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Janus in the Sunshine

Prepared by Roy Ziegler, Associate Director for Collection Development at Florida State University and Vice-chair/Chair Elect of the CSUL's Collection Planning Committee

Introduction:

Opportunities that create efficiencies for cost-savings, increased levels of customer service, and improved responsiveness for the availability of critical information are all beneficial outcomes of Resource Sharing, especially when it comes to providing the variety of materials that comprise our library collections. The 11 academic institutions that make up the Council of State University Libraries (CSUL) represent millions of dollars per year in the acquisition and subscription of library materials. When considering the fact that collectively Florida's public universities are one large public asset for the state, the idea of resource sharing is something that we should routinely be maximizing at every turn as an extension of our stewardship role for the public good. Even though the the university library community and the Florida Center for Library Automation (FCLA), have been successful at cooperating on a common Library Management System, agreeing on what online databases to share, there is still considerably more cooperation that can be done. This article is one exploration that is currently underway to expand the areas in which we collaborate beyond our individual campuses.

Background:

In October of 2005 the *Janus Conference on Research Library Collections* took place at Cornell University. Attendees were primarily chief collection development officers from upper tier research libraries in North America and the University of Florida was one of the invited institutions. The conference chose Janus, the Roman god of gates and doorways to symbolize the passage toward a new way of thinking about collaboration and resource sharing for research collections. Speakers such as Hendrik Edelman, Emeritus Faculty from Rutgers University, took a look back to describe how far we have come since collection development as a professional librarian activity was conceptualized 25 years ago but the major emphasis of the conference was to look to the future to try to find a better way to build library collections collaboratively. The structure for that discussion was presented by Ross Atkinson, who described the *Six Key Challenges for the Future of Collection Development*.

Six Key Challenges

- RECON (Converting the Scholarly Record)
- PROCON (Prospective Conversion/Born Digital)
- Creating Core Collections
- Licensing Principles and Publisher Relations
- Archiving Print, Digital, and Born-Digital
- Alternative Channels for Scholarly Communication

The conference held breakout sessions for each challenge and identified obtainable goals for each. Once the conference was over, there was considerable interest to continue the discussion. A steering committee was selected to facilitate an action plan. They agreed to meet regularly.

A National Response Stalls:

At the 2006 ALA Annual Conference in New Orleans, the Janus Challenges were a major discussion topic at the Chief Collection Development Officers of Large Research Libraries (CCDO) meeting. A four hour breakout session was held to polish the work that was started at Cornell. Out of these discussions, six working groups were formed to develop action items for each challenge. Seven months later at the 2007 ALA Midwinter Conference in Seattle, the working groups had made no progress. Based on what was not getting done, it seemed as though Janus was a nice idea but it was going to be too much work to pull together a strategic initiative that would benefit academic libraries across the continent, if not the world.

Florida Steps Up:

In February 2007, the Council of State University Libraries' (CSUL) Collection Planning Committee (CPC) met in Ft. Myers for a face-to-face meeting to discuss a number of various issues from WorldCat Collection Analysis to setting goals for the year. It was reported by several CPC representatives who attended the Midwinter meeting, that the Janus Challenges had lost momentum and was clearly doomed at a national level. This was a disappointment for the CPC because the Janus Challenges represented the basic structure for collaborative collection development for our academic libraries. We saw a strategic plan that showed such promise that it could be easily adopted and the benefits could be quickly realized. It's hard to know why the Janus Challenges failed to take hold on a national level. Perhaps there was too much work to be done effectively by individuals who had full-time commitments at their home institutions. Maybe there wasn't enough leadership to keep the issue on the table long enough to see an idea through to an implementation. There's always a political context and this could've been too complex to gain any traction. Setting aside such speculation, the CPC quickly decided to form a working group to explore the topic: Do the Janus Challenges mean anything for Florida? A group volunteered and agreed to prepare a report.

On May 11, 2007, the CPC Janus Challenges Working Group met in Gainesville and quickly realized that the Janus Challenges had a lot of meaning for Florida academic libraries. The goal was to use the structure of the Janus Challenges to propose a workable collection development and resource sharing strategic plan for public research institutions in Florida. In some circles the original Janus Challenges were seen as too provocative. With this in mind, the Working Group's intent was to recast the Challenges to what was doable for us in order to bring separate collections together into a more unified, more usable, and more sustainable informational asset for the state of Florida. There was an understanding that this report was going to be a starting point but if realized the plan had the potential to reshape scholarly collections within the state in a revolutionary way. However, the consequence of not attempting any plan at all was an even bigger fear. The consensus was that we can't be successful today for our students and faculty without relying on each other and it's certainly true that we won't be successful

tomorrow if we don't rely on each other significantly more. There are numerous examples of other statewide library consortia that have adopted sustainable models and the sense amongst many librarians across the state is that our individual institutions are at considerably greater risk if cooperation is not maximized even more. We know what's occurring in these other states and we think that there's more that can be done in Florida. As for implementing Janus Challenges, the downsizing to a statewide resource sharing initiative was more obtainable than what was imagined for a national project and much more manageable from our perspective, with 11 academic libraries sharing not only a common goal but a common grip on the funding realities in Florida. The hope was that a well articulated plan might be endorsed by the CSUL directors.

During the Fall of 2007 the CPC accepted the Florida Janus Challenges Report which was forwarded to the library directors. The directors accepted the Working Group's recommendation to form Six Janus Challenges task forces that would prepare guidelines and implementation strategies for each targeted area. Each task force is currently gathering information, holding conference calls and preparing draft reports. Final reports will be submitted by the end of 2008.

Janus Challenges in the Sunshine

- **RECON (Converting the Scholarly Record)**

The goal is to convert to digital form objects that are currently only available in print. The impact is that retrospectively migrating the format from print to electronic file preserves original item and makes the resource more accessible to new audience. In an era of distance learning and expensive travel, it makes sense to upgrade the container to the computer desktop. The expense to do this requires a significant financial commitment but by creating a centralized facility greater efficiencies will lower costs over time and will be a tremendous collection and will be a good return on the investment.

- **PROCON (Prospective Conversion/Born Digital)**

The goal is ensure that objects published in the future are available in digital form. The impact is that this facilitates greater resource sharing and establishes a permanent resource as long as digital preservation is in place. By not having to maintain as much brick and mortar space for collections with reduced processing costs, this is also a very cost-effective way to access information. Institutional as well as statewide digital collections can be built and sustained. Our libraries won't be entirely electronic materials but a good portion will be as it benefits the remote user and 24/7 access.

- **Creating Core Collections**

The goal is to define what materials compose a core monographic collection and establish a mechanism for providing access to the greatest amount of currently available scholarly content at the lowest possible cost. The impact: is that a greater distribution of unique content throughout the state and can be achieved as core collections and shared collection development are

established for print and e-books. Core collections save money by reducing duplication which enhances institutional funding to acquire unique materials. By establishing a preferred statewide vendor for approval plans and firm-orders, greater discounts equate to the ability to buy more content. By being able to view what other institutions are ordering, the number of duplicate copies within the state is possible as well.

- **Licensing Principles and Publisher Relations**

The goal is to negotiate with publishers for the best possible shared access to materials and to develop Best Practices and Guidelines for licensing of content. The impact is that a centralized state-wide information asset is created and is openly access for libraries around the state as a resource. The possibility of licensing content across multi-type libraries is also a possibility. As libraries need to assert what we need in our licenses, not what we feel that we have to accept.

- **Archiving Print**

The goal is create a centralized statewide storage facility where the state university libraries can transfer and store low use materials. The impact is that duplicate copies of the same low use item within the system can be reduced. Institutional collections free stack space and the access to the content is not impeded. A proposal for such a facility is current on the state's Public Expenditure Capital Outlay (PECO) list and will hopefully be operational in 3-5

- **Alternative Channels for Scholarly Communication**

The goal is to create a network, not just within the state but nationally and even internationally, of publishing structures that scholars can use as a supplement or alternative to standard scholarly publishing. The impact is that competition creates a viable alternative to for-profit publishing and puts the author in control of his/her intellectual output. By populating scholarly information in the public domain we all benefit.

Summary of the Challenges: By sharing best practices, sharing our resources and licensing strategies, sharing of technology, expertise and infrastructure; we can find many efficiencies to drive down cost and improve operations that are sustainable and work in concert for the common goals of state's public academic libraries.

Next steps: Statewide Resource Sharing Conference in 2009.

On March 26 and 27, 2009, Florida State University Libraries and PLAN will host an academic library conference in Tallahassee that will focus on Collaborative Collection Development and Resource Sharing. This event is an opportunity for us to invite librarians from around the state and region to come together in the spirit of the Janus Challenges to see in practical terms where these concepts have become operational at the

institutional level that could easily scale to greater participation by a variety of library types. A call for proposals will be distributed by the end of September.

Conclusion:

On March 8, 2006 Ross Atkinson passed away but he is still with us with his scholarly work on collection development. There is a timeless quality to his thinking. Even though on a national front, it's been said that the Janus Challenges are no longer relevant. Within the public academic libraries in the state of Florida, we certainly hope to disprove this sentiment. Many of us believe that Ross' thinking is a valuable gift that just might find a home in the Sunshine State.

“It was Ross’ goal that [the challenges] would also result in significant action,” said Sarah Thomas (Cornell University Library Director). “Ross was insistent to me that it was important to move from local solutions to collective action. We plan to continue in that spirit.”

from *Chronicle Online*, March 14, 2006

For additional reading and viewing:

Edelman, Hendrik. Intelligent Design and the Evolution of American Research Library Collections. Print version of Janus Conference presentation available at Cornell University's eCommons: <http://hdl.handle.net/1813/2598>

Hendrik Edelmet's archived videotaped presentation is available at Cornell University's eCommons: <http://hdl.handle.net/1813/5422>

Ross Atkinson's archived keynote address video from the Janus Conference. Cornell University's eCommons: <http://hdl.handle.net/1813/5426>

Atkinson, Ross, “Six Key Challenges for the Future of Collection Development,” *Library Resources & Technical Services* v. 50: no. 4 (Oct. 2006), 244-51. Note: Ross was posthumously awarded the Blackwell's Scholarship Award for 2007 for this article. The award honors the author of the year's outstanding monograph or article in the field of acquisitions, collection development, and related areas of resources development in libraries.

Link to Janus Conference website at Cornell:
<http://www.library.cornell.edu/janusconference/>

Link to the Janus Conference presentations at Cornell's eCommons:
<http://ecommons.library.cornell.edu/handle/1813/3767>

Link to Janus TF website on CSUL site: <http://csul.net/cmc/janus/janus.shtml>