

### Collection development issues in the online environment

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What are the issues affecting collection development in the current online environment? In this volume the issues covered have been grouped into 3 themes: Common Issues, Special Issues, Future Issues. The authors are from academic institutions in Australia, Canada, the United Kingdom and the United States, ensuring that the coverage is global.

The **Common Issues** discussed are those of the choice of subscribing to journals in print or electronic format, academic resistance to going e-only, the processes of electronic journal administration, and library budgetary practices that cannot keep pace with evolving pricing models for electronic resources.

Stephen Crothers and colleagues from the University of Melbourne, Australia, give a detailed account of the issues associated with the administration of electronic journals. Using quotes taken from various email listservs they discuss the frustrations often associated with the activation of online access, especially when an "elusive" subscription number is required in order to complete the process. Other issues that they deal with are those of the variety of pricing models for electronic journals and poor communication from publishers.

Librarians from the United Kingdom and Canada discuss the feasibility of going e-only in their institutions. In the United Kingdom the "application of Value Added Tax to electronic services" is one of the hindrances that institutions face when contemplating a move to e-only access as a way of decreasing subscription costs.

The topics covered in the **Special Issues** section are copyright law, depth and quality of indexing in databases, and the digitisation of fragile material.

Linwood DeLong (University of Winnipeg Library) cautions libraries to look at the quality of indexing of databases before they subscribe. DeLong suggests that a comparison should be made of the indexing of similar articles in different databases in order to establish whether the level of indexing meets requirements.

In **Future Issues**, the authors discuss ideas for the redesign of pricing models, the development of institutional archives, and the importance of keeping up with technology developments.

Stephen Good (formerly of Texas Tech School of Law Library) discusses technology developments in his chapter entitled *PDA Serials: Practical and policy issues for librarians*. Personal Digital Assistant (PDA) serials are "electronic serials either customized or created specifically for handheld technology." Good advises that there is no necessity for libraries to rush to adopt all new technology. "If in doubt, wait". "Librarianship is a conversation" between librarians, publishers and library users. Librarians may be able to encourage publishers to develop services for new technology, such as PDAs, but librarians also need to be in conversation with library users to be sure that they would support and use the newly developed services.

In his introduction to the book, the editor writes "due to the rapid change of technology, some facts might have already been out-of-date at the time this book is published." As most of the chapters in the book appear to have been researched in 2003, some of the information is not as current as it could be. However, as the editor suggests it might, the volume, as a whole, does serve to document the issues of the time.

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