Among Harvard's Libraries: Conference on research trends and library resources

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CONFERENCE ON RESEARCH TRENDS
AND LIBRARY RESOURCES

Lawrence Dowler

A Conference on Research Trends and Library Resources was held at Harvard on 22 and 23 February 1990. It was jointly sponsored by the Harvard College Library and the American Council of Learned Societies, under a grant from the Council on Library Resources. Lawrence Dowler, Associate Librarian of Harvard College for Public Services, and Stanley Katz, President of ACLS, were co-chairs. (A list of participants is printed as an appendix.)

The purpose of the conference was to identify new or changing tendencies in research in the humanities and social sciences and the implications of such changes for research libraries. In addition, we hoped to elicit from the participants some of their concerns about library and other research institutions and suggestions for changes in library practices that would support research in the future.

In organizing the conference, we tried to select scholars who would be broadly representative of the various academic disciplines within the humanities and social sciences: English literature, political science, classics, ancient and medieval history, history of science, anthropology, material culture, women's studies, art history, social and cultural history, and public policy were among the areas covered. At the same time, we looked for scholars who seemed to exemplify the changing trends in research that were a principal focus of this conference.

Prior to the conference, participants were asked to consider three trends in research that appear to have particular significance for library services and resources. First, there are a growing number of scholars for whom research has changed appreciably as a result of new technologies. For some, technology has made research more efficient but has had only a limited impact on the kind of research they do; in other cases, however, the nature of research is being significantly altered because technology makes it possible to explore issues that could not otherwise be explored. Both cases have implications for libraries, especially in the area of library services. Second, many scholars are doing interdisciplinary research or, perhaps more accurately, are asking questions that are not easily satisfied by consulting traditional library cataloging and classification schemes.

For these scholars, the question of the level and type of access provided by libraries to research materials seems to be crucial. Third, and related to the preceding examples, many researchers are now using materials, such as images, artifacts, popular literature, ephemera, and the like, that are not the materials primarily collected by most research libraries. The extent to which libraries can or should collect such items is obviously an important question for both scholars and librarians.

The scholars invited to the conference were asked to write brief papers, which were circulated prior to the conference. The papers were meant to be open-ended and to encourage speculation about the themes outlined above, the direction of research in each scholar's discipline, and the possible consequences for their discipline. The scholars were also asked to comment on the adequacy of library resources and services for their research and to raise those issues and concerns that ought to be considered by a session on research trends and library resources. The papers and much of the discussion focused broadly on the three topics outlined in the agenda: the impact and consequences for academic departments of new sources of information, problems of access to information, and new technologies. As one might expect, it was not possible to limit discussion to a single topic; discussion and thoughts flowed back and forth among these three themes, with occasional forays into new issues and areas of concern. This report does not reproduce in detail two days of discussion, but rather attempts to capture the leading ideas presented in both papers and discussions during the course of the conference.

I. NEW SOURCES OF INFORMATION

The discussion of sources of information reflected scholars' increased use of different forms of research materials, including images, ephemera, artifacts, conference reports, spatial data, etc. There was considerable discussion throughout the conference of the value of imagery and what James Ackerman called "vernacular expressions of culture." It was generally agreed among this group of scholars that libraries needed to acquire not only the traditional published sources but also "nontraditional" research materials—images, including photographs

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and motion picture film, popular literature, even advertising and other forms of ephemera, spatial data, personal papers and archives, artifacts, raw economic and social data, and virtually anything else that might reflect the attitudes, activities, and culture of society.

Two underlying reasons for the increased interest in these nontraditional sources or, at least, two themes, emerged from the discussions. First, many scholars have perceptibly shifted away from interpreting canonical texts and toward examining the context or frame of reference within which a text, idea, or activity may be understood. Even scholars whose interest centers on public policy and whose methodology is primarily quantitative rather than historical are often concerned with understanding the context in which decisions are made and are, therefore, interested in nontraditional research sources. Thus, the changing nature of inquiry, including a greater emphasis by scholars on expressions of everyday life—social and cultural history, studies of women and families, popular culture, public perceptions and beliefs about a variety of issues—has tended to promote more interdisciplinary research and, therefore, the use of nontraditional sources. In the words of Ken Ames, "The range of goods considered appropriate for study has expanded over the past two decades. Any artifact may provide valuable insights into society, culture, or psyche."

Related to this trend is the changing nature of the sources, or documentary evidence, society is producing. Specifically, as James Ackerman observed, "A much greater proportion of today's information and artistic expression is in the form of imagery." The same observation can be made about electronic information. The point is, changing sources and forms of information will affect how research is done and, therefore, should affect what libraries and archives acquire in order to support research. In sum, the changing nature of scholarly inquiry, coupled with the changing nature of documentary evidence produce new research trends that will significantly alter the resources libraries need to acquire in order to support research.

The conference participants were clearly aware of and concerned about the implica-

tions for libraries of changing patterns of research. Although there was a plea that librarians pay more attention to acquiring and preserving imagery (among other materials), it was also generally recognized that no library or repository could possibly collect everything. There was some discussion about the possibility of employing core sampling techniques for some forms of research materials, and several scholars argued for event- or issue-oriented collecting. Who, for example, is collecting all types of evidence relating to the "cold fusion controversy," including communications on BITNET?[1] There was virtual unanimity about the need for libraries to establish collecting priorities. Not every library needs to collect "junk literature," observed Roberta Miller, even though such material can be very revealing; what was needed, many thought, was cooperative collection development, even regional networks, among research libraries. Several challenging inferences that emerged from the discussion about cooperative collecting efforts ought to interest the research community—librarians, as well as scholars.

First, the consensus among the participants that no institution could collect everything and that cooperative efforts would be essential is contrary to the common experience of many librarians, who have seen cooperative efforts thwarted by the complaints of their own faculty. The conference itself may have increased this group's appreciation of library problems and may explain the consensus for cooperation. Another reason may be that many participants were engaged in interdisciplinary or nontraditional research, which took them beyond the walls of their own institutions. In any case, the thrust of their argument suggests that the time for networking and cooperative collection development (especially for nontraditional materials) is at hand and, as Stanley Katz noted, the nineteenth-century concept of the library as a storehouse or service facility for faculty may be coming to an end.

Second, despite some confusion over the difference between libraries and archives, participants recognized that the need to collect nontraditional materials could not be borne by research libraries alone. But, as Ken

[1] Roberta Miller, David Musto, Kathy Peiss, James Ackerman, Eugene Wu, Stanley Katz all commented on this issue; Ken Carpenter wondered if institutional cooperation would include materials scattered in small repositories.

Ames put it, just as the boundaries between academic disciplines are weakening, so too may the boundaries between libraries, archives, museums, etc., be diminishing. In truth, the sources for research, or at least research in primary sources, had always extended beyond the resources of an individual research library, but the participants in this conference, perhaps because they saw their own research gravitating to multiple cultural sources, came close to suggesting that the concept of a research library needed to be reinvented.[2] At the very least, they concluded that what was needed for research was access to a broad variety of cultural evidence, which might be found in a variety of research institutions, and that they all ought to be linked by a common informational network. Conceptually, this suggests that traditional library networks ought to become cultural databases, not just bibliographic utilities.

Third, responses to a question about the consequences of collecting nontraditional material turned to a discussion of the tenure process and academic recognition. In part, the tenure issue evolved out of the further question of whether collecting nontraditional material was the responsibility of the library or of the faculty. Several scholars at this conference were actively engaged in constructing databases of research material[3] and, in this sense, were indeed engaged in an activity that some believe should be carried out by librarians.[4] Technology has clearly been a factor in this development, but the issue for faculty is that the academy gives little recognition for this kind of activity. As Gregory Crane noted, in the academy, "tenure is the incentive, and building up resources, such as a database, as opposed to, say, summarizing, is less valued in tenure considerations." The problem is compounded by the fact that academia has retained the traditional notion of form, i.e., books and articles, and scholars are less likely to be rewarded for using nontraditional media, such as images.[5] It was further argued that tenure decisions, that is the criteria used to make tenure decisions,

will ultimately determine or strongly influence library policies and structure. The measure for tenure has always been the book or article, thus libraries preserve these forms. "But since there are other ways of contributing to knowledge, how do libraries reflect this shift? Some works lend themselves to being recorded on electronic rather than print media."[6] The question, perhaps, is whether the primary mission of the research library is to reflect the academic tenure process, or whether it has a wider responsibility to collect and make accessible information about society and culture. And if the responsibility is not the library's, then whose is it? This is a critical question for any attempt to "rethink" or "reinvent" the library.

