menus.nypl.org/.

5 FromThePage, http://fromthepage.com/.

6 Papers of the War Department: 1784 to 1800, http://wardepartmentpapers.org/transcribe.php.

7 Rose Holley, "Crowdsourcing: How and Why Should Libraries Do It?," *D-Lib Magazine*, 16, no. 3/4 (March/April 2010), http://www.dlib.org/dlib/march10/holley/03holley.html.

8 Elisabeth Grant, "Crowdsourcing the Civil War," *AHA Today*, June 7, 2011, http://blog.historians.org/resources/1346/crowdsourcing-the-civil-war.

9 Dick_long_wigwam, "TIL How to Participate in History while Sitting on My Ass by Transcribing Civil War Diaries Online," *reddit*, June 8, 2011, http://my.reddit.com/r/todayilearned/comments/humy3/til_how_to_participate_in_history_while_sitting.

10 Dave Hesketh, e-mail correspondence with University of Iowa Libraries, November 15, 2011.

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Keeping the Doors Open: Exploring 24-Hour Library Access at Washington University in St. Louis

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Even as electronic resources become increasingly important to academic library users, access to libraries' physical spaces also remains essential to many patrons. Students responding to our Service Quality Survey in November 2010 sent this message to the libraries at Washington University in St. Louis.[1] Survey data shows that 72% of undergraduate respondents and 52% of graduate respondents visited the library at least once per week. Fewer than 2% of undergraduates and fewer than 3% of graduates reported never entering the physical library. Furthermore, undergraduate and graduate respondents alike expressed a need for Olin Library, the main library of the Washington University Library System, to expand its hours. While some students asked us to expand our hours on particular days of the week, many students told us emphatically to keep the library open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Their requests inspired our library to gather additional data about late-night and all-night library usage and to explore how we might begin to meet our students' expressed need for 24/7 library access.

Washington University Libraries' Service Quality Survey

Every three years, the libraries distribute an electronic survey to faculty and students to assess the quality of library service based on user expectations and to identify areas for improvement. Two main areas of the November 2010 Service Quality Survey revealed our students'—and especially our undergraduates'—desire for extended hours in the libraries.

Item 7 of the survey stated:

- The library will continue to purchase materials (print, online, digital, etc.) to support your work, but we would like to know what other services, facilities or resources might be useful to you. Please rank your 3 highest priorities for Library spending, other than collections.

Users responded by selecting priorities from drop-down menus. Among the 10 available priorities was "Extend Library hours." While "Extend Library hours" ranked as the sixth priority for graduate students and faculty, it ranked as the second priority for undergraduate respondents, after "More study space."

Questions 12, 13, and 14 of the survey were open-ended:

- Would you like to comment on a specific library?
  (Comment on all that apply)

- What services could be provided that would better meet your needs?

- Anything else?

Undergraduates' and graduates' expectations about library hours emerged as a theme in their responses to these questions. Comments ranged from general pleas of "Extend the hours!" to more specific statements of need. One graduate student commented, "I am unsatisfied with the current library hours and I feel that there should be 24-hour access to the main library five days a week Sunday-Thursday. I feel that the university as a whole demands a high caliber of work from its students therefore they must provide proper resources for students to meet this requirement." A first-year undergraduate requested, "Please extend the hours! Almost all universities of our caliber have libraries open 24/7," and a third-year undergraduate said, "Please leave Olin open later! It is absolutely ridiculous that one of the best schools in the country doesn't have a 24-hour main library."

About Olin Library

John M. Olin Library is at the center of Danforth Campus, which is also home to nine departmental or school libraries. Olin's five floors house general-interest materials and collections in the humanities, social sciences, and engineering. The Help Desk on the first floor is central to user services. Librarians, staff, and student workers at the Help Desk are cross-trained to assist users with both circulation and reference inquiries.

Olin is currently open 115.5 hours per week during the fall and spring semesters, until 2:00 a.m. Sunday through Thursday nights, until 8:00 p.m.

Friday, and until 10:00 p.m. Saturday. During reading and exam weeks, we remain open until 4:00 a.m. After midnight during the normal schedule and reading and exam weeks, the Help Desk is staffed entirely by student workers; permanent staff leave at midnight. Access to Olin is restricted to valid Washington University ID holders via card swipe after 9:00 p.m.

