Reference Services Committee  
Minutes of the meeting of January 12, 2005, 9:30-11:30 a.m.  
Alice Moulton Room, Gerstein Science Information Centre

Present:

Gail Nichol (Engineering & Comp Sci), Sian Meikle (ITS), Jenny Mendelsohn (Robarts), Heather Cunningham (Gerstein), Gabbi Zaldin (Victoria), Elsie Del Bianco (Trinity), Marian Press (OISE/UT), Richard Carter (St. Michael's), Sandra Langlands (Gerstein), Laura Anderson (Rotman), Mary-jo Stevenson (Robarts - CDD), Nalini Singh (FIS) (Chair), Barbara Geiger (Regis), Sara McDowell (Robarts), Elaine Tamura (UTSC), Patricia Bellamy (Robarts), Sam-chin Li (DMGIS), Shauna Dorskind (Media Commons AV), Suzanne Meyers Sawa (Music), Margaret Fulford (Dentistry) (minutes).

Regrets: Irene Puchalski (Architecture)

1. Minutes of the last meeting (November 10, 2004):

Approved.

2. Business arising

Sian Meikle described a new feature that will appear in the EIR whereby library staff will see a "report a problem" icon and will be able to click to inform ITS of problems accessing specific e-resources. Marc Lalonde will send out an e-mail to announce this feature. Library staff will be encouraged to use this reporting method rather than e-mailing "e-problems", as this has the advantage that library staff can see whether someone else has already reported the problem.

ITS will set up this feature to appear on all Central Libraries staff computers. Other libraries will be asked to e-mail Marc the IP addresses of their library's staff computers in order for him to set this up.

3. Report from Sian Meikle:

Sian Meikle reported that before the holidays there was a note added to Books 24x7 informing users that off-campus access was unavailable. This was because Books 24x7 was concerned about certain users downloading and saving many books and was cutting off access by IP address.

Books 24x7 now requires an anonymous numeric identifier for each user. Confidentiality is protected: since ITS knows who the users are, but Books 24x7 only knows the identifier. So Books 24x7 can cut off individual users who are breaking the rules, by their numeric identifier rather than their IP address, which
is preferable since it doesn't affect others at the same IP address.

So, off-campus access has been restored, but now users must log in with their barcode and pin even if they are on campus. This means that there is no access for walk-in users; ITS is still working on a solution to this.

Sara McDowell suggested there should be a follow-up discussion later re: the possibility of going with an alternate vendor next time. (The Books 24x7 license was renewed in October.)

Jenny Mendelsohn asked Sian if it is possible to get usage statistics for e-resources. Sian said that a relatively easy way would be to track click-throughs from EIR, though this would miss people who have bookmarked particular resources. This could be looked into in the future.

Sian brought to the committee the issue of what wording to put in the catalogue to alert people that a particular library (such as UTS or Mt. Sinai) may have restrictions on access or borrowing. This must be done within certain technical limitations such as number of characters. There was extensive discussion of what wording to use, whether to include an alert on both the hitlist and the details page, how to make the alert stand out in the case of libraries that have restrictions, how to keep the wording positive, whether to tailor the alert to the particular library, whether to add the alert to the library name in the display, what terms users may or may not understand, etc. The committee made suggestions which Sian will try out in the catalogue.

Marian Press asked about the "online" links from book catalogue records which lead only to a book's table of contents and may mislead users. Sian explained that this is the 856 tag in the MARC record, which appears in some records copy-catalogued from LC, and that U of T cataloguers can choose to remove the 856 tag so that this "online" link will not appear in the catalogue.

Jenny raised the issue of users being confused or misled by links to publishers' web pages from the EIR intro pages. By clicking a publisher's link from the intro page to a particular resource, the users may find themselves at web sites where they are asked to pay for resources. Sian said perhaps the links to the publishers could be made less prominent. The WAG group will consider this.

Marian Press mentioned that getting into the catalogue had been slower than usual of late. Sian said she will watch this issue over the next week, and if it's still slow she will ask Sirsi to look into this.

Sandra Langlands reported on the Scholars Portal working group of a number of Ontario universities looking at CSA/Scholars Portal:

The group has members from Queen's, York, UWO, Wilfred Laurier, Windsor, and U of T.

Alan Darnell gave them background information and a demonstration.

They decided to solicit feedback from librarians and user. They drafted a checklist (questionnaire) with the goal of giving it to librarians by the end of January.

They also plan to hold a focus group at the OLA Super Conference in early February.

Sandra distributed the draft questionnaire to the committee members ("DRAFT: Scholars Portal Illumina Background and Questionnaire for Library Staff Feedback"). Sandra asked the committee if they wanted to have a meeting to give responses to the questionnaire.

Nalini Singh pointed out that the committee's comments from an earlier meeting covered similar ground as the questionnaire. Sandra offered to slot those comments from the earlier meeting, plus subsequent ones that committee members had e-mailed, into the questionnaire responses. Then she'll send the responses to the committee to see if any more input is needed beyond that.

Sandra also confirmed that those additional e-mailed comments had been seen by the working group. Nalini confirmed that both the comments from the meeting and the additional comments had been sent to CSA by Hana Alston. All the comments were also included in the November Reference Services minutes.

Nalini also mentioned that she finds the Scholars Portal listserv useful; if people want to subscribe they can contact Hana.

Alan Darnell had sent an e-mail about needing some sort of a U of T representative for Scholars Portal issues. Sandra will speak to him to find out more about what's needed.

Jenny Mendelsohn emphasized the importance of U of T's giving input on key issues such as which options will be the default.

5. Report from Sara McDowell:

Sara McDowell reported that:

We now have access to the World Shakespeare Bibliography, which was
jointly sponsored by Victoria and Central Libraries.

We will have a new edition of the Encyclopedia of Religion online (round March) co-sponsored by Regis and Central Libraries.

We should soon have the Bibliography of the Hebrew Book.

Gail Nichol asked about AccessUN. She noted that while this shows up as an e-Index, it also contains many e-books, but since these e-books are not in the catalogue, they are not well used. She wondered if AccessUN should be listed as e-Reference.

Sara said she would find out whether AccessUN makes MARC records for the e-books available.

Nalini asked Sara if she’d heard whether Wilson indexes will be included in CSA/Scholars Portal; Sara hadn’t heard any update on this.

Jenny noted that one can now search multiple Wilson indexes simultaneously, which is very useful.

Marian mentioned that people find it frustrating when the EIR intro page for a journal leads not to the journal but to Wilson's Library Literature and Information Science. Previously this was the only option, but Sara will check with Marc Lalonde to see if this can now be changed.

Sara mentioned that Wilson is now doing retrospective indexing of old journals and asked the committee if they would be interested in this product. She will bring more information to a later meeting.

Sam-chin Li followed up on the AccessUN discussion, reporting that the Data Library has been talking about ways to make AccessUN more accessible.

Patricia Bellamy said she would find out about the possibilities for putting AccessUN material into the catalogue.

Patricia mentioned that the categories "e-Reference", "e-Indexes", etc. need to be rethought, since even librarians sometimes can’t remember whether something is in e-Reference or e-Indexes. She suggested this would be a good topic for WAG to look at in the future.

6: Other Business

Sandra Langlands mentioned that we will soon have e-CPS (electronic version of Compendium of Pharmaceuticals and Specialties), acquired through the Health Science Information Consortium of Toronto.
Patricia Bellamy mentioned that WAG has been working with Marc Lalonde on some changes to the UTL site, especially the Library Services section. She asked that people send comments to refinfo.

Nalini mentioned that the Reference Services committee's terms of reference will be discussed at the February Library Council meeting.