Law library collection development in the digital age
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The topical issue facing libraries and librarians nowadays is how to collect, preserve and provide information that is needed by its 21st century users. The question of access versus ownership of information seems to be aggravating concerns of the custodians of information in libraries (especially law libraries) as they are faced with two distinct types of information sources that are pertinent to their users, viz. print and digital.

The content of a law library, traditionally made up of primary and secondary sources of law, raises a major concern to law librarians as to how these collections can be developed in the digital age. Professor Penny Hazelton's ideas on *How much of your print collection is really on Westlaw or LEXIS-NEXIS?* have spurred Michael Chiorazzi and Gordon Russell to compile a collection of articles addressing digital issues in law library collection development. Their efforts, through the inspiration of Hazelton, have resulted in a monograph that will be appreciated by law librarians, lecturers, budget librarians and archivists, library planners and others concerned with the preservation and use of information in the digital age.

While some of the articles in this composite work are directed at enriching the minds of those who are to design law libraries in the digital era, others focus on legal education, the publishing industry, and, most importantly, on the impact that changes in acquiring and using the various types of information today have had on Intellectual Property.

Michael Chiorazzi's article *Books, Bricks and Bodies: Thinking about Collection Use in Academic Law Libraries* reflects the way access to information, as opposed to ownership, is fast gaining ground in the digital era. This article presents the major advantages and disadvantages of using and acquiring digital and non-digital information. It explores the cost-effectiveness involved in collecting, disseminating, preserving, and ensuring accessibility to information in the future, and projects societal concerns on the aspect of permanent access to digital information. As some sort of complement on the aspect of preservation of information, Julie C Turner's *Changes in the Courthouse-Electronic Records, Filings and Court Dockets: Goals, Issues and the Road Ahead* emphasises the importance attached to digital archiving and how this is changing the function of court systems. Maureen Garmon in *Book Selection Services: One Law Library, Two Vendors* indicates that book selection services are just one of the resources used by law libraries for collection development purposes. She holds the view that book selection services function as a new title pre-selection service, saving collection development hours of staff time spent in sifting through thousands of new materials that meet their collection needs.

Gordon Russell's *Re-Engineering the Law Library Resources Today for Tomorrow's Users: A Response to How Much of Your Print Collection is Really on Westlaw or LEXIS-NEXIS?*, Edmund P Edmonds and Margaret Maes Axtmann in *A Law Library in the New Century: The Creation of the University of St. Thomas Law Library*; and Simon Canick in *Availability of Works Cited in Recent Law Review Articles on LEXIS, Westlaw, the Internet, and Other Databases,* all discuss ways to build and provide adequate space and materials in law libraries, as this will influence the use patterns of the collection in the digital environment. Canick furthermore considers an investigation of recent law articles that were examined to determine the proportion of cited resources that were easily found online.

Richard A Danner's *Strategic Planning for Distance Learning in Legal Education: Initial Thoughts on a Role for Libraries* unveils the role and impacts of technologies on distance learners. He looks at current distance learning alternatives for law schools and their impact, vis-à-vis other technological methods, on the future role of the academic law library in legal education.

Among the pertinent articles about publishing is the one by E Dana Neacsu, *Legal Scholarship and Digital Publishing: Has Anything Changed in the Way We do Legal Research?*, which serves as an eye opener for scholars who use digitally published information as sources of reference. He asserts that the growth of digital publishing threatens the establishment of source materials, as some cited Internet articles could not be accessed within a certain period. In his view this distorts scholarship, as scholars will not be able to rely on such cited sources to build upon their work.

Marguerite Most's *Electronic Journals in the Academic Law Library-Law Reviews and Beyond* looks at the questions librarians face and must respond to as they provide access to legal scholarship in an electronic environment. The article shows that although law reviews are the main form of scholarly communication in law, law faculties and users look beyond traditional law journals in their research, thus placing the burden on law librarians to buy journals beyond student-edited law reviews. The article considers how subscription costs and changing publication patterns in other disciplines have led to a "serials crisis," and how this has led to a scholarly communication crisis that has influenced electronic publishing. The article by Kervin M Marmion and Richard J Spinelli, *The Changing Role of Law Library Vendors: The William S. Hein & Company Perspective,* sheds light on their perspective on changes in library-vendor relationships over the past two decades. It discusses how the transformation of the legal publishing world, tighter budgets, increases in librarian's responsibilities, and the use of computers to manage library systems have impacted on a particular company in its roles as subscription agent, book jobber (a book dealer who buys from publishers and sells to libraries and bookstores), publisher of book reprints, microform provider, and provider of online legal information, and what the future may hold for library vendors.

John Dethman in *Trust v. Antitrust: Consolidation in the Legal Publishing Industry* underpins the effects that foreign conglomerates engaged in businesses have on the information business. His article gives some historical viewpoint on legal publishing, examines the conglomerates as businesses, considers germane legislation concerning databases, and what effects all these would have on law libraries and the users they serve.

Scott Matheson's *Access versus Ownership: A Changing Model of Intellectual Property* covers areas of intellectual property. This article argues that the main change in intellectual property is the way that owners distribute information, not in the sense of new media, but in the sense of new legal constructs governing distribution. It discusses the impact on libraries of a move towards seeing information as a service that must be licensed, not purchased, and the effect of protecting intellectual property under contract law instead of copyright and property law.

As this composite work indicates, lecturers, law budget librarians and archivists, library planners, legal scholars, will find this series of great importance. The articles cover matters pertaining to collection use and development, law library automation, legal research, benchmarking, cost analysis for digital and non-digital materials, electronic archives, preservation, and provides notes, references and bibliographies to enhance further reading.

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