UBC LIBRARY NEWS

new series no. 31/ february 1991

Scholarly communication system in jeopardy?

Have you visited the Library recently to look at a new journal or book only to discover we don't have it? If not, expect to. UBC Library, like all major research libraries today, is not able to keep up with the unending avalanche of publications. That's not new. What has turned this situation into a crisis is the escalating cost of serials. The causes and implications of this crisis as well as the solutions go far beyond the Library and its budget. They go to the heart of the University's mission—the creation and dissemination of knowledge.

The problem

Not only are research libraries unable to keep abreast of scholarly publications, they're losing ground. A recent analysis of serial holdings of major North American research libraries shows their coverage of the estimated universe has dropped from 32% to 26.4%. University library budgets, despite increases, are purchasing fewer and fewer publications, resulting in less comprehensive and less balanced research collections.

The main reason for the decrease in buying power is the tremendous rise in the cost of serials, especially technical, medical and scientific journals published abroad. Over the last fifteen years, average serial prices have been going up at twice the consumer price index (approximately 10% a year). The price of foreign publications has been going up much faster. Add the relative weakness of the Canadian dollar (UBC Library spends over 90% of its collections budget outside Canada) and the many new journal titles published (doubling every ten years) and a budget squeeze was inevitable.

Some causes

Between 1976 and 1986, the number of scientists in the U.S. doubled to over 4 million. According to an article published in the *Chronicle of Higher Education* in 1987, articles are submitted at a rate of one every 30 seconds to over 40,000 science journals (containing over a million articles) published each year. The academic tenure and promotion system, which continues to be based primarily upon scholarly publishing, contributes significantly to this publication explosion. As a result, more journals are being published, they're getting larger and being published more frequently.

There is little direct competition in scholarly publishing, which has become increasingly commercialized. Some major firms have a virtual monopoly in certain fields. Together, three of the largest publishers (Elsevier, Pergamon, and Springer) publish almost 1300 journals. Spiraling prices well beyond production costs have created considerable profits for the commercial publishers. A 1989 report by Economic Consulting Services Inc. for the Association of Research Libraries (ARL) analyzed average prices and costs for four major firms in the U.K., Netherlands, Germany and the U.S. The findings show that subscription price increases between 1980 and 1987 have exceeded costs by 4.5% to 12.9%.

Library tactics

The pressure on research libraries to maintain journal subscriptions gives

First Annual Symposium on Library Issues

Scholarly Communication System in Jeopardy?

1:00 p.m. – 2:30 p.m.
Thursday, March 14th
Room 110
Henry Angus Building
Everyone welcome

Ann Okerson from the Association of Research Libraries will join a panel of faculty, deans, and the University Librarian to discuss this issue and possible solutions. Ann Okerson is the author of a major report on the crisis – *Of Making Books There is No End* – commissioned by the ARL in 1989.

This symposium is sponsored by Ruth Patrick, University Librarian and Daniel Birch, Vice-President, Academic.

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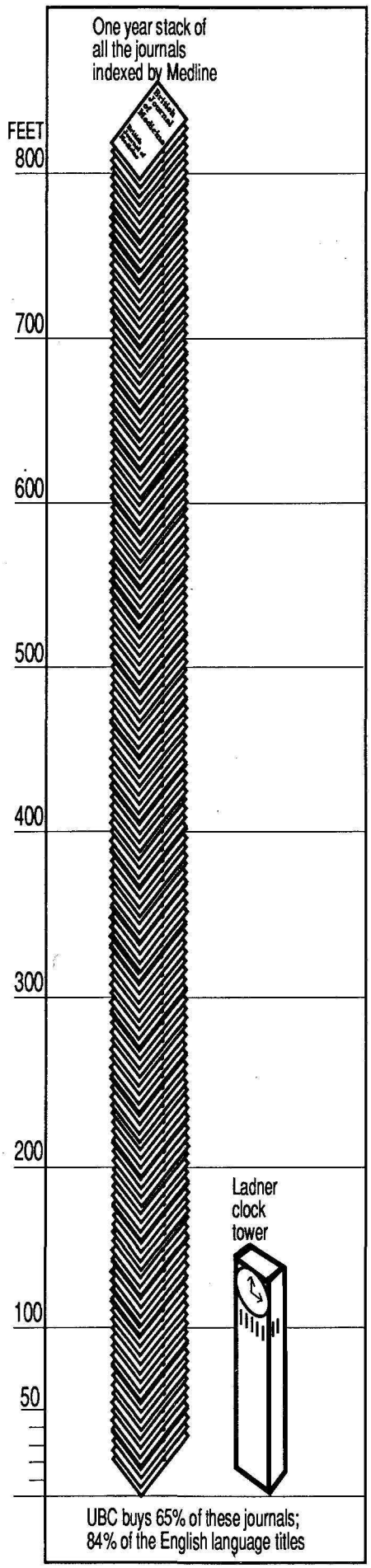