Olin has an attached café, Whispers, on the first floor. The 5,000-square-foot café serves as our 24/7 space during the fall and spring semesters and provides soft seating, tables, computers, printers, restrooms, and vending machines. Food service in Whispers ends at midnight Sunday through Thursday nights and at 3:00 p.m. Friday and Saturday afternoons. One security guard attends Whispers during the overnight hours.

Our Exploration of Library Hours

January 2011: Dean Shirley Baker engages ARL colleagues in discussion about library hours

Responding to user needs is, of course, a primary concern for our library, as is making decisions based on a complete investigation and data-supported understanding of the expressed need and how best to fulfill it. Recognizing that in their Service Quality Survey comments, students were comparing Olin Library's hours to their perceptions of other major research libraries' hours, Dean of University Libraries Shirley Baker initiated a discussion with her colleagues via the ARL Directors Discussion List. Gathering this information from our peers helped us to achieve a better understanding of how our current hours compare with those of other research libraries.

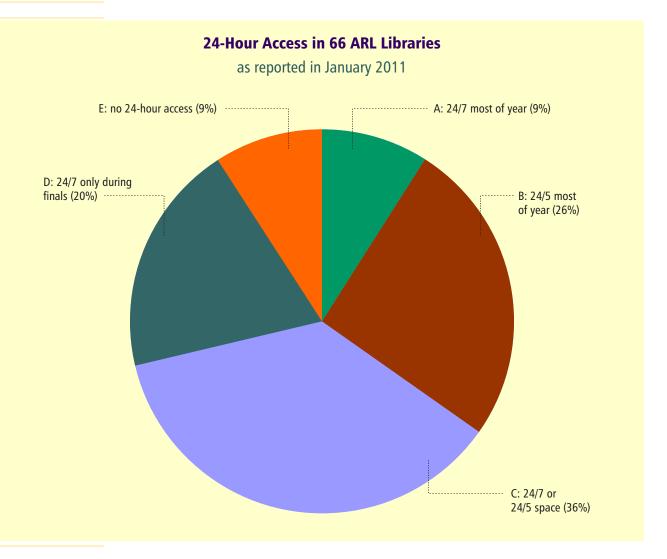Dean Baker's message to the list included the following questions:

- Do you keep your main library open 24/7?

- If not, how many hours per week is your main library open?

Of the 126 ARL libraries, 66 libraries responded. Respondents fell roughly into five categories:

A. Those with main libraries open 24/7 most of the year—6 total (9%)

B. Those with main libraries open 24/5 most of the year—17 total (26%)

C. Those with 24/7 or 24/5 spaces within or attached to the main library, or in a separate library—24 total (36%). Roughly half of the respondents in this group have a 24/7 or 24/5 space within or attached to the main

library, which can be closed off from the rest of the building. Some of these libraries have a "learning commons," and others have only certain floors open for 24 hours. The remaining respondents in this group maintain regular 24/7 or 24/5 schedules in a library other than the main library, often in a science or engineering library.

D. Those with main libraries open 24/7 only during finals—13 total (20%)

E. Those with no 24-hour access indicated—6 total (9%)

24-Hour Access in 66 ARL Libraries
as reported in January 2011

E: no 24-hour access (9%)

A: 24/7 most of year (9%)

D: 24/7 only during finals (20%)

B: 24/5 most of year (26%)

C: 24/7 or 24/5 space (36%)

The compilation of responses showed that, among the 66 respondents, Olin Library is situated within the largest group; like 36% percent of the respondents, we have a 24/7 space (Whispers Café), and this space is outside, though attached to, the main library. The responses also revealed other ways that ARL libraries provide 24-hour access. Among our respondents, more libraries operate

with a 24/5 schedule—opening on Sunday morning and remaining open until Friday evening—than with a 24/7 schedule.