Fourth, there was some recognition that even when actual materials could not be brought together, it was important to bring information about those materials together.[7] Such informational networking is precisely the aim of a project in the Yale Babylonian Collection; it is also the kind of project, at least for publications, that librarians have tried to carry out through the creation of union catalogs and national library utilities. The shift from information sources to information *about* sources also neatly brings us to the second theme, the consequences for academic disciplines of the problems of access to information.

II. Problems of Access to Information

If conference participants agreed that no single research library could collect everything and, recognizing this, proposed that libraries divide collecting responsibilities among themselves, perhaps regionally, they also agreed that librarians ought to be able to provide access to research materials regardless of location or form of material. In one sense, conference participants seemed to be arguing for a return to traditional library bibliographic functions. At the same time, there seemed to be considerable dissatisfaction with, or at least mistrust of, library cataloging practices as useful access tools,

[2] See especially Tim Weiskel's paper, but also remarks by Stanley Katz.

[3] Gregory Crane, Martha Howell, and Gary Beckman.

[4] In point of fact, building collections, in whatever format, has always been a function of scholars, collectors, and, in a generally different way, librarians. The question of how collections are created and who creates them is worth

pursuing—there seems to be considerable confusion about it among scholars—but the issue was not taken up at this conference.

[5] Kathy Peiss.

[6] Roberta Miller.

[7] Gary Beckman.

especially for nontraditional research.[8] This apparent contradiction, that is, the request for more bibliographic work and collection-level finding aids on the one hand, and mistrust of traditional library cataloging practices on the other, can perhaps be understood by considering the scholar's method of doing research, at least in the humanities, and by considering the relationship of this method to interdisciplinary studies.

Humanist scholars generally work alone; their methodology might best be characterized as associative, that is, because human culture is so complex, one rarely knows where a particular piece of evidence or idea will lead. And because inquiry constantly shifts and changes, a preconceived guide or catalog can never anticipate every research question. The "most important part of the research process," notes Martha Howell, "happens when I go out on my own. Every time I blunder around library shelves or muck through scholarly journals I find material of use to me; and sometimes I stumble upon an argument, a piece of evidence, a way of looking at a piece of evidence that utterly changes my line of research." Moreover, this need to "browse" through materials has been accentuated by the trend toward interdisciplinary and "messy" cultural research.[9] As Robert Preyer observed, "A researcher who makes the effort to penetrate below the level of common opinion comes to the startling awareness that one might have to revalue the significance of materials long ignored, texts never canonical ... [and] virtually unknown today." Indeed, it is precisely because scholars are moving beyond the canonical texts in their fields and asking different questions that traditional catalogs and guides are found wanting. Only one thing is certain: serendipity is still an important aspect of research in the humanities.

The fundamental question about access is the extent to which poor or limited access to research materials inhibits innovative research and perpetuates imitative scholarship. This question and various responses to it were never far from the surface during the discussion of access problems. On the one

hand, as Doug Greenberg noted, nontraditional research is being done, despite the fact that libraries do not systematically collect nontraditional materials. On the other hand, nearly everyone acknowledged that a great deal of research was imitative and determined by or limited to the most readily available materials. Students faced with an overwhelming number of sources can end up doing imitative work.[10] In the words of Gregory Crane, "People tend to avoid questions that might be interesting but that would force them to do too much 'leg work.' Change the amount of time it takes scholars to move around within their source material, and they will gradually change the places they visit." From this perspective, proximity is the major component of access; the desirability of browsing is predicated not only on the mistrust of traditional cataloging but also on the tendency of many students and scholars, with limited time and relentless publication demands, to limit their research to what is most readily available. Seen in this light, the problem of access becomes more than a question of cataloging practice. Librarians, as Tim Weiskel observed from a slightly different perspective, "have the opportunity to undertake radically new tasks and redefine the character of scholarly work and perhaps even the way we think of the world."

