ubc library bulletin

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OUR CHIEF IS 6 MONTHS OLD

Six months ago Doug McInnes was named University Librarian. In honour of the occasion we waylaid him to ask a few questions about the Library's prospects for the next year or so.

Q: What do you see as the strengths of the UBC Library?

A: There are many. Obviously, the Library's real strength lies in its rich collections and in the knowledge and skills of its staff. In comparison with many research libraries, the UBC Library is quite young; it has nevertheless developed collections of international importance, thanks to the priority given over the years to maintaining collections funding even in difficult times and to the dedication of those who have worked to build collections of lasting importance . In particular, the breadth and depth of our serial and microform collections are remarkable, even among very large libraries.

We also have in good measure the other ingredient essential to a strong research library: people with the knowledge, skills and desire to make the Library indispensable to the University's teaching and research programmes. Every library staff member contributes in some way to the end product: providing collections and information services to our public. The UBC Library has a long tradition of good service. This is often difficult to maintain in a large system, with pressures of heavy use and shortages of funds, but somehow we have always managed it. Everything good that happens in the library is the result of the work of many people; the truly memorable characteristic of this library comes from the extra effort that so many staff members make to satisfy individual library users.

I would not want to underestimate the importance of the good will and cooperation that have existed among Library staff. We have enjoyed a lack of formality that has made communication easier, and I would like to see that continue. Perhaps we have done less well in the more formal kinds of communication, which are just as important but which require greater effort to maintain. Library staff can help by pointing out matters on which more information from the library administration would be useful.

Q: And what are its weaknesses?

A: Physical space and the lack of funding to proceed with a more systematic transition to the use of new technology. In many parts of the Library, the shortage of space for collections and readers is already critical. Equally frustrating is our inability to reorganize the space we do have so that major collections and services can be presented in ways that are more effective and efficient for the library user.

Our library systems staff has developed and kept running computer support for our housekeeping and records control. At this point, however, I can think of nothing that would improve services more than to have the capital funding and other resources needed to take the next big step: to bring the multiplicity of partially complete records together in a unified system, allowing patrons and staff to determine quickly and easily what we have, where it is, and, if necessary, to request it for use. We <u>have</u> come a long way from the not-too-distant past when information about the collection as a whole was available in only one central location. Given the resources, we could now do much more to make access to the collections easier and more complete.

While there are several good reasons for our conservative approach to

non-book materials, it is nevertheless true that the Library as a whole has done relatively little to provide materials in formats other than the printed book and its microform equivalents. In this we probably reflect the unspoken priorities of the University itself,. New formats for information will become more important in future, however, and we are poorly equipped to deal with them.

Q: What problems will you be tackling in the next year?

A: At least half of our collections budget is spent on serial publications and the collections are generally rated highly by users, but we still get many complaints about the unavailability of current periodicals. We must give some priority to finding ways of improving access to current periodical literature. Reductions in the number of duplicate subscriptions, together with increased emphasis on journal articles in undergraduate courses, have made this perennial problem more acute. No simple answer would suffice; to make any real improvement we will have to review loan policies, procedures for handling and binding serials, physical arrangements for housing current issues, and staff requirements to keep issues in good order on the shelves.

I think we must also begin a review of our space requirements, updating figures used as the basis for the 1980 proposal for a new Main Library building. It would make good sense in the present financial climate to examine alternative plans that could offer more immediate relief to our most critical space problems.

Another priority this year will be to see the WLN/BLIS system replicated in British Columbia. You will be hearing more about this before very soon. (ed's note:see next article)

Q: Changes in information technology have already profoundly affected how this and all other libraries operate. What further impact do you think these changes will have on this library?

A: I hope it will allow better access to resources here and elsewhere. It has staggering potential for expanding the external resources that we can make available to library users at UBC. It poses a great many problems for us as well. For example, participation in RLG's East Asian program would provide on-line access to a wealth of information about East Asian materials held in major North American research libraries, but we probably can't afford the capital costs for specialized terminals or the on-going cost of using the system. New developments in information technology will greatly expand our potential for improved library services - all it takes is money and the divine guidance to select wisely from a broad range of possibilities.

Q: The need for economic restraint has meant some consolidation in the library system. Will there be more?

A: What consolidation? Last year we opened 2 new branch libraries (St. Paul's and Hamber), a health sciences networking service, and assumed responsibility for the Film Library and the Centre for Human Settlements A/V Library. It's unfortunately true that in the same year we lost a branch (Ecology) and changed our relationship to campus reading rooms. These were changes that I would like to have avoided, and I hope that further "consolidation" doesn't occur unless it can be for positive reasons, such as integration into a new and better building. Closing the Reading Rooms Division affected people in the Library and in many faculty departments. The problems involved in extricating the Library in an acceptable way from an increasingly costly service are intimidating, and we aren't through with them yet.