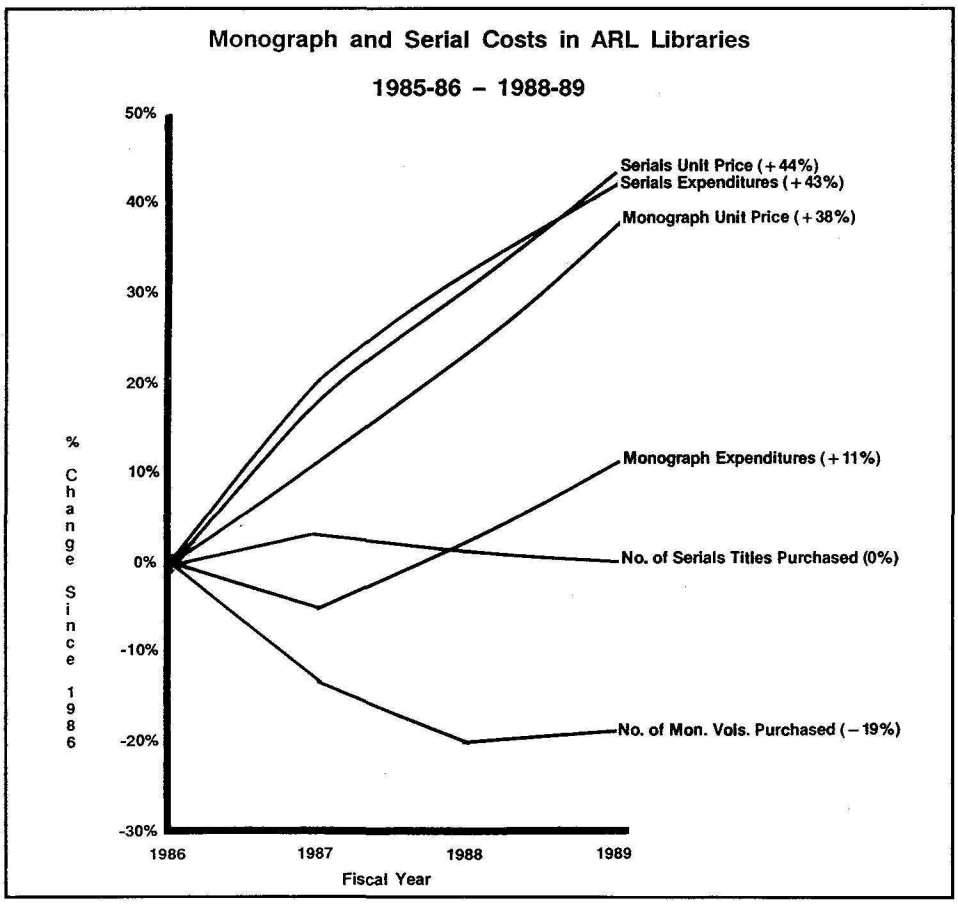
the publishers a captive market. However, as prices began to skyrocket, research libraries had to take action.

The early seventies ushered in the first massive serial cancellation projects. To keep a balance between monograph and serial spending and preserve equitable subject coverage, research libraries had to cut serial titles. The cancellations have not stopped. For example, the University of Toronto Library recently cut over 1,500 serial titles. The Library at University of California, Berkeley, has just cut over $400,000 (U.S.) from its serials budget and expects to cut more this year. The cuts, however, have not curbed serials spending from eating into book budgets. ARL libraries spent an average of 40% of their collection budgets on serials in 1976. By 1987, this ratio had risen to over 56%.

Academic libraries have tried to bolster their collection budgets by seeking special increases and endowments. To this end, university funding reserves are being redirected to try to keep up with the soaring prices. Many libraries have cut staff positions to move more money into their collection budgets. Research libraries have also tried to reduce the impact of serial cancellations by entering into cooperative buying projects and resource sharing plans.

Some UBC examples

Since 1976, the Library has cut over 2,800 serial subscriptions in three major cancellation projects. Despite these cuts, we now spend between 60 to 65% of the $6 million collections budget on serials compared to 32% twenty years ago. Looking at the science collection budget, the numbers are even more dramatic—serials now account for over 81% of their budget compared to 63% in 1984. And it would be far higher if the Science Division hadn't cut such mega-titles as *Beilsteins Handbuch der Organischen Chemie* (cut in 1978, it now costs over $26,000) and *Science Citation Index* (cut in 1988, it now costs over $11,000—Woodward Library still has a subscription).



