

The ICONMAL '98 conference

New missions of academic libraries in the 21st century

by Lester J. Pourciau

With a clearly discernible focus, ICONMAL (International Conference on New Missions of Academic Libraries), the brief name by which the conference became known, included 142 papers, of which 109 are in English, and 33 are in Chinese (with English abstracts). Each converged on the conference title and theme, "New Missions of Academic Libraries in the 21st Century" and are available at <http://www.lib.pku.edu.cn/98conf/>. The conference was held from October 25–28, 1998, and the venue was the newly completed library building at Beida—the affectionate, shortened name of Peking University, Bei(jing), Da(xue).

The format of the conference divided the papers into six different theme sessions, each of which spoke to some concern about the role of the academic library of the future. There were two keynote presentations at each theme session, followed by discussions coordinated by a moderator.

Connecting CALIS

One of the keynote presentations was made by Zhu Qiang, professor and deputy director of the Peking University Library. Qiang spoke about CALIS, the Chinese Academic Library and Information System. His description of CALIS was most impressive and he spoke in some detail about the efforts to

establish connectivity among Chinese institutions of higher education.

He spoke about the current priorities of those involved in implementing CALIS, the various facilities that are needed, and the effectiveness expected of CALIS by professional librarians in China.

Managing electronic information

Another of the keynote presenters, Carole Moore, chief librarian at the University of Toronto, spoke of the management of electronic information, making the point that, "The potential of new technologies to expand access to knowledge beyond our borders brings enormous new opportunities for libraries to give service at levels previously unimagined."

She identified various questions that must be addressed and answered in order to provide such service, and stressed the importance of standards in creating a new paradigm of library service.

The challenges of distance learning

Rebecca Martin, dean of Libraries at the University of Vermont, spoke about the increasingly popular and challenging topic of library services to distance learning and the changing environment of higher education.

About the author

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She identified the challenge as one of "... how we will move into this new environment, changing the rules and changing the very nature of what it means to be an academic library." She identified this new meaning in terms of the shifting role of the institution of higher education from that of sole provider of educational content to one of guidance to students in their efforts to assemble "... learning opportunities, available at a distance from a variety of institutions," into a coherent educational experience.

Professional development and continuing education

Peter Durey, university librarian emeritus at the University of Auckland, New Zealand, defined professional development as "... a program which encourages employees to develop their skills and capabilities on a continuing basis." He was clear in his view that such a program be well-planned, resulting from performance reviews and discussions with library staff. He suggested the use of local library re-

sources, expertise elsewhere in the university, and programs offered by external sources, and noted that such training and development is often available in the form of interactive video or via the Internet.

On the third and closing day of the conference, Beverly Lynch of UCLA presented a masterful summary of the various discussions that took place during each of the six theme sessions, highlighting and making reference to several significant papers that were included in each of the six themes.

By any measure, ICONMAL '98 must be considered a major success. The new library building at Peking University is stunning, and this conference, designed to celebrate the centennial of the university and to commemorate the opening of the building, was a most fitting effort. Zhu Qiang, was the primary individual responsible for what we in the United States call "local arrangements."

Zhu and his staff did a truly remarkable job, and their efforts showed clearly throughout the entire conduct of the conference. ■

"Checking out..." continued from p. 85

Checking out digital cameras naturally evolved from the ITC goal of focusing on Web publishing and multimedia. It's the next wave for instructional technology. Checking out digital cameras is easy and cheap and a great boost for library public relations due to its popularity. We highly recommend offering this successful service and welcome any questions regarding how to begin.

Notes

1. <http://libweb.uoregon.edu/scilib/slitc.html>.
2. Klassen, Tim. "Creating an X Window Terminal-Based Information Technology Center," *Reference Services Review* (Spring 1997): 25-29.
3. For example, fines accrue if the camera is overdue: \$2 for the first hour, \$.50 per hour after the first hour, with a maximum of \$20. The patron is responsible for the camera during check-out and is charged for damage or loss. The replacement value of the camera is \$800.
4. McClelland, Deke. "Midrange Digital Cameras," *Macworld* (April 1998): 38-39.
5. One person checked out cameras 11 times, the highest. ■

Internet Resources continued from p. 81

• **ALA, ACRL Institute for Information Literacy (IIL, formerly NILI).** Formed in 1997 under Cerise Oberman's direction, the IIL aims to train instruction librarians, provide programming for library administrators on information literacy issues, and support ACRL and the National Forum on Information Literacy in various higher education initiatives.

This site provides information on IIL programs and links to related sites on information literacy. Of special interest is a page on the important upcoming IIL Immersion Program, a comprehensive four-and-a-half-day institute for instruction librarians to be held at SUNY Plattsburgh in July 1999. Last update: November 19, 1998. Access: <http://www.ala.org/acrl/nili/nilih.html>.

Notes

1. gopher://ala1.ala.org:70/00/alagophiv/50417007.document.
2. Loanne Snavely and Natasha Cooper. "The Information Literacy Debate," *Journal of Academic Librarianship*, Jan. 1997, V23(N1): 9-14, and Kasman, Joyce Valenza. "Information Literacy is More Than Computer Literacy," *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, 16 April 1998, sec. F3, column 2. ■

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