Digital Resources and the Education Library

E D I T O R I A L

By Patricia O'Brien Libutti, Ph.D., Guest Editor

This theme issue on *Digital Resources and the Education Library* developed from a chapter on Virtual Collection Development Policies in J. Carr's recent book: *Management of Curriculum Materials Centers: The Promise and the Challenge* (ALA/ACRL, 2002). As often happens when writing on one subject, an author finds out that there is much more to the topic as a written piece is prepared. The concepts inherent in the advent and incorporation of digital resources in the daily work of education librarians were only sketched in that chapter; much more was yet to be examined. Two new publications addressed the range of topics: this journal and a book to be published by ALA/ACRL on an expanded vision of the topical area. The journal and the book represent a cross-fertilization of ideas and contributions from members of both organizations, as well as from author-practitioners active in Higher Education, Library and Information Science, and School and Library Media positions.

The initial chapter from Dr. Leslie S. J. Farmer frames subsequent ones. The issues addressed in Dr. Farmer's writing go beyond the school library media center. Appropriateness, Administration, Strategic Planning, and the 'ripple effect' of activity beyond the school library media center. The questions she poses in each section can be asked in any educational scenario where working with use and evaluation of the Web is central to lessons taught and learned. In fact, the pragmatic issues central to organizational thinking about the advent of the Web into a school district, Graduate School of Education, -even the University or Library Consortium- are asked in this article. Dr. Farmer has succeeded in presenting an overview useful to many practitioners in the education arena.

Jo Ann Carr, Director of the CIMC at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, has gained recognition over the last decade as a thinker and action-oriented practitioner who involves fellow librarians at many levels in product development for the Web. She documents three case studies that are supposedly range from a local project to a national endeavor. project.

Yet, due to the nature of the Web and the merit of the resources, the range far exceeds the author's designations. The 'local' project, *An Annotated Database of Education Journals,* was set in Wisconsin at its origination. In March 2002, the product, a database of annotated education journals was made available to the public, indicating that on the Web, there is rarely a 'local' project, if the work is useful to many beyond the geographical boundaries.

Carr's careful documentation of consultation, delegation, and leadership in organizations demonstrate the necessary component of relationships as essential in product development, inauguration and maintenance. She points to phases in project development that faltered due to lack of institutional commitment and then proceeded to gain such commitment. The resulting three Web resources show the 'nitty-gritty' aspects and persistence needed for quality resource management.

Repman and Carlson take the reader through a sequence of implementation with K-12 school age students of existing Web resources The resources, evaluated and explained from the view point of 'what works' with students, provide the reader with a ready listing of tips and techniques that are useful and thought provoking.

The inclusion of Dr. Loriene Roy's article on the emergence of the Oksale Native American Resource Web site highlights the most valued use of the Web : the visibility of resources once difficult to obtain and use, now available for the student and teacher alike. Readers are provided with a visual and narrative excursion into the thinking needed to make these rare resources available to all.

A note on the composition of this journal is in order. Unlike the APA format which specifies the inclusion of URLs in the body of the text, this Editor has, instead, concentrated on presentation of the author's thoughts . Links are listed in the back of Education Libraries as *Bookmarks by Article Author*. Hyperlinked documents have the advantage of presenting the explorer with options at any point in the document. It is many-branched, indicating the choice of deciding to examine a path on the way through the writing is the readers; however, the print counterpart, with the visual and conceptual clog of URLs in sentences, does not afford the reader such a luxury and may, instead, provide obscurement of comprehension. It is the opinion of this Guest Editor that this 'approximation' of the value of hypertext by inclusion of URLs in the body of text stimulates rethought on the dubious value of the change in writing style due to such approximations.

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