



The Quarterly Newsletter of ACRL/NY

Winter 1999/2000, Volume 18, Number 4

Libraries and Technology: For Better or For Worse 1999 Symposium Summary

ACRL/NY's annual symposium, *Libraries and Technology: For Better or For Worse*, was held November 12 at the Fashion Institute of Technology.

Edward Tenner, author of *Why Things Bite Back*, a book on the unintended consequences of technology, was one of two

featured speakers at the symposium.

Tenner began by talking about technostress, a recent phenomenon in human history which he identified as going back no further than the early 19th century. Before industrial technology, people were exploited. Technology was

supposed to relieve the load. We've put ourselves on a "technology treadmill" which does not allow us to go back. Why are we doing better now and feeling worse? As we become more scientific and establish standards, we can hold professionals to these standards

Symposium, cont'd on p. 4

Thanks to Our Corporate Sponsors

ACRL/NY would like to thank the following companies for their generous contributions to the 1999 Symposium. Their support is greatly appreciated.

Alfred Jaeger, Inc.

Greenwood Publishing Group

Baker & Taylor Books/Yankee Book Peddler, Inc.

John Wiley

Blackwell's Information Services

McGraw-Hill

Bridgeport National Bindery, Inc.

Ocker & Trapp, Inc.

Coutts Library Service

R..R. Bowker

EBSCO Subscription Services

SWETS & Zeitlinger

President's Message by Tian Zhang

As the newly elected President for the Association of College and Research Libraries New York Metropolitan Area Chapter, I would like to express my sincere thanks to all the members in 1999 of the ACRL/NY Executive Board and the Symposium Planning Committee. Because of their hard work, we had a successful Annual Symposium: *Libraries and Technology: For Better or For Worse*. We had six wonderful speakers: Edward Tenner and David Magier, the keynote speakers; and Peter Liebscher, Cerise Oberman, Marie Radford, Jay Schafer, the four panelists. Their talks on technostress from different points of view attracted a large audience. About 150 people, coming from the libraries of New York, New Jersey and Connecticut, attended the Symposium. Among them, there

were 12 library school students from Queens College.

According to the evaluation sheets, our audience enjoyed the speeches very much.

We also invited two students to the symposium as our honored guests in memory of our former President, Rochelle Sager. They were: Barbara Bonous-Smit, from the Palmer School of Library and Information Science, and Geraldine Burke from the Library School of Queens College. Both of them received the book, *Why Things Bite Back: Technology and the Revenge of Unintended Consequences*, by Mr. Tenner, as a gift from ACRL/NY. ACRL National highly praised our way of recruiting new members.

At the beginning of this new millennium, ACRL/NY is going to have its 20th Anniversary. The Executive Board has been discussing possible activities for a celebration. We recalled all the Annual Symposium topics since 1985 and found out that all the past meetings had topics that closely caught up with the information age. In order to express our thanks to those past presidents, we intend to invite all of them to join the celebration. There will be an exhibition on our past

activities, too. We are going to collect items from our archives as well as materials, from past Presidents, Executive Committee members, and our ACRL/NY members. If anybody wants to donate pictures or materials that have something to do with ACRL/NY history, please contact a Board member.

As usual, the beginning of a year is the time to say goodbye to some of our retiring Board and Committee members and to welcome our new ones. I want to take the opportunity to express special thanks to the three retired members: Lucy Heckman, Past President; Arthur Sherman, Treasurer; and Maureen Wren, Symposium Registrar. Both Arthur and Maureen held their positions for the past three years. As Treasurer, Arthur spent a lot of his spare time on his responsibilities. Because of Maureen Wren's creative mind, for three years we had all those beautiful ribbons attached to the badges. Last year, Maureen even spent her own money on buying the materials for the badges. As a colleague with Lucy, both on the symposium committee and at St. John's University, I admired her responsible attitude. With her help and encouragement, I was able to fulfill my role as Chair of the symposium committee.

This year, Marilyn Rosenthal will be our Vice President and Chair of our Symposium

Volume 18, Number 4
Winter 1999/2000

ACRL/NY Connections is published quarterly by the Greater New York Metropolitan Chapter of The Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL/NY) for its members. Membership is \$10.00 per year; \$5.00 for current members of national ACRL.

ACRL/NY, P.O. Box 8331, New York NY 10116-4652.

Edited by Mary Habstritt, Birnbaum Library, Pace University-NYC. Comments and submissions may be sent to mhabstritt@aol.com.

Archival issues of *ACRL/NY Connections* may be found on the chapter's Website:
<http://www.nyu.edu/library/bobst/acrlny/acrlny.ht>

Planning Committee. Bellinda Wise is going to take the Treasurer's role. Both of them have been working with the Board for quite a few years. We also have several new energetic Executive Board members and we are poised for a brilliant future.

Meet the New Executive Board—2000 Election Results

Marilyn Rosenthal of Nassau Community College was elected Vice President/President-Elect. Bellinda Wise, also of Nassau Community College, was voted in as Treasurer. Amy Beth, Queens College, is the 2000 Chair for the New York City Geographic Section, with Tammy Wofsey being elected Vice Chair/Chair-Elect. Hofstra University's Harriet Hagenbruch is Vice Chair/Chair-Elect for the Long Island Geographic Section. Rebecca Albrecht of Pace University's Pleasantville Campus was elected Vice-Chair for Westchester. Thank you to everyone who ran for office and congratulations to our new Board members! To contact Board members, please see the directory on ACRL/NY's Web site at <http://www.nyu.edu/library/bobst/acrlny/acrlny.html> under Mission & Organization.

Education/Curriculum Materials Center Librarians' SIG Meets

The Education/Curriculum Materials Center Librarians met on November 19 at the Milbank Memorial Library, Teacher's College, Columbia University. The theme of the meeting was collaboration and outreach activities on the part of curriculum materials center librarians. This topic was, in large part, inspired by a chapter on collaboration and outreach that will appear in, *The Promise and the Challenge: An International Directory and Guide for Curriculum Materials Centers in the 21st Century*, a book due to be published in 2001.

Jennifer Govan and Irina Poznansky, Librarians at the Milbank Memorial Library, described a number of activities that they employ to reach out to colleagues on campus as well as in the geographic neighborhood. One activity consists of a story hour program that takes place in the Library's Resource Room and draws upon the talents of students, faculty, staff, and administration at Teacher's College as well as authors, and leaders in the field of education. Participants plan their own sessions

and can utilize activities, games, music and finger plays along with the books they have selected. The Resource Room has promoted this program through a videocassette that Jennifer and Irina presented at the meeting.

They also described a series of teleconferences that they established in 1998 that consist of United States Department of Education town meetings as well as other special events. These teleconferences, delivered via satellite within the Milbank Memorial Library, focus on a variety of key educational issues and are attended by faculty, students, staff and guests.

Harriet Hagenbruch, the Curriculum Materials Center/Education Librarian at Hofstra, also described some of the strategies she makes use of in order to reach out to colleagues in Hofstra's School of Education and Allied Human Services. At this point, others joined in to discuss their various

experiences in terms of collaboration and outreach.

Later in the day, many of the group members attended an ERIC workshop which also took place at Teacher's College. This proved to be a thoroughly rewarding day in terms of both sharing and learning.

Harriet Hagenbruch
Hofstra University

To be notified of future meetings of this SIG, contact Harriet Hagenbruch, Chair, at LIBCMHAH@Mail1.Hofstra.edu

Symposium, cont'd from p.1

(malpractice, for example) requiring constant attention on the part of the practitioner to the rules and systems of the profession, causing stress.

Tenner's discussion was laced with a multitude of examples of technostress including telegraphers, the first professionals to suffer from technostress. Telegraphers were often afflicted with "glass arm," a recognized repetitive stress injury. "Neurasthenia" arose as the pace of life speeded up and was common among train engineers. The development of cast iron frames for pianos allowed sound to fill large auditoriums but required twice as much pressure on the keys causing repetitive motion injuries among pianists. The automobile

was hailed as the solution to the sanitation problem caused by horses, but then resulted in air pollution and other problems.

Tenner calls this sort of unintended consequence a "revenge effect." A revenge effect makes the condition it was supposed to solve worse or creates another condition as bad or worse. Revenge effