Reference Services Committee  
Minutes of the Meeting of October 12, 2005  
Alice Moulton Room, Gerstein Science Information Centre

Present: Gail Nichol (Engineering, Chair); Noel S. McFerran (St. Michael’s); Warren Holder (ITS); Dan D’Agostino (CDD-Gerstein); Laurie Scott (Consortium); Barbara Geiger (Regis); Mary-jo Stevenson (Robarts); Elaine Tamura (UTSC); Gabbi Zaldin (Vic); Jennifer Toews (Fisher, minutes); Alastair Boyd (Robarts Cataloguing); Susanne Tabur (Gerstein); Suzanne Meyers Sawa (Music); Nalini Singh (FIS); Hana Kim (East Asian); Elsie Del Bianco (Trinity); Sian Meikle (ITS); Richard Carter (St. Michael’s); Renata Holder (Gerstein); Sophia Kaszuba (Univ-Laidlaw); Jenny Mendelsohn (Robarts); Vicki Skelton (Centre for Industrial Relations); Sam-Chin Li (DMGIS); Patricia Meindl (Chemistry); Sara McDowell (Robarts); Rea Devakos (T-Space)

Regrets: Margaret Fulford; Patricia Bellamy; Heather Cunningham; Ian Whyte; Sandra Langlands; Jack Howard

1. Minutes of last meeting: September 14

The Scholars Portal Search report may be available in October. Sandra Langlands can report to the committee on this.

2. Business Arising:

Question for Patricia Bellamy (not present) from Barbara Geiger: When is the revised catalogue brochure available?

Question: When has the Teaching and Learning Group meeting been changed to?  
Answer: They are still trying to find a date that will work. To keep informed, please make sure to join the ILU listserv.

3. Non-roman records in the OPAC – Alastair Boyd

Max Okrasa and Alastair have been working on an in-house system to display non-roman characters in the OPAC, as there are definite drawbacks to only having access to Roman letters in the database.

They have developed a scheme through a Plug-In feature which allows both forms of headings to be viewed by the user.

Alastair demonstrated the prototype for the Committee. When a bi-lingual record is selected, the user will see a message to ‘View in Original Script’ in large font.

As catalogue records imported from OCLC and RLIN already contain the fields with the required information for this function, cataloguers will stop deleting this coding from imported records in the future.
The ‘View in Original Script’ link will only show in the record when there is something to see.

Jenny asked about searching in non-roman characters.

Max O. is presently working on other projects in this same vein including searching issues. All of the indices are presently based on the Romanized form.

Warren asked about searching in e-resources.

There must be an ‘880’ field in the record for this to occur.

4. Presentation on Open Access - Dan D’Agostino:

Dan presented his findings on the course of the future of Open Access e-journals and libraries; forecasting possible directions for the next four years.

His presentation highlighted how libraries will have to change, how they will have to pay more for Open Access initiatives to continue.

In the mid-1990s the goal was to make information freely available immediately upon publication—to remove all barriers between user and information. This has not worked out as planned, partly due to cost.

Material may be made available by two main methods:

a) Green Road – where the author self-archives in Open Access

b) Gold Road – where the author publishes in an Open Access journal

Dan proceeded to outline some further systems of online publishing, including issues which have arisen.

He went on to suggest the future role of libraries and librarians in this context, such as: becoming more involved with indexing of databases to make them more user-friendly, creating tools which help users to effectively sift through research, creating Blogs for research teams.

5. Rea’s presentation on T-Space postponed until later in meeting

6. Scholars Portal Search Discussion:

The Committee had an extensive discussion regarding the use and teaching of Scholars Portal

Elaine began the discussion by asking how others are directing students to use Scholars Portal
Nalini stated that she uses an inter-disciplinary approach to teaching.

Noel said he uses Scholars Portal for some searches as the results include a broader range of material, e.g. ‘Ratzinger’ will produce a wider range of search results than searching theological indices.

Elaine asked whether users tend to use Scholars Portal themselves.

Some members agreed that teaching of resources should be subject-based.

Warren encouraged members to direct users to Scholars Portal rather than Google Scholar because of linking issues—searches will be more successful on Scholars Portal. Scholars Portal uses controlled vocabulary which builds in more material. User surveys are continuing: users should be asked what they would like to be taught.

Jenny asked how many members prefer to use ‘quick search’—this method generally returns too much non-relevant material.

Discussion ensued as to preferences for using ‘basic’ versus ‘advanced’ searching as the default setting; including issues of phrase searching in ‘basic’.

There was discussion regarding pre-selecting databases for searching, especially searching inter-disciplinary sources at the same time.

Jenny asked about possibly clustering results by database, such as searching ‘AIDS’ + ‘Policy Africa’ to include both health and political articles.

Noel pointed out that we want users to make selections before their search commences, whereas users want to select from a larger range of results—it becomes a question of what users want versus what they actually need.

Suzanne mentioned that many users will likely give up their searches if they are forced to make too many choices before receiving results; that we want to teach users to be information literate before they leave university; and suggested that many undergraduates learn their search strategies from one another.

Sian suggested asking undergraduates what they need.

Jenny pointed out that undergraduates and faculty want simple, effective searches that produce a few ‘good’ articles in their topic areas—we should concentrate on how we get them to this point.

Richard suggested that federated searches satisfy some users while forcing others to the reference desk for help.

Further discussion ensued.
Gail summed up saying that the majority of the Committee members would like to stay with the quick search on the Library home page if we could have the addition of ‘AND’ and keyword search functions; otherwise we should seriously consider switching to ‘advanced’ search as the default.

The discussion about Scholars Portal could continue at another meeting as there are so many issues to cover.

5. Update on T-Space – Rea Devakos:

In the interest of time Rea presented a shortened version of her update on the T-Space project.

Rea agreed to submit her presentation to the Ref. Services list.

Some key issues of concern to respondents to the spring consultation process regarding T-Space are:

- a need for greater marketing of the project to university community
- appropriate governance structure
- production of a brochure to promote the service
- possibility of a name change
- positive reaction to new web design
- concerns regarding the presence of T-Space articles in the Library Catalog and the quality of the metadata in T-Space records generally
- supplying citation and usage statistics to contributors
- negative reaction to tying T-Space to tenure and promotion process
- call for greater involvement of subject librarians
- initiatives to implement the creative commons.ca license and priority Google indexing

Key Respondents Interview Summary:

- need for University wide deployment
- integration with Library operations
- appropriate committee structures

7. Other Business:

Jenny made an announcement on behalf of Patricia Bellamy, requesting research and resource tips be submitted. These will randomly appear on the library’s homepage. Please note that ‘research tips’ are tips for searching and ‘resource tips’ are tips regarding the existence of individual resources. Please send any tips to Marc Lalonde - they cannot be more than 15-20 words including title.

Please email any other business to Gail.