There are issues such as the Library's role as a provincial resource and the impact of BCLN, etc. that will be important, but perhaps they are best left for another time. Instead, let me thank you for all the kindness you have shown me and wish you a Merry Christmas and a very Happy New Year.

B.C. LIBRARIES NETWORK TRIAL

One tangible result of library cooperation in B.C. is the B. C. Union Catalogue, listing nearly a million items in provincial libraries. Participating libraries have used UTLAS cataloguing services to create the data base from which this is produced. It has been felt that the computer technology available and the cooperation achieved in B.C. would be better exploited if a library data base and the supporting technology were established in the province and used for such things as acquisitions, interlibrary loan, authority control, perhaps an on-line catalogue with public access. Doing this provincially offers the advantage of local control to set priorities for development and maintenance.

Funding has been obtained for a trial run of such a service. B.C. Libraries Network (BCLN) will consist of a library catalogue system and data base operating from a University of Victoria computer and the initial participants will be UBC, UVIC, SFU, BCIT, and VCC Libraries. Other B.C. libraries are expected to join later.

The catalogue component was developed by the Washington Library Network (WLN) and is part of a turn-key (meaning ready-to-go) system being acquired from Biblio-Techniques, a company in Olympia, Washington. The whole system is called BLIS and includes the WLN system, ADABAS (a data base management system), and COM-PLETE (a communications support system).

The data communications network between the participating libraries' terminals and the computer in Victoria will use the UBC Library mini-computer and thus permit existing terminals and printers to be used with BLIS. Our Systems division will be largely seconded to the task of implementing BCLN; this allows the trial to go ahead on a shoe-string budget. Bob MacDonald is the project manager for the initial implementation and staff from UVIC and SFU, as well as UBC Systems staff, will be involved. There will be some effect on UBC systems work for about 6 months; details will not be known until initial planning is completed. Library use of the mini-computer will be unaffected by BCLN use.

Right now the schedule for implementation, which includes obtaining UTLAS tapes of the participating libraries' holdings, reconciling and merging them into one file, and adapting the WLN/BLIS system to this file, is being worked out. Staff training for the new procedures will also be necessary. The system should be installed at UVIC during January; the pilot operation includes a 3 month evaluation expected to start in March, with the final 'go-no go' decision expected in May/June. This decision will largely depend upon the costs of the trial and whether the funds of the participating libraries are sufficient to make BCLN viable.

Libraries using BCLN will continue to use UTLAS, but the amount of use will decrease as work shifts from UTLAS to BCLN. Also the kind of use may change as UTLAS, rather than being used to maintain the catalogue data base, will be used only as a source of information.

BLIS has a number of advantages over other systems. It is currently in use in a number of libraries, including the National Libraries of New Zealand and Australia, University of Washington and other American university libraries and any improvements made to BLIS at these places can be incorporated into the BCLN system. The strong points of BLIS are the authority support, better search methods including keyword access using Boolean logic, an acquisitions system, and potential for use as a public access catalogue. Comparison showed it to be a better choice than continuing with UTLAS. The cost of BLIS is expected to be less also, although that will be determined from the trial.

If BCLN flies, it will be a while before there is much of a public impact in the library. The first effect will probably be more consistent,

Did you read this whole page?

accurate forms of entry as a result of the authority control. This also means we may have to accept some forms of entry in our catalogues not of our choosing. For the next year the microcatalogue and other fiche lists will be produced here as usual. Our long-awaited acquisitions system will start up when space at the Computing Centre becomes available and planning is completed for it because moving it to BLIS would require real dollars; doing it here uses only computer dollars.

UBC Library has been committed for many years to the development of a provincial library catalogue system, one that will offer direct benefits to the UBC Library. If the trial is successful, we'll be one step closer that system.

NEWS FLASH

The Bulletin has just learned that Heather Keate was appointed Assistant University Librarian for Public Services (Branch Libraries) effective immediately. Heather has been with the UBC Library since 1970 as Science Bibliographer, Assistant Biomedical Librarian, and Deputy Biomedical Librarian. This past year she served as Interim Planning Coordinator for the expansion of the health sciences library services.

As Assistant University Librarian, Heather will be responsible for most branch libraries, excepting Sedgewick and Mathematics. For the immediate future, however, Bill Watson will look after Asian Studies, Crane, and Curriculum Laboratory as well as public services in Main, Sedgewick, and Mathematics.

AUTOMATION OF THE LIBRARY'S PERSONNEL AND ESTABLISHMENT RECORDS

Erik de Bruijn and Bill Ng in Systems have developed automated files and procedures to replace the various manual files in the Librarian's Office which record information about the Library's staff and establishment of positions. The objectives have been to reduce the amount of manual record keeping, to avoid duplication, to provide faster access to information and a variety of outputs which currently have to be manually prepared, such as staff lists and telephone lists.

