

# Janus Challenges Brief

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## Background:

The *Janus Conference on Research Library Collections: Managing the Shifting Ground Between Writers and Readers* took place October 9-11, 2005, at Cornell University. Participants were primarily collection development officers of the top forty ARLs who came together to reflect on the past accomplishments of collection development and to plan for the future. Ross Atkinson, presented the original Six Janus Challenges (see video). Individual sessions were held to refine each challenge.

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## National Response after the Janus Conference:

At the 2006 ALA Annual Conference in New Orleans, the Janus Challenges were a major discussion topic at the Chief Collection Development Officers (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 further define each challenge. Seven months later at the 2007 ALA Midwinter Conference in Seattle, little progress had been made by the working groups. Based on what was not done by the working groups, it seemed as though Janus was a nice discussion topic but was not going to take root as a national strategic initiative for academic libraries.

## Florida Response:

In February 2007, the CSUL Collection Planning Committee (CPC) met in Ft. Myers for a face-to-face meeting to discuss the WorldCat Collection Analysis project, hear subcommittee reports and to set goals for the year. John Ingram gave a report on what was going on with the Janus Challenges at ALA Midwinter. Other committee members who were at ALA mentioned that Janus was clearly dead on a national level and that this was disappointing because the challenges are so fundamental to the future of academic library collections. It was suggested that the CPC form a working group to explore what the Janus Challenges mean for Florida. A group volunteered and agreed to meet to prepare a report.

On May 11, 2007, the CPC Janus Challenges Working Group met in Gainesville. The goal was to use the structure of the Janus Challenges, but arrive at a workable resource sharing plan for public research institutions in Florida. The group's intent was not to be provocative but rather to focus on what can be done to bring separate collections together into a more unified and more usable informational asset for the state of Florida.

## Conclusion:

"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

## Six Challenges

1. RECON (Converting the Scholarly Record)
2. PROCON (Prospective Conversion)
3. Creating Core Collections
4. Licensing Principles and Publisher Relations
5. Archiving
6. Alternative Channels for Scholarly Communication