February 2011:
Formation of Library Hours Committee

Following our compilation of the responses to the ARL Directors List inquiry, Dean Baker appointed the Library Hours Committee to investigate issues related to our libraries' hours and to make recommendations for change to the Dean's Council. As the Library Hours Committee began its work, responses to the ARL list inquiry gave us a greater awareness of the possibilities for providing 24-hour access. In addition to reporting their hours, many respondents shared insights, suggestions, questions, and concerns about providing 24-hour access in their libraries, and these helped the committee to frame our own investigation:

- Some respondents recommended piloting 24-hour access before declaring it a long-term plan, in case the service needs to be revised after implementation or is not heavily used.

- Several respondents raised the question of what users really want when they ask for 24-hour access to the library: physical collections, course reserves, research assistance, computing resources, quiet study spaces, or a combination of these?

- Budgets were a concern. Some respondents share the cost of providing 24-hour access with their student government associations. Some are unable to provide 24-hour access due to budgetary constraints.

- Safety of users and security of collections were common themes. How can libraries ensure the safety of students arriving and leaving the library in the middle of the night? How can they ensure the security of collections and buildings? Would restricting access to only certain areas of the library help? Among respondents who provide some level of 24-hour access, deploying overnight security personnel is common.

April and May 2011:
Gathering of data on late-night usage
of Olin Library and Whispers Café

Library Hours Committee members knew that in order to make sound recommendations to the Dean's Council, we needed statistical data on Olin and Whispers usage during late-night and overnight hours. No recent counts of users were available for Olin. Though our security gate automatically counts users entering and leaving the library throughout the day and night, counts of users arriving cannot be distinguished from counts of users who are leaving. Thus, the gate counts can provide a picture of general activity at the main entrance, but we wanted a more detailed picture. Taking a cue from questions raised by our ARL colleagues, we wanted to know how many users were inside Olin during the late hours, and we also wanted to know what these users were doing.

During one week in April and one week in May, Olin student workers performed headcounts of users during the late-night and early-morning hours. While one student worker counted users on all five library levels, another remained at the Help Desk to provide service. The week in April gave us a picture of use during non-finals time, and the May week provided a picture of use during final exams.

April Headcounts

Student workers counted users hourly for the last three open hours of each day: from 11:00 pm. until 2:00 a.m. Sunday through Thursday; from 5:00 p.m. until 8:00 p.m. on Friday; and from 7:00 p.m. until 10:00 p.m. on Saturday.
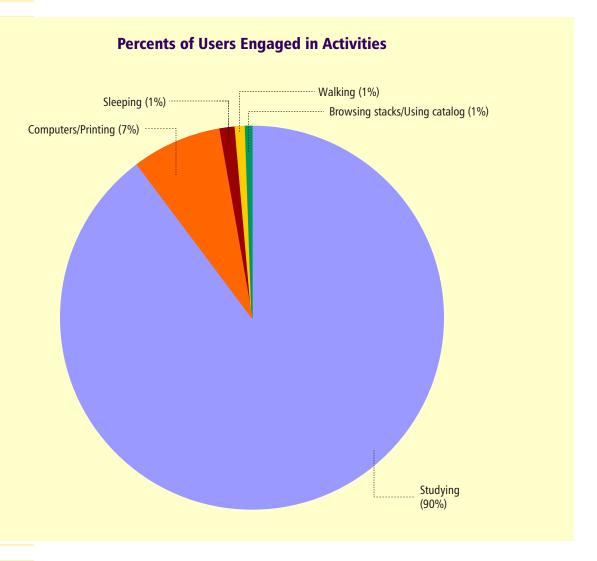
April Headcounts

Date	Day of Week	11:00 p.m.	12:00 a.m.	1:00 a.m.	2:00 a.m.
4/11/2011	Mon. night/Tues. morning	223	173	110	15
4/12/2011	Tues. night/Wed. morning	211	169	114	5
4/13/2011	Wed. night/Thurs. morning	163	132	88	8
4/14/2011	Thurs. night/Fri. morning	71	39	32	1
4/17/2011	Sun. night/Mon. morning	147	104	70	4

Headcounts from the April week demonstrate that at 11:00 p.m., 12:00 a.m., and 1:00 a.m., headcounts were more than two times higher on Sunday, Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday nights than on Thursday nights. The 2:00 a.m. headcounts show that even after our final closing announcement each night, we still had some users present.