Several scholars at the conference seemed to be seeking collection-level descriptions of primary sources, including material culture, archives, songs, ephemera, film, photographs, and other forms of imagery—indeed, the entire range of material documenting a culture.[11] Robert Preyer thought that libraries ought to have guides to local sources similar to the *National Registers of Archives*; many libraries do, of course, but they tend not to be collected and made available systematically. It may be that scholars need: first, a new type of catalog, a kind of meta-level catalog, that provides collection-level descriptions for all kinds of research material; and, second, an expansion of the scope of library catalogs to be essentially cultural databases that include information about all research materials, not just print and published sources. In theory, nothing in current

[8] See especially, Martha Howell, Stanley Katz, and Kathy Peiss.

[9] Kathy Peiss.

[10] Stanley Katz.

[11] David Musto, Kathy Peiss, Roberta Miller, and Ken Ames all made this argument at various times throughout the conference.

library practice precludes this; in reality, however, most research library catalogs understandably focus primarily on printed material. Finally, given the previous arguments on behalf of cooperative collecting policies, there is also a clear preference for information about sources in other institutions, including archives, museums, historical societies, etc., as well as libraries. Some of these changes are already underway; the sense of the conference is that such changes ought to be accelerated.

In discussing the growing role of images in research and the possibility of using images of objects as substitutes for the artifacts themselves, several scholars pointed out that effective access to images depends on a visual information system; one should not have to go through the medium of words to get to images.[12] It is not clear at this time just what such a system is or ought to be, but several participants were concerned that libraries were not paying sufficient attention to collecting and preserving images and providing adequate access to them.

The discussion of imagery raised several related issues. James Ackerman expressed concern about the quality of images, that is, the distortion of actual objects in a visual medium. A related problem, the rapid deterioration of slides and the consequent decrease in the quality of visual images raised the thorny problems of preserving both images and electronic data.[13]

Many scholars at the conference favored having full-texts available online or on CD-ROM. Janice Reiff and Roberta Miller, in particular, made a case for the importance of full-text access for scholars in the humanities and social sciences. David Musto said his work would benefit enormously from having full-texts of a small number of nineteenth-century medical journals available online, and Stanley Katz made much the same case for legal history. The underlying obstacle is economic: the lack of financial incentives for making material of interest to humanists available electronically. Electronic access to current medical and legal materials is more advanced because of the incentive to invest in these areas. The Department of Defense and other such agencies have so

much clout with computer scientists because they have the money.[14] If research materials for humanists could be made available electronically, which would be most useful in electronic form and how would they be funded? Should conversion to electronic formats be the responsibility of librarians, individual scholars, or their professional associations? There were no clear answers to these questions, which are obviously important to the entire research community.

Economics affects research in another way. Kathy Peiss and Robert Preyer observed that research is often shaped by lack of access to major research centers; in terms of library resources, the problem is really one of the "haves" and the "have nots." Scholars from smaller institutions tend to look to interlibrary loan and the use of electronic media as a means of access to information and the resources of larger research collections.[15] But, as David Musto and Larry Dowler observed, there are limits to using the resources of other institutions, both because of limits on exchanging physical objects, and because of the difficulty of administering resource and cost-sharing agreements in a national community. Most participants agreed that, like cooperative activities among libraries in general, resource-sharing is desirable. But, as Jim Haas noted, "Library decisions are most often made as a result of crisis rather than policy. We are in a period of rising expectations on the part of faculty. At the same time, the volume of material acquired by libraries has increased exponentially, whereas the rate of need is decreasing. We must rethink this situation."

Haas was not the only participant to urge that librarians and scholars rethink the mission of the library. Some scholars thought the ways in which knowledge is classified ought to be reconsidered. The discussion ranged from Stanley Katz's wish that Library of Congress subject headings could be converted into contemporary vocabulary to Roberta Miller's hope that the work of information scientists might eventually lead to better ways for users to interact with databases. As scholars move toward interdisciplinary research, traditional classification schemes or subject headings no longer work

[12] Ken Ames and Sid Verba, in particular, made this point.
[13] Gregory Crane, Sidney Verba, Jim Haas all addressed the question of preservation.
[14] Gregory Crane.
[15] Janice Reiff.

well. If one imagines trying to find all of the material related to, say, "civil rights," one begins to understand the real limitations of Library of Congress subject headings for certain kinds of research.

