Reference Services Committee  
Minutes of the meeting of February 10, 2005, 9:30-11:30 a.m.  
Alice Moulton Room, Gerstein Science Information Centre

Present:

Patricia Bellamy (Robarts), Richard Carter (St. Michael’s), Heather Cunningham (Gerstein), Elsie Del Bianco (Trinity), Shauna Dorskind (Media Commons), Margaret Fulford (Dentistry), Barbara Geiger (Regis), Hannah Kim (East Asian), Sandra Langlands (Gerstein), Noel McFerran (St. Michael’s), Sian Meikle (ITS), Jenny Mendelsohn (Robarts), Suzanne Meyers Sawa (Music), Gail Nichol (Earth Sciences), Lee Robbins (Astronomy), Patricia Serafini (OISE), Nalini Singh (FIS) (Chair), Vicki Skelton (CIR), Mary-jo Stevenson (Robarts-CDD) (minutes), Susanne Tabor (Gerstein), Ted Tjaden (Law), Robert Tomaszewski (Chemistry).

Regrets:

Laura Anderson (Rotman), Sara McDowell (Robarts), Gabbi Zaldin (Victoria)

1. Minutes of the last meeting (January 12, 2005):

Approved

2. Business arising:

Barbara Geiger inquired as to whether any progress has been made with having UN Access listed as an e-Reference resource. Sara McDowell will report at the next meeting.

Nalini handed out copies of the Illumina Quick Reference Card, to have something ready to be used for teaching and at the desk when Illumina goes live this week.

Patricia Bellamy reported on the Illumina Focus Group session for OCUL Scholar’s Portal representatives at OLA. Jenny Mendelsohn and Gail Nichol also attended. Attendees were asked to imagine what the ideal Illumina interface would be and the first response was “Just like Google”. Discussion ensued about how to create the best search interface for the service. Other discussion focused on whether relevancy or currency was the better default display. Jenny mentioned the “Making Links” blog (makinglinks.uwindsor.ca:8087/mitas/sfxblog/), which is devoted to “libraries + SFX + RefWorks + Illumina”.

3. Report from Sian Meikle:

a) Hypertext links in the detailed record

Recently, it has become obvious that the subfields included in hypertext-linked fields may need adjusting; some hypertext searches are giving surprising results. Sian asked people to report any problems they’ve experienced with using hypertext links in the detailed record to her. Elizabeth Black is currently reviewing the issue and would like this feedback.

b) Serial concatenation

A FIS practicum student is working with Elizabeth Black and Anne Dondertman to identify duplicate records for serials. So far, out of a possible 20000 records, 9000 have been examined. Some technical problems need to be solved before serial records can be concatenated:

-- we must figure out how to move serial controls from one bib record to another
-- for e-journals, we must figure out how to identify and edit specific marc holdings records attached to a given bib record

A discussion followed on how online and print journal records should be concatenated. Sian will summarize and post on refinfo, and ask for input.

c) Links to online resources on the hitlist

Currently, the hitlist just displays “URL” and “Online” as link. We can display more detail, if it is available in the 856 field in the bibliographic record. We discussed options and ramifications. Sian will summarize and post on refinfo, and ask for input.

4. Report from Sandra Langlands: Working Group on CSA’s Illumina Interface

Sandra provided a written report of the Working Group’s progress:

-- Staff at 11 OCUL libraries completed the Group’s questionnaire; comments are being reviewed to identify common themes for improvement requests

-- With Alan Darnell’s help, the Group will identify which items can be dealt with at the OCUL level and which can be referred to CSA; the latter items will be dealt with in a conference call or at a meeting with CSA

-- The Working Group held a focus group on Illumina at OLA and results are being summarized now

-- The Group is planning to do usability/user testing of the interface at member institutions in March/April for undergraduates and May/June for graduate
students and faculty. Results will be analyzed over the summer. Gail Nichol, Heather Cunningham and Patricia Bellamy will participate in the study.

5. OLA Superconference Reports

Gail Nichol reported on the Reference Interview session, which was also attended by Nalini and Heather Cunningham. Discussion focused on the difference between in person and live chat reference work, where the reference interview is part of the process, and email reference service where there is little opportunity for an interview. Redesigning the reference email inquiry form could improve the situation; the form used by the Internet Public Library was noted as being detailed enough to get around the inability to conduct an interview. Discussion followed about how we might revise our various online reference forms to elicit more information than presently requested, and whether there are ethical issues about retaining such detailed information about users. Patricia Bellamy suggested that interested people can meet and look at revising our forms: she, Heather, Nalini, and Gail will do so.

Nalini Singh reported on James Marcum’s session on the Library as a Dynamic Learning Centre. Dr. Marcum’s goal is to transform the library into a “dynamic learning centre.” He believes the library can play a leading role in creating a dynamic learning culture, both on the campus and in the community and that the university should be concerned less with transferring existing information and knowledge and more with creating environments where knowledge can be discovered, created, and shared, as a part of assisting people to become competent in the real world.

Richard Carter reported on a session on Roving Reference Librarians presented by the Markham Public Library. As only about 30% of users go to the desk when they need help, Markham librarians walk around and ask people if they need help, and find this a proactive way of showing people the kind of service they can find at the library. Gail mentioned a Simon Fraser University initiative called ‘Librarians have left the building – Ask us here’ in which librarians set up a mobile reference desk with a wireless laptop in various high-traffic campus locations. It’s been highly successful with staff getting more in-depth reference questions at the remote desk than at the main reference desk in the library.

6. Announcements

Ted Tjaden starts a year’s leave of absence March 1. John Papadopoulos will replace Ted on this committee, but is also teaching at FIS fall term, so may not be able to attend all meetings.

Marian Press will be on research leave March 1 – August 31, 2005. Pat Serafini will be the OISE representative to the committee while Marian is away.
Suzanne Meyers Sawa mentioned a problem with records for CDs in the Music Library. Many CDs do not circulate, although the initial screen for a title indicates STACKS; it isn’t until you get into the catalogue information section that the “for use in library only” note is visible. As well BINDERY as a location for Music material means the item is in the backlog at Robarts and there is no way to retrieve it.

Nalini noted that ‘Mr. Google’ is calling again; others reported hearing from him as well. Remember to immediately forward his calls to Bill Godoy. As well, be sure GALTs working at reference desks are informed of the procedure for dealing with him.

Noel McFerran raised the issue of how to deal with an annoying user who isn’t doing anything illegal or wrong but who is making other users uncomfortable. Campus police will not come in such situations. Suzanne mentioned that the Music Library has had success in subtly encouraging such users to leave by make staff presence clearly obvious to them.

**Next meeting:** Wednesday, March 9, 2005, 9:30 – 11:30 a.m., Alice Moulton Room, Gerstein Science Information Centre.