Headcounts for the last three hours of Friday and Saturday nights, when we close earlier than the rest of the week, show fewer users present than Sunday through Wednesday, and more than on Thursday. After the final closing announcements on Friday and Saturday nights, no users remained in the library.

May Headcounts

Date	Day of Week	1:00 a.m.	3:00 a.m.	4:00 a.m.
5/4/2011	Wed. night/Thurs. morning	N/A	N/A	20
5/5/2011	Thurs. night/Fri. morning	170	91	5
5/6/2011	Fri. night/Sat. morning	70	21	1
5/7/2011	Sat. night/Sun. morning	138	47	15
5/8/2011	Sun. night/Mon. morning	210	79	1
5/9/2011	Mon. night/Tues. morning	N/A	N/A	2
5/10/2011	Tues. night/Wed. morning	90	42	2

May Headcounts

During final exams in May, student workers counted users at 1:00, 3:00, and 4:00 a.m. (Because only one student worker worked on May 4 and May 9, 1:00 a.m. and 3:00 a.m. headcounts were not possible on those dates.) The available 1:00 and 3:00 a.m. headcounts demonstrate that in some cases, Olin contained a large number of users during the late-night hours. 4:00 a.m. counts show that after the final closing announcements, users remained in the library:

User Activity during Headcounts

While performing the April and May headcounts, Olin student workers made note of what users were doing: studying, using computers and printing, browsing the collections and using the library catalog computers, sleeping, and walking. We used the term "studying" somewhat loosely to apply to any

Percents of Users Engaged in Activities

Sleeping (1%)

Computers/Printing (7%)

Walking (1%)

Browsing stacks/Using catalog (1%)

Studying (90%)

person seated at carrels, tables, or soft seating and not engaged in one of the other activities, and we discovered that most users fit into this category. Of the 3,245 users counted during the April and May weeks, 2,916 (90%) were studying, 242 (7%) were using computing resources, 40 (1%) were sleeping, 28 (1%) were walking, and 19 (1%) were browsing the stacks or using the catalog computers. These numbers suggest that the majority of late-night users come to Olin for the space itself—not for the physical collections and access to Help Desk services.

Late-night Circulation Data

Circulation data for the late-night hours further supports the theory that our users are more interested in using the physical space than in using the collections and checking out material. A comparison of average checkouts after

midnight to average checkouts at other times of the day showed that circulation services are not used as heavily late at night. The low hourly averages of checkouts after midnight, compared to the hourly averages at other times of the day, raised a question. If we were to remain open all night, would we need library staff and student workers at the Help Desk?

Counts of Users in Whispers

When considering whether a large number of users would use the space if Olin were to remain open all night, we might have been tempted to look at head-counts of users in Whispers, our current 24/7 space, and draw conclusions based on these counts. If Whispers numbers were relatively low overnight compared to the number of users inside Olin approaching closing time, we might conclude that there is no great need to keep Olin open later. However, we could not draw this sort of conclusion, since users tell us regularly that the café atmosphere of Whispers is no substitute for Olin as a late-night study space.

Still, analysis of Whispers headcounts collected by the Whispers security guard from November 21, 2010, through May 10, 2011, revealed that users do use the space at all hours of the night. It also suggests a parallel between the most-used nights in Olin and the most-used nights in Whispers. Average headcounts reveal that Sunday through Wednesday nights in Whispers were significantly busier than Thursday through Saturday nights, and Olin student workers' April and May headcounts revealed the same about Olin.

July 2011:
Library Hours Committee proposes
trial 24/4 schedule in Olin Library

Based on the Service Quality Survey data, counts of users in Olin and Whispers late at night, and late-night circulation data, the Library Hours Committee proposed to the Dean's Council a trial 24/4 schedule for the 2011-2012 academic year. The 24/4 schedule would begin the third week of classes during the fall and spring semesters. We would open at 10:00 a.m. on Sunday and remain open until Friday morning at 2:00 a.m. We would maintain our normal Friday schedule, 7:30 a.m.–8:00 p.m., and our normal Saturday schedule, 9:00 a.m.–10:00 p.m. During reading weeks and finals, Olin would implement a 24/7 schedule.