In the final analysis, research libraries are moving into an unknown world. In the words of Sid Verba, "Libraries are largely a dependent type of institution. They have a responsibility to maintain traditional services, yet are called upon to address new challenges." Unforeseen factors intrude on the library—unionization, for example—resulting in cost increases. "In the long run," he continued, "there will have to be resource-sharing and cost-sharing in order to create a national community. Technological change, as well as limited funds, will force us to do this."

III. New Technologies

In one sense, electronic media represent a source of information and perhaps ought to have been considered, as indeed they were, in the course of actual discussion, under part I, New Sources of Information. But electronic media might equally be considered in part II, Problems of Access to Information. The confusion about just where to place electronic media is telling. In fact, electronic media are both information and a process for gaining access to information. Moreover, new technologies are challenging the traditional separation between medium and content. This has caused confusion among librarians about whether to assign responsibility for acquiring electronic products to a library's collection-development department or to public services or to the university computer office.

Improved access, especially the possibility for manipulating data and having increased searching power, is what makes electronic media so different from print and so attractive to scholars. Moreover, some fields of research are simply not possible without technology. As Roberta Miller observed, "Advances in computers have changed the way that social scientists conduct their research and communicate with each other. Physical documents, though still critical in many research fields, have become less important for many types of research than

electronic access to information and data. For this reason, if libraries of the future are to remain centers for research, they must play an increasingly important role in the provision of electronic services and information to the research community in addition to their traditional role as purveyors of documents." Finally, new technologies contain within them the allure of convenience, every scholar's fantasy of having all of one's research material instantly available with a few keystrokes on the computer. It is perhaps too early to know whether the ideal of the scholar workstation—customized, of course, for each scholar—will become a reality. Certainly, there are large questions about who—scholars or librarians—should be responsible for creating research databases and who will pay for their maintenance and preservation. Indeed, everyone agreed that new technologies are enormously expensive and that humanists are at a distinct disadvantage in commanding the resources needed to produce them. Still, the consensus among the conference participants was that technology is a powerful new research tool that promises to have a considerable and, for some, a transforming impact on research. As Gary Beckman of the Yale Babylonian Collection observed, "It will become possible for the scholar to bring more data to bear on a particular problem and to pursue more problems within his or her scholarly career. Advances in data-processing technology promise to render our field of research so much more efficient that it would not be out of place to speak of a qualitative advance."

As we mentioned above, there was great interest in having access to full-texts online. How this might actually be accomplished, who should do it, and who should pay for it, were touched on, but never fully addressed. The hope was expressed that future technical advances, especially scanning technology, might eventually make it feasible to provide historical texts in electronic form.[16] It was also noted that certain kinds of economic data are not available in published form and that raw data, rather than summary information, ought to be made available electronically.

The question of new technologies is more than a matter of how information is stored;

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[16] Janice Reiff. Terry Martin noted that the legal community had had access to full-texts for some time; what he wanted was to see their holdings expanded to include international texts.

as Gregory Crane noted, there is the matter of how scholars will create documents in the future. How will electronic texts and documents be preserved and made accessible and what will happen to information created as motion pictures, still images, or sound?[17]

As the discussion of new technologies turned to CD-ROMs—seen by some scholars as a vehicle for publishing journals and other textual materials—the problems of publication and the privatization of data emerged as a central concern. Roberta Miller proposed that journals be put on CD-ROM, but that professional associations should maintain control. In this scheme, publishers would market new books through CD-ROM, and libraries would become repositories of the past, an archive rather than a circulating system. Again, the thrust of the discussion was toward redefining the function and role of the library. But, as Doug Greenberg pointed out, we are currently in a very expensive transition stage of becoming accustomed to electronic publishing, before individual scholars have the hardware even to read CD-ROM.