Examples of price increases

	1984	1991
European Journal of Operational Research	$370	$1,119
Journal of Molecular Structure	$1,334	$4,613
Journal of Comparative Neurology	$1,592	$5,009
Brain Research	$3,477	$7,858

Of course, subscriptions are only part of the expense in maintaining journal files. Additional costs include checking in issues, binding, and providing space to shelve them.

During the university budget reductions in the 1980's, the Library was successful in protecting the collection budget from major cuts. However, considerable sacrifices have been made in staffing the Library. In 1987 and 1988, $430,000 from the salary budget was reallocated to collections on a continuing basis. The Library also received assistance from "excellence" funds and other special allocations. Favourable foreign exchange rates in the last few years have provided more stablity. However, price increases are not going away and the GST will add 2.3% to our collection costs.

Electronic solutions

With new computer technology and the establishment of information networks in academe, there is some optimism for finding a partial solution to this crisis. However, as long as commercial publishers maintain copyright control, the costs of using technology for the dissemination of published research could be even higher for universities. A recent experiment in the Law Library illustrates this point. A U.S. commercial database offering full-text retrieval was searched for articles in law journals not held by the Library. Downloading a few articles cost a staggering $538 (U.S.).

Taking back control

Research libraries have concluded that continuing to seek more money for collection budgets is not the answer. The system of scholarly communication must be reformed. Ann Okerson's report (*see box p.1*) summarizes the current literature on the serials crisis and ends with several recommendations. She advocates increasing competition as one way to prevent the major commercial publishers from continuing to wreak havoc with university library budgets. Academe needs to increase the use of existing non-commercial channels as well as establish alternative publishing ventures which take advantage of computer technology to collect, preserve and disseminate knowledge produced at universities. University administrators must also reconsider current policies that have created the 'publish or perish' syndrome. The issues are complex and require the leadership and participation of faculty and university administrators. The solutions are not simple. But can we afford not to seek them?

Brenda Peterson

Senate Library Committee

Members of the Senate Library Committee advise and assist the University Librarian in formulating policy for the development of resources for instruction and research; in advising on the allocation of book funds to the fields of instruction and research; in developing a general program of library service for all the interests of the University; and in keeping the University Librarian informed about the library needs of instructional and research staffs, and keeping the academic community informed about the Library. The Senate Library Committee reports to Senate on matters of policy under discussion by the Committee.

The faculty members for 1990/1991 are Dean P.T. Burns, Mrs. E.A. Carty, Dean J.R. Grace, Dr. S.E. Grace, Dr. J.A. McLean, Ms. B.M. Peterson, Dr. P. Resnick, Dr. G.G.E. Scudder, Dean N. Sheehan, and Vice-President, Student and Academic Services, K.D. Srivastava. The convocation senator members are Mr. J.A. Banfield and Ms. N.E. Woo, and the student members are Miss A.L. Callegari, Mrs. L. Lohia, and Mr. M.D. Nikkel.

Chancellor L.R. Peterson, President D.W. Strangway, Registrar R.A. Spencer and University Librarian R. J. Patrick are ex-officio members. Dr. Resnick is Chair of the Committee.

Crane Library receives service award

The Crane Library for the blind and visually impaired received a Certificate of Merit February 5 during National White Cane Week, sponsored jointly by the Canadian National Institute for the Blind and the Canadian Council of the Blind. The award is for Crane's role in providing access to information for the blind, visually impaired and many print disabled persons throughout British Columbia. Crane Library's unique collection of taped and braille books and materials, technical resources and reference services are primarily for UBC's blind and visually disabled students. But Crane has become a provincial as well as national resource by sharing these materials with libraries, educational agencies and service agencies nationally and internationally.

Paul Thiele

Canadian government CD-ROM'S for your review

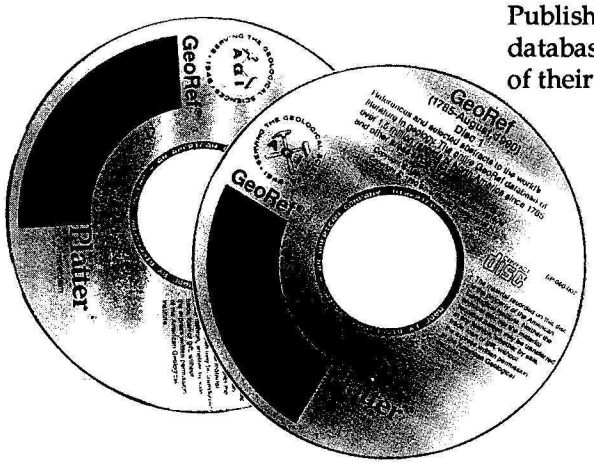
The Library is participating in a federal government test of electronic publications in depository libraries. The test is to consider the implications of including electronic formats in the depository programs. Two products are available for your review in the Humanities/Social Sciences Division, Main Library.

