

Managing Electronic Resources for Today's User
ARLD/ACRL Maryland and Congress of Academic Library Directors (CALD)
Friday March 2, 9:30-3pm

ARLD/ACRL Maryland and Congress of Academic Library Directors (CALD) presented a joint program on electronic resources on Friday March 2, 2007. There was a full audience of about sixty attendees in the meeting room at the Timonium campus of Loyola College.

Andrew Wheeler from the US Naval Academy presented an overview of the challenges involved in managing resources in the academic library. He listed the advantages of consortia resource management, especially cost savings but also group database evaluation and training, and central billing. Some disadvantages may be that individual libraries cannot always choose their preferred resources, vendors and billing dates. Next, Wheeler discussed ERM (electronic resource management) tools which currently require too much customization; these systems need to provide easy access to licensing, renewal information and standardized tracking information for statistics. Wheeler also mentioned future trends, such as open access, institutional repositories, new formats (ex: the Digital Michelangelo Project at Stanford) and new models such as a NetZFlux model for inter-library loan. Wheeler recommended the following sources for additional information:

- Open Access News, Peter Suber
www.earlham.edu/~peteers/fos/fosblog.html
- Resource Shelf, Gary Price www.resourceshelf.com
- TechEssence.info Roy Tennant et al.

ERM:

- *Journal of Electronic Resource Description & Access*, Haworth Press
- *Getting Things Done*, David Allen
- DLF ERM12: dlfermi.blogspot.com

Usability:

- Usability.gov www.usability.gov
- Don't Make Me Think, Steve Krug
- UM Library Usability Studies
- University of Michigan Library
www.lib.umich.edu/usability/projects/projects.html

Emma Kryer from Johns Hopkins University provided an inside look at ERM or electronic resource management. With photographs of offices crowded with file cabinets and stacks of papers, she showed the system that existed prior to the development of ERM systems. However, due to the work and time involved to implement an ERM, many libraries that have purchased ERM software still depend heavily on paper files, pdf licenses stored on local drives and spreadsheets. Emma discussed the Digital Library Federation's Electronic Resource Management Initiative (DLF ERMI) which is developing standards for these systems <http://www.diglib.org/standards/dlf-erm02.htm>. While the original idea was for an integrated program, interoperability with other library

systems is still a problem. Some libraries have programmed their own ERM, such as UNC which used MySQL to build an ERM which links to their A-Z database and journal lists. The Sheridan Libraries at Johns Hopkins use Innovative's ERM which does provide access to database licensing information through the OPAC. Naturally an integrated ILS and ERM would provide greater functionality and more information to users. Erma also discussed:

- Standardized Usage Statistics Harvesting Initiative (SUSHI): protocol for standardized statistics for tracking usage of databases and journal titles.
- Haverford's white paper on the integration of the acquisition modules of the ILS and the ERMS
http://www.haverford.edu/library/DLF_ERMI2/ACQ_ERMS_white_paper.pdf
- E-Books:
 - Originally vendors offered very strange pricing models to try to emulate the way the library's print books are purchased and used.
 - Technology hasn't been satisfactory for reading e-books.
 - E-books are typically only used for a few minutes not read in their entirety; good for reference.
- Future: ERMOPACILS – a fully integrated system.

Nathan Robertson from the University of Maryland Law Library discussed license management for electronic resources. Licenses for databases and for specific journals differ and they are time-consuming to read and interpret. ERMI includes terms of use fields which can be specified when the license is initially reviewed. Then the library can provide information on terms of use to staff and even users through its ERM. Libraries can also develop license interpretation guidelines which list the terms they decide are most relevant. Emerging trends indicate a movement toward standard licensing expression, http://www.editeur.org/onix_licensing.html, and an xml standard for communicating license information. There is also a NISO initiative for a shared e-resource understanding which would eliminate the need for license agreements! <http://www.niso.org/committees/SERU>

“Usability testing is an iterative process”, according to Laura Wrubel, who gave a presentation on usability studies of electronic resources by the University of Maryland libraries. Results from the OCLC survey of college students underline the need to simplify interfaces: while students recognize that library resources are more credible and accurate, they find internet search engines much faster, more reliable and easier to use. Laura provided several tips for usability testing:

- UMD uses a group of about 40, including undergraduates, graduates and faculty, but they do a series of tests with four students in each round. With this method, the library can make some adjustments, then do another test and make incremental improvements during the study.
- UMD librarians recruit students on the spot at the café by offering them \$25 gift certificates at Barnes and Noble or Amazon; they make appointments with faculty (students often miss appointments)

- Have student assistants (graduate students) conduct the tests so participants feel less intimidated than they would by librarians.
- UMD uses MORAY software which captures everything participants say, and the sessions can be viewed simultaneously from another computer.
- Usability tests should include tasks that are typical of what users look for at the library, such as looking for books or articles using the library catalog.

During the presentation, Laura provided great quotes:

“What people say, what people do, and what people say they do are entirely different things.”

-- Margaret Meade

“Any darn fool can make something complex; it takes a genius to make something simple.” --Pete Seeger

“If the user can't use it, it doesn't work.” --Susan Dray

Submitted by Patty MacDonald, ARLD
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