The fact that technology is evolving and is moving in an uncertain direction between different forms of information, led inevitably to the issue of training. In the words of Janice Reiff, "Just as researchers have always relied on the assistance of librarians and archivists to help them find materials in libraries and other repositories, they will continue to need assistance in making use of an online system. They will need technical support on how to access databases, use the network, download materials, and many other such tasks. They may also need assistance in how to 'think' like whatever structure evolves in order to manipulate it. Good online help systems, even expert systems to help the novice walk through, are mandatory. A new kind of support staff will have to exist who are very skilled in all aspects of such systems." Although not everyone thought it was the role of the librarian to train researchers, there did appear to be agreement that librarians must play a role in training and that the library is the logical place to centralize these services.[18]

The discussion of new technologies raised once again the question of preservation. The necessity to preserve printed formats has finally been recognized; the cost of preserving information originally in this form is, of course, enormous. But the problems of preserving the information provided by various new technologies is almost beyond comprehension. Videodisks, to take only one example, degrade quickly after ten years; who will be responsible for putting this information into a stable form?[19] Stanley Katz observed that national professional societies are just beginning to address the preservation problem, and Larry Dowler argued that strategy for collecting and preserving information in electronic and other forms had to be developed cooperatively with the professional associations, foundations, library consortia, and the federal government. One might create a discipline-based model, like the Archives of American Art, for carrying out these activities, but the input of academic associations, he said, would be essential.[20] Roberta Miller disagreed, however, observing that the trend toward interdisciplinary research in the humanities and social sciences would tend to limit the effectiveness of professional associations, which generally reflect traditional academic disciplines. One effective role organizations could play, according to Jim Haas, was to lobby manufacturers to make changes that would prolong the life of information in various formats. He noted the success of environmentalists in getting publishers to switch to acid-free paper in their publications, "We shouldn't let technology set the standards for libraries."

Nothing has so much dramatized the importance of standards in scholarly communication and research as automation and new technologies. We have already touched on the problem of applying standards for evaluating the scholarship of those researchers who employ a nonprint technology, but the more immediate problem is to ensure that information will be interchangeable or even usable in an ever-changing technical environment. The problem, as Sid Verba noted, is that "electronic media don't

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[17] Robert Preyer and Roberta Miller.

[18] Martha Howell, Janice Reiff, and, in a somewhat broader sense, Tim Weiskel argue for a larger role by libraries and librarians.

[19] Gregory Crane.

[20] Larry Dowler argued that because of the fragmentation of the humanities, the political role of academic associations would be a key to any cooperative effort to acquire and preserve information produced by new technologies.

have a generalized language. Conventions differ from field to field." Moreover, the manufacturers, or those with a vested interest and the funds to support it, will set the standards. It is extremely important for libraries to have a say in setting standards. The question is, given the cost of maintaining standards for new technologies, how can librarians and scholars have a voice in adopting standards that will support scholarship?[21]

IV. OTHER ISSUES

Two additional issues emerged from the general discussion of research trends and library resources: the need for better communication between scholars and librarians, and the role of scholar librarians in research libraries.

During the course of the conference it became increasingly apparent that, by and large, scholars do not discuss research problems or interests with scholars outside their own specialty. For one thing, most institutions lack a forum for such discussions. If there is little communication among scholars about research issues and library resources, systematic communication between scholars and librarians is virtually nonexistent. Most librarians can recount stories of new academic programs being launched without any input from librarians about the library collection in the new program's area. Not until a problem arises, especially a budget crisis, does discussion between scholars and librarians begin in earnest.[22] Given the complexity of the issues raised during the conference and the uncertainty about the effects of changing inquiry and research methods on library resources (especially the use of new technologies), communication between scholars and librarians will be crucial to research libraries in planning for the future. But how can the communication process be structured, both locally and nationally, to ensure that vital concerns of scholars are communicated to librarians and that the complex issues facing librarians are discussed with scholars? There exists no simple or obvious answer to this

question, for there is a gap, really, a disjunction, between the two allied professions. The quality and character of research will suffer unless a way is found to improve communication between them.

An issue related to the problem of poor communication is the future status of the academic or scholarly librarian. Because libraries are technically and administratively complex, strong managerial and technical skills are essential to their effective operation. But there was a feeling among most librarians who participated in the conference that the trend in research libraries will result—and already has resulted—in a decline in the number and influence of "scholarly" librarians. As management and technical issues demand increasing attention within libraries, the role of the "scholar" librarian begins to seem peripheral to the operation of the system.[23] In libraries, managers and technicians are needed to solve problems, but it is the academic librarian who is most likely to understand the research problem and understand, too, the intellectual argument that lies at the heart of an academic institution.[24] If the role of the academic librarian continues to decline, then, as Charles Berlin said, the day may come when scholars will go to the library and find there no one who understands their research or with whom they can communicate.