Termium is a computerized bilingual dictionary created by the Department of the Secretary of State. It contains about 3 million French and English terms in all fields of knowledge. Each term is defined and notes are included about its acceptability rating, its origin, frequency and official status. The database comprises the Secretary of State's collection of terms, proper names and translation problems. You can search the database by browsing the index of entry terms or by searching the text of the records.

StatsCan Reference Disc 1989 is a CD-ROM product distributed by Statistics Canada. Its main contents are a Statistics Canada Publications Catalogue and a Directory to the CANSIM Main Base Series. You can search the Catalogue by keyword to identify specific Stats Can publications, a complete collection of which is in Government Publications. The CANSIM Main Base Series Directory is a 'Table of Contents' to the information Stats Canada maintains on the economy. If the information is in print form, it may be in Government Publications. If it is in machine-readable form and included in the CANSIM University Base, a subset of the Main Base Series, it is available in the Data Library.

The Library has been asked to complete test evaluations for the Canada Communications Group, formerly the Canadian Government Publishing Centre. Come try the databases. We welcome your opinion of their usefulness.

Jocelyn Godolphin



Geology research easier on CD-ROM

If you're doing research in geology, take advantage of Science Division's new CD-ROM, *GeoRef*. *GeoRef* has more than 1.5 million citations and covers the geology literature of North America since 1785, and of all other areas since 1933. It indexes journal articles, conference proceedings, dissertations and separately published maps. You can tailor your searches using keywords, date limits, language limits and other combinations. *GeoRef* is updated quarterly.

Searches on a CD-ROM are fast, especially retrospective searches. You may download or print your search results. Searching and downloading is free; please bring your own 3.5" disk. Printing costs 15¢ a page with a UBC Library copy card. The CD-ROM is available weekdays from 8am to 5pm in Science Division, Main Library. For more information or to book a time slot to use *GeoRef*, phone 228-3295.

Bonita Stableford

Your neighbourhood, city, world – the numbers at your fingertips

Have you ever wanted to find the demographic characteristics of your neighbourhood or another area in Canada? Do you need to know the age and sex distribution of the population in your neighbourhood? What is the educational, occupational, language, and ethnic makeup? How many of the dwellings are owned or rented? What about labour force information and household incomes?

These data are available from the Canadian census. A national census has been held every ten years since 1871. Since 1956, Statistics Canada has also conducted a mid-decade census, the most recent one in 1986. The next census day is June 4, 1991.

The population census is a major source of demographic information for research and planning at both local and national levels. Since 1961, census data have been distributed in computer-readable form, thus providing a ready source of data for computer-based statistical analysis.

All computer-readable census files are available for use at the UBC Data Library. (Printed census publications are in the Government Publications Division, Main Library). The Data Library also has many other numeric data files. The collection is particularly strong in Canadian economic, financial, and demographic data, Canadian social surveys and public opinion polls.

If you need computer-readable figures of any kind, the Data Library is the place to start looking! Please call 228-5587 or come to the Computer Sciences Building, Room 206, for more information. We are open Monday to Friday from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Hilde Colenbrander

What will UBC Library be like . . . in the 21st century?

What do we want it to be like? What will students, faculty and others expect from the Library? What services and resources will exist? What will be the same? What will be different? Dr. Ruth Patrick, University Librarian since August 1990, began a strategic planning process in September to answer these questions and many others.

Like other academic research libraries, UBC Library faces many changes - in technology, in the publishing industry and in higher education. These changes will bring opportunities as well as challenges. Many large academic libraries, including MIT, the University of Michigan, and Carnegie Mellon, have developed strategic plans recently to help them manage these opportunities and challenges. Although all of the strategic plans share some common concerns, each Library's plan is also unique, reflecting that particular institution's environment. UBC Library's plan will also take into account external and internal trends, and, in particular, the goals and objectives of the University's mission statement, *Second to None.*

The planning process began with a questionnaire which asked staff to list the major issues facing the Library. Jeff Gardner, a consultant from the Association of Research Libraries, was hired to coordinate the process. In October, after a review of the questionnaire results, meetings were set up with all levels of staff. A planning retreat was organized, after which committees were formed to begin work on various parts of the strategic plan. Many staff are involved in these committees and work is proceeding on a statement of the library's values and operating philosophy; on a vision statement of the desired library of the future; on an environmental analysis; and on assessments of the Library's current performance.

