Editor's Keyboard

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Recently, the press reported on Google's partnering with major research institutions to index and scan their library book holdings. This proposal, while it received a great deal of hype, is not new. Three years ago Carnegie Mellon Libraries, the Chinese Academy of Sciences, the Indian Institute of Science, OCLC, and the Internet Archives launched the Million Book Project to digitize and make available on the free Web out-of-copyright books. In "Using Data to Persuade: State Your Case and Prove It," Denise Troll Covey, who is the principal librarian for special projects at Carnegie Mellon and the driving force behind this undertaking, describes how she took advantage of her rhetorical training (Covey received a master's degree in rhetoric from Carnegie Mellon) to persuade first a private foundation to give $200,000 for an earlier library digitization project, and then the National Science Foundation to provide $3.6 million to make the Million Book Project a reality. These grants were the result of her changing the culture of strategic assessment planning at her library through what Covey calls "the art of persuasion." As Covey notes, "Your audience will only accept your conclusions—your ask—if they accept the premises with which you begin and share the view of reality with which you end your rhetorical argument."

We might ask ourselves the same question. Who are the audiences we are addressing our arguments to at our own institutions? What do they need to hear from us in order that we can be successful? In a similar vein, Karen Brown and Kate Marek, both professors at the Graduate School of Library and Information Science at Dominican University, discuss the applications of the theorist Karl Weick's writings on organizational management to the library profession. In "Librarianship and Change: a Consideration of Weick's 'Drop Your Tools' Metaphor," they relate the story of two groups of forest firefighters who lost their lives in separate incidents because they did not know how to drop their tools in the face of escalating danger. Is this the fate of librarians who are invested in antiquated technologies and methods? Marek and Brown make us believe that it doesn't have to be the case, that library leaders are in fact implementing successful organizational change. They cite examples from the focus groups they conducted of library leaders from a wide range of public, academic, and special libraries. James Neal, vice-president of Information Services and University Librarian at Columbia, who spoke to Gregg Sapp recently on the challenges of leadership, gives a candid assessment of the opportunities—and the challenges—ahead for the libraries. He predicts an increasingly digital information environment, while noting that the "transformation of the nature and purpose of library space is not something that we have fully taken advantage of and embraced."

John Riddle, Binh Le, and Rebecca Mugridge, library administrators at three Penn State campuses, have teamed up to describe in "The Value of Faculty Recognition Programs for Libraries," events held at their libraries to celebrate faculty tenure promotion and scholarly publication. These programs, which are relatively low-cost to implement and not a burden for staff to run, have created a sense of community on campus and contributed to good library public relations. In the final article in this issue, "Assess Your Strategic Plan," J. Parker Ladwig, the mathematics librarian at the University of Notre Dame, reports on the steps a library can take to evaluate existing materials before implementing a strategic plan. He describes a practical "check-up" libraries can perform before launching any kind of overall assessment.

Those of us who attended the LAMA National Institute in November, held in the desert city of Palm Springs, California, felt a wonderful sense of rejuvenation on returning to work. This beautiful, natural setting was a wonderful backdrop to our two days of intensive workshops on topics ranging from "What Is Leadership and What It Is Not." to "3M Six Sigma: Achieving Breakthrough Performance for Our Customers, Shareholders, and Employees" and "Leading Your Superiors and Your External Communities." I thought of the workshops and the beauty of the rugged environment, when I read John Lubans's column, "On Managing." John talks about the importance of experiential living in staff development and his own experience in several Outward Bound programs. "I've come to believe that our days in the woods had much to do with the success of my work group's change efforts," he says, "our rethinking traditional ways, our questioning why we did what we did. Unprecedented productivity increases followed. I doubt it was coincidence alone that several of the people driving change in the library were active participants in outdoor

A: I do believe that there has been a decline in new library construction. I think there has been a lot of focus on renovation and refurbishment of library space. It is common now to offload some collections into offsite facilities. Many of us have built or co-constructed shelving facilities where we can store some of those low-use, but still important research collections and convert or transform our library space on campus into new purposes. Today, library space is more of an intellectual space, a social space, and a community space. That transformation of the nature and purpose of library space is not something that we have fully appreciated and embraced.

Another prediction that more than fifty percent of reference transactions would take place over campus networks is proving correct. I think the ATM philosophy that we experience in our broader lives applies to all of the service environments in which we work. The notion of electronic reserves, chat reference, renewal of books, everything where we have a service relationship with the user is increasingly an online, user-driven activity.

Finally, one of the predictions that I made in 1996 was that academic libraries would become much more involved in government information policies issues. That certainly is true, particularly in the case of copyright and a whole array of laws, legislation, and court decisions that we have been party to on the issues around privacy, around intellectual freedom. All of these affect access and the functionality of our evolving services. Libraries more than ever are seen as central players in many of these national and international information policy debates.

Q: Here's your chance to dust off that crystal ball again. Bring this to, let's say, 2010: What are we looking at? What are we facing? What are we doing?

A: The nature of our collections will continue to be transformed. The trends that we are experiencing today will continue to move us toward a much more electronic content and service environment. More and more stuff that we acquire will be made available electronically. More and more of our historical content will either be made available by publishers or search engine vendors or through our own digital library programs. We have to be cognizant of the relationship between quantitative change and qualitative change. At what point do we reach true transformation? I often allude to Marxist theory of knowledge where he talks about a pot of water over a flame. Intellectually we know the temperature is increasing, but at some point it reaches a transformational point where the water turns from liquid to gas. At what point do we reach a similar transformational point of quantitative shift from print-based to electronic information and Web-based services? Also, the competitive environment, where libraries will work in the future, is something that we have not come to understand. There are continuing efforts by the information distributors and others to bypass libraries and to provide our communities with access to information in a market relationship with users. There are organizations and companies that have the ability perhaps to serve our users more effectively than we can, and the economics of that competition pushes us to the side.

Reference

1. James G. Neal, "Academic Libraries: 2000 and Beyond," *Library Journal* 121, no. 12 (July 1996): 74–76.

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I invite you to think about LAMA's future and what kinds of programs your professional association needs to have in place to meet your needs. There are many things LAMA could do to increase leadership skills in the library profession, so we will undoubtedly have difficult choices to make. If we are to succeed in articulating our course to the future, we will need your input, advice, and leadership. I look forward to lots of conversations and e-mail exchanges with many of you!

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learning. Of the many staff development programs we offered during those years, it was the outdoor variety that best moved staff beyond personal and organizational limitations. With the library's top leader encouraging risk taking and experimentation—while expertly fending off those seeking to keep the old ways—we were able to achieve major successes on behalf of the library's users."

I hope that you enjoy reading this issue of *LA&M* as much as Gregg and I enjoyed preparing it.