If the reputed decline of academic librarians owes something to changing demands and budget constraints within libraries, the problem is likely to be exacerbated by the general difficulty the academy faces in developing a new generation of scholars. Doug Greenberg observed that as today's students opt for careers in management, one wonders where new scholars will come from. Moreover, in many academic institutions the close ties between the dean and library director have eroded; more often than not, the librarian reports to a university financial officer rather than the academic dean. In the end, the fundamental problem may be the one posed by Stanley Katz at the beginning of the conference, namely, how can the needs of scholars in the humanities

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[21] Robert Preyer, Gregory Crane, and Larry Dowler.

[22] Assunta Pisani.

[23] David Partington observed that technical processes seem to be moving librarians further away from substantive or content-related work. See also, the comments of Ken Ames, Gregory Crane, and Stanley Katz.

[24] Jim Haas commented that there was too much intellectual inbreeding in the library world. In order to counter this, library schools should recruit people with real world experience to return to academia for doctorates.

and social sciences be addressed within a university in a more systematic way? Whatever the solution to this issue, it must include better communication with librarians and others who share with scholars a professional commitment to supporting research.

V. CONCLUSION

The conference concluded by asking the participants to indicate what issues national organizations such as ACLS and CLR ought to address during the next two or three years.

K. Peiss: Online bibliographic control in order to bring together disparate resources. Second, better education for scholars about the uses of new technologies.

K. Ames: Networking, that is, cooperative collection building. There needs to be enlightened collecting. Second, wider dissemination of information about where materials are located. There also needs to be a review of library education and training.

R. Miller: Online bibliographic control of information and international standards for electronic needs. Also, academic associations ought to discuss the possibility of producing journals on CD-ROM before commercial publishers take over and drive the prices up.

R. Preyer: Thought that NISO standards are essential for information retrieval and also collection-level finding lists, including basic information about where to go to find information, even who to ask when problems occur.

K. Carpenter: Retrospective bibliographies for various countries.

G. Crane: Standards for electronic media that would enable vendors to do valuable work. He also commented on the importance of the text encoding initiative. Second, educating scholars about technology, in particular, what tools are available to them and what can and can't be done with technology. We need to institutionalize this educational process.

W. Freitag: First, reaffirm the archival mission of libraries. Second, encourage single format libraries, e.g., newspapers, etc. Third, rethink the relationship in research libraries between collection building and the access and services that can be provided.

E. Wu: Concern about central control of standards, citing as an example, the lack of responsiveness of LC to changes in subject headings. He fears that the same problems will occur if standards are also put under central control.

L. Dowler: Cited the tension that exists between the need for standards and the cost of adopting and maintaining them. Standards will be set through NISO and other standards bodies; the question is, how can librarians have input? Second, libraries need to strike a balance between item-level cataloging and collection- or meta-level cataloging, which aims to help scholars locate the material they need.

In general, the participants' "wish list" recapitulated many of the observations presented during the conference and defined not only the role for national organizations but, to some extent, also what the participants wanted individual research institutions to consider. The list also showed an enormous interest in developing bibliographic tools covering primary sources, especially in ones that would bring disparate resources together. Participants particularly wanted research institutions to be able to identify and locate not only research materials in their own holdings but those in research institutions in the region. What seemed to be called for was the creation of a cultural resource database that would guide researchers to needed research material in any library, archive, or historical society within a region, regardless of the form or genre of the material. The notion of networking is not new to librarians—although the idea of a multimedia database perhaps stretches conventional practice a bit—but the call for shared resources and information by a group of scholars may indicate a changing perception in the research community.

Items on the list also showed a concern for standards, a topic only mentioned briefly during the conference itself. Technology prompted much of the concern about standards, for there was a clear recognition that international standards for electronic information would be essential to access to electronic media in the future.

Appendix

INVITED PARTICIPANTS

James Ackerman, *Harvard University, Fine Arts Department*

Ken Ames, *Winterthur Museum*

Gary Beckman, *Yale University, Babylonian Collection*

Gregory Crane, *Harvard University, Classics Department*

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