A user survey will be circulated soon among the university community. The survey is one way we will gather your views on the library. As the Library's strategic plan evolves, interested members of the university community will have the opportunity to discuss and comment on it. Watch this newsletter and *UBC Reports* for more information.

Gifts enrich the collection

Hugh M. Palmer, Arts '36, recently donated to Special Collections a collection of almost 300 volumes by and about Aldous Huxley. The collection includes first editions of Huxley's novels, short stories, poetry, drama and other primary works, and critical and biographical works about Huxley.

Jan J. Solecki, Associate Professor Emeritus of Slavonic Studies, recently donated a substantial collection of some 500 books on forestry (mostly in Russian, with a few in Polish), including many on the Soviet pulp and paper industry. To be housed in the MacMillan Library, the collection dates primarily from the 1960s to the present. It contains some books from the '20s and '30s, as well as a few rare imprints published in Russian in Harbin, Manchuria.

Cyril Bryner, Professor Emeritus, Slavonic Studies, has given the Library over 200 books and periodical issues on Russian science fiction and a number of rare editions published by Russian emigre scholars in Prague.

Help in the online jungle

Graduate students and researchers in History, Political Science and Education participated recently in hands-on sessions on using the online library files. These sessions teach basic search skills as well as orient participants to the variety of online sources accessible for their research.

Sessions tailored to information needs

Coordinated through the Humanities and Social Sciences Division, the sessions are tailored to the information needs of specific subject areas. For example, last fall, History graduate students attended three sessions. The first covered the basics of searching UBCLIB, using the more powerful command rather than menu mode. The second session provided search practice on local online files of interest to historians, such as the Canadian Politics Bibliography, the Vancouver Centennial Bibliography, and the Canadian Institute for Historical Microreproductions. The final session was an overview of bibliographic, numeric and textual databases containing historical information available on networks, such as Internet, on CD-ROM, in data depositories like the Data Library, and through commercial vendors.

Sessions to tutor Education students

Hands-on workshops on searching the Library files, including ERIC, were provided to education students in early January. They can also attend Info Tutor, Wednesday through Friday at 3:30 p.m. until March 22, in Scarfe 1A, for an individualized tutorial on searching any of the files on UBCLIB.

Jocelyn Godolphin

UBC authors to be honoured

UBC President David Strangway and University Librarian Ruth Patrick will host an inaugural reception March 18 to recognize and honour members of the UBC community who have recently written books.

If you are a member of the University community and the author of a book published between January 1990 and March 1991, we would like to hear from you. Please phone Isabel Pitfield, Main Library (228-2302).

AROUND THE LIBRARIES

People

Anthony Hardy was appointed November 20, 1990 as the Indonesian Language Bibliographic Associate. He has a B.L.S. from the University of Indonesia and was Deputy-Head of the Central Library of Atma Jaya Catholic University in Jakarta for five years.

Dan Heino and **Diana Kent** from Woodward Library and **Barbara Saint** from St. Paul's Hospital Library were largely responsible for the preparation of the Health Libraries' Association's submission to the Royal Commission on Health Care and Costs. The submission, presented by Dan Heino, proposed that a health information network be set up to serve the health professionals throughout the province.

Janet Heekin has been appointed as a temporary reference librarian in Woodward Library until April 30, 1991.

Hot off the press

Access to Scientific Information
Science Division, UBC Library
(brochure)

Footnotes and Bibliographies: Getting Started

Geological Sciences Information Resources at UBC

Physics Information Sources at UBC

Start Here 127. General Literature of Education (revised)

Start Here 150. Basic Geological Science Sources

Start Here 151. Basic Physics Sources

To request a copy of these hand-outs, phone the Information and Orientation Division (228-2076).

On Display

Freedom to Read
Books to dust?
Murder in the Stacks
Main Library

Romanov Dynasty
1613-1917
Special Collections
Main Library

History of Bloodletting
Hippocrates
Medieval Caricatures of
Thomas Rowlandson
Woodward Library

Apollo's Kiss/Matricide: an allegorical landscape
Cornelia Wyngaarden
March 5-28
Fine Arts Gallery
Main Library

Editor: Julie Stevens
Design: Merry Meredith

Information and Orientation Division
University of British Columbia Library
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