Card access to the building would begin at 9:00 every night. Circulation staff

and student workers would maintain their normal hours, with permanent staff working until midnight Sunday through Thursday and students working until 2:00 a.m. Help Desk services would end at 2:00 a.m., though Olin would remain open to students all night Sunday through Wednesday. Student workers would announce the closing of the Help Desk beginning at 1:30 a.m., encouraging users to check out all material before 2:00 a.m.

To staff the overnight hours during this trial period, we recommended hiring two security guards to patrol inside the building from 1:30 a.m. until 7:30 a.m., Monday through Thursday mornings. One guard would be stationed at the Help Desk to ensure that reserve material, audiovisual collections, and staff areas behind the desk remained secure. Another guard would walk throughout Olin, helping to ensure the safety of users and collections. The guards would perform hourly headcounts, record any questions asked at the Help Desk, and write reports of any problems that might occur during the night.

By introducing and promoting the 24/4 schedule to users as a trial, we would grant ourselves the opportunity to gather data, determine the effectiveness of the service, and make changes as necessary. During the trial period and the summer following the trial period, we would elicit feedback about the service from library users and analyze data collected by the security guards. Depending upon our findings, we would consider recommending full implementation of the 24/4 service.

August 2011:
Dean's Council agrees with proposal, implements search for funding

The Dean's Council agreed enthusiastically with the Library Hours Committee's proposal. However, funding was not available in the libraries' fiscal year 2012 budget to hire two security guards. Dean Baker explored additional funding options with the university provost in an effort to implement the service at the recommended time. Ultimately, the Library Hours Committee learned that the trial period would be postponed. The libraries' fiscal year 2013 budget submission will include a request for funds to cover the cost of security personnel, and we expect to implement the trial in the fall of 2012.

Moving Forward

While we wait to begin the trial 24/4 schedule, we will perform additional headcounts of users in Olin Library, not only late at night, but also during the morning, afternoon, and evening hours. Doing so will help us build a more detailed picture of how late-night usage of Olin compares with usage at other times throughout the day, and the data could inform future decisions about library hours.

The Library Hours Committee's exploration of how to address our students' desire for 24-hour library access has been extensive. We are confident that the trial 24/4 schedule is the best way to begin to fulfill our students' requests for extended hours while also learning more about their needs. Until we are able to keep the doors open all night, we lack a complete understanding of how and when students will use our spaces and services. Keeping the doors open is an opportunity not only to understand our users more fully—it is also an opportunity to understand the extent of our role in their educational experiences and in their lives.

[1]   Washington University in St. Louis Libraries' *Library Service Quality Survey 2010 Final Report* is accessible via the libraries' Assessment Team LibGuide at http://libguides.wustl.edu/assessment/.
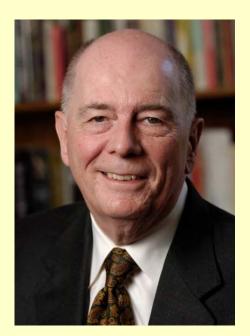
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News

ARL Announces 2011–2012 Board of Directors

Winston Tabb, Sheridan Dean of University Libraries and Museums, Johns Hopkins University, began a one-year term as President of ARL on October 13, 2011, during the ARL Membership Meeting in Washington, DC. He succeeds Carol A. Mandel, Dean of the Division of Libraries, New York University. Mandel continues to serve as a member of both the ARL Board of Directors and the ARL Executive Committee as Past President.

Winston Tabb, ARL President 2011–2012

Also on October 13, the membership ratified the Board of Directors' election of Wendy Pradt Lougee, University Librarian and McKnight Presidential Professor, University of Minnesota, as ARL Vice President/President-Elect.

Three new Board members were elected by the membership to serve three-year terms: Joan Giesecke, Dean of Libraries, University of Nebraska–Lincoln; Judith C. Russell, Dean of University Libraries, University of Florida; and Jay Schafer, Director of Libraries, University of Massachusetts Amherst.

Continuing elected members of the Board are: Deborah A. Carver, Philip H. Knight Dean of Libraries, University of Oregon; Carol Pitts Diedrichs, Director, University Libraries, Ohio State University; Ernie Ingles, Vice-Provost, University of Alberta; Deborah Jakubs, Rita DiGiallonardo Holloway University Librarian, Vice Provost for Library Affairs, Duke University; and Anne R. Kenney, Carl A. Kroch University Librarian, Cornell University.

Also serving on the Board in ex officio capacities are: Carton Rogers, Vice Provost and Director of Libraries, University of Pennsylvania; James F. Williams II, Dean of Libraries University of Colorado at Boulder; Ann J. Wolpert, Director of Libraries, Massachusetts Institute of Technology; and Charles B. Lowry, Executive Director, ARL.

The Board is the governing body of the Association and represents the interests of ARL member libraries in directing the business of the Association, including establishing operating policies, budgets, and fiscal control; modifying the ARL mission and objectives; and representing ARL to the community.

To view a photo roster of the ARL Board of Directors, visit http://www.arl.org/arl/governance/board.shtml.

ARL Transitions

Hawaii: Paula Mochida will retire as Interim University Librarian, effective, December 31, 2011. She has served the university for over 37 years, including 5 years in her current position.

Library of Congress: Deanna Marcum will retire as Associate Librarian for Library Services, effective December 31, 2011, after 8 years in the post. She has accepted the position of Managing Director, Ithaka S+R, effective January 1, 2012. Roberta I. Shaffer has been appointed Associate Librarian for Library Services at the Library of Congress, effective January 3, 2012. She has served as Law Librarian of Congress since August 2009.

SPARC Transitions

SPARC Europe: Lars Bjørnshauge was appointed Interim Director, effective October 19, 2011. He was formerly Director of Libraries at Lund University in Sweden and a long-standing member of the SPARC Europe Board.

Other Transitions

Association of American University Presses (AAUP): Peter Givler plans to retire as Executive Director, effective June 2013, after 16 years leading AAUP.

British Library: Lynne Brindley will step down from her position of Chief Executive at the end of July 2012, after 12 years leading the library.

Honors

Sul Lee was honored by the University of Oklahoma (OU) during its annual Ring Ceremony on October 21 for his "outstanding leadership of the library system for more than 30 years." He also was selected to serve as parade marshal for the OU Homecoming Parade on October 22.

Memorial

Jan Merrill-Oldham, 1947–2011

Jan Merrill-Oldham died peacefully at her home in Cambridge, Massachusetts, on October 5, 2011, at the age of 64. As the Malloy-Rabinowitz Preservation Librarian at Harvard University, she directed the Weissman Preservation Center in the Harvard University Library and the Preservation & Imaging Services Department in the Harvard College Library from 1995 to 2010. Prior to her work at Harvard, she established the University of Connecticut Libraries' Preservation Department. While at Connecticut and Harvard, Merrill-Oldham served as a consultant to the ARL Preservation of Research Libraries Materials Committee for 15 years, helping to shape a preservation agenda for ARL and guiding the development of standards for mature preservation programs in ARL libraries. She was a leader in the preservation profession and trained many of the preservation administrators now in ARL libraries. In 2002, ARL honored Merrill-Oldham for her service to research libraries.

ARL Calendar 2012

http://www.arl.org/events/calendar/

January 20–23	ARL, LibQUAL+®, SPARC at ALA Midwinter Dallas, Texas
February 9–10	ARL Board Meeting Washington, DC
March 11–13	SPARC Open Access Meeting Kansas City, Missouri
March 12–16	Service Quality Evaluation Academy New Orleans, Louisiana
April 2–3	CNI Membership Meeting Baltimore, Maryland
May 1–4	**ARL Board & Membership Meetings** Chicago, Illinois
June 22–25	ARL Statistics & Assessment events at ALA Annual Anaheim, California
July 26–27	ARL Board Meeting Washington, DC
October 9–12	**ARL Board & Membership Meetings** Washington, DC
October 29–31	Library Assessment Conference: Building Effective, Sustainable, Practical Assessment Charlottesville, Virginia
December 10–11	CNI Fall Membership Meeting Washington, DC

Research Library Issues

A Quarterly Report
from ARL, CNI, and SPARC