Two files have been established: one containing information relating to all the Library's positions, and the other relating to the Library's staff. Within each file is a separate record for each position or each person. At the present time, records have been established for all the Library's positions, excluding student assistants, and personnel records are being added, beginning with staff appointed since October 1982.

SUPPORT STAFF CHANGES

One result of Erik and Bill's automation of staff records is that the Bulletin will now be listing support staff changes.

New staff (including temporary appointments):
- Zofia Grzybowska, LA I, Main Circulation
- Keiko Takahashi, LA II, Special Collections
- Nina Schaubs, KPO, Catalogue Products
- Darlene Fichter, KP Trainee, Acquisitions
- Carmen Rettich, LA I, Fine Arts
- Bonnie Lissel, LA III (part-time), Science
- Shelley Brown, LA I, Woodward
- Lorraine Herbst, LA II, Catalogue Records
- Margaret Bayley, LA I, Sedgewick

Ups and Downs (promotions, temporary and permanent, and demotions):
- Sara Jean Lohmann, LA II, Catalogue Records
- Anne Helgason, Clerk II, Acquisitions
- Naomi Mitchell, LA II, Woodward
- Katherine Lebold, LA II, Woodward
- Maureen Martens, LA III, Catalogue Records

Transfers:
- Allisa MacDonald, LA I, Main Circulation
- Kevin Grace, LA III, Catalogue Records

Resignations:
- David Cumming, LA I, Curriculum Laboratory

SERIALS AND DRS GET NEW ON-LINE INDEXES

Systems recently regenerated the NAME and TITLE on-line keyword indexes for the Serials and DRS files. The new programs for index maintenance seem to be working and the indexes are current and stable. The indexes are updated automatically whenever information is changed in the main record. Systems would like library staff to try the new indexes and report any problems encountered. Phone Brian Owen, 5066.

Systems is going to convert the ISSN, ORDER and LCCN indexes to the new indexing programs in the near future to standardize command and prompt syntax and information display. It is likely that other numbers such as the RSN and Government Document Number will also be indexed. Systems is currently exploring the possibility of indexing all numbers in one large index, to be called appropriately enough NUMBERS, instead of maintaining separate indexes.

SHARING IS TRYING

Staff using SHARE will know that response time has not been very satisfactory recently. Systems has been attempting both through changes in the Library's computer facilities and through talking to the UBC Computing Centre to improve the situation. In the meantime, you can help by signing off SHARE or any library terminal if a message appears on the screen asking you to do so. Signing off promptly means Systems can re-start the system and you neither lose data nor inconvenience those who have signed off and are waiting for the system to come back up.

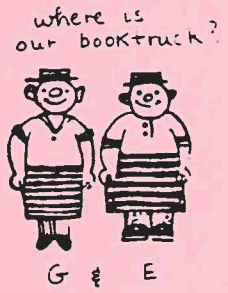
GIFTS AND EXCHANGES NEEDS

Urban Reader vol. 1, 1973, all issues

U.S. News & World Report, vol. 88, no. 26, 1980, & vol. 91, nos 16 & 19, 1981

Its Booktruck, no. 143, a Remington small dark brown wood truck missing since July.

If you can supply these issues or know the whereabouts of this truck, please call Gifts and Exchanges, 2304 or 2607.



NNOUNCEMENTS

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Rolf Boon, LA I, Main Circulation, in real life is a music composer. Recently 6 of his compositions, ranging from a bassoon solo to 2 pieces for a small orchestra, were performed at his graduation recital for a Master's in Music Composition. Rolf would like to compose music for films; in the meantime, he's the super-tracer in Main.

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Advertisement of Professional Positions

Advertisements for Canadian professional positions will be circulated to all librarians. All other current American and foreign advertisements will be kept in a binder in Erik de Bruijn's office. Feel free to consult. Notices for senior positions in US libraries will be listed in the Bulletin as space permits.

Recently Received:

Assistant University Librarian for Public Services, George Washington Univ., Washington, D.C.

Assistant University Librarian for Technical Services, George Washington Univ., Washington, D.C.

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THIS LIBRARY BULLETIN NEEDS NEWS. Now that the Bulletin is committed to a more or less monthly publishing schedule, it needs news. Is your branch or division doing something that the rest of the library should know about? Is there something that you wish the rest of the library would stop doing? Is there something that you or another staff member has done that deserves reporting (publications, recitals, elected offices, other formal achievements, etc.)? Send items to Editor, Library Bulletin, I & O, Main Library.

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The display committee in the Main Library is thinking of doing a display on collectibles in the 5th floor case in the Main Library. If you have a collection of things usual or unusual that could be put into the display case and are willing to loan some of it, please send details to Jocelyn Foster, Information & Orientation, Main Library.