



Center *for* Research Libraries
.....
GLOBAL RESOURCES NETWORK

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Collections as Community

2020 EAST Member Meeting
December 9, 2020

Topics Today

1. Contemporary challenges, historical context
2. Making sense of collections
3. Paths ahead for shared print

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We face existential challenge

The changes wrought by the digital revolution add up to a perfect storm for libraries and librarians.

This perfect storm is so terrifying because the role that many librarians have seen for themselves historically is not a great fit for the current era.

- John Palfrey, Bibliotech (2015)

We have been here before

“As **an agent of change**, printing altered methods of data collection, storage and retrieval systems and communications networks.”

– Elizabeth Eisenstein,
The Printing Press as an Agent of Change
(Cambridge, 1979)

We have been here before

[The research university] organized what had been experienced as **a 'flood' of print** into coherent, culturally complex intellectual identities. It was a source of authority amid moments of technological change and epistemic anxiety.

– Chad Wellmon,
*Organizing Enlightenment: Information Overload and
the Invention of the Modern Research University*
(Johns Hopkins, 2015)

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Radical Uncertainty

"Faltering budgets compound an intensifying existential crisis resulting from profound shifts in information, scholarship, technology, and academic organizations. The **purposes of collections are particularly uncertain** in this radically fluid context."

"Libraries are on uncertain ground as they engage with this **fractious, seductive, alien, and essential universe.**"

– Dan Hazen, *“Rethinking Research Library Collections”* (2010)

There are multiple ways to define collections

Collections can be understood as:

Things

Service

Collections as Service

Collections as Use

Curricular Collections



Teaching and Learning

Scholarly Record



Scholarship

Distinctive and
Special Collections



Cultural Heritage

Collection Models: Angharad Roberts

Collections-as-Things

Collections-as-Process

Collections-as-Access

Angharad Roberts, *Conceptualizing the Library Collection for a Digital World*, PhD Thesis, University of Sheffield, 2014.

Collection Models: Lorcan Dempsey

Lorcan Dempsey
Outside-In/Inside-Out
Collections

Lorcan Dempsey
Facilitated Collections

Dempsey: Outside-In, Inside-Out

Outside-In BOUGHT LICENSED

- Increased consolidation
- Move from print to licensed
- Manage down print – shared print
- Move to user-driven models

Aim: to discover

Inside-Out

- Institutional assets: special collections, research and learning materials, institutional records,...
- Reputation management
- Increasingly important?

Aim: to ***have*** discovered... to **disclose**

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Celebrate and Foster Community

How shall we foreground values of diversity, inclusivity, and equity in our collections and services?

How shall we foreground values of diversity, inclusivity, and equity in how and when we collaborate?

How does Open Access and the push to create an open knowledge ecosystem change our approach to collective collecting?

Embrace Paradox

Local

Global

Popular

Distinctive

Contemporaneous

Prospective

Analog

Digital

Foreground First Principles and Values

- Diversity, Inclusivity, and Equity
- Democracy
- Public Good
- Responsible Stewardship

*Taken from ALA Core Values of Librarianship & SAA Values Statement and Code of Ethics

Community Building as Capacity Building

"While ever more prolific, varied, and collaborative, shared print efforts remain awkwardly siloed – not only from program to program, but also, even more detrimentally, from other library services and infrastructure. Overcoming that siloing is the hurdle that shared print now faces."

- Susan Stearns & Alison Wohlers, "Shared Print on the Threshold," *Collaborative Librarianship* (2020)

Collections **are** Community

"Humor is essential to the integrative balance that we need to deal with diversity and difference and the building of community."

- bell hooks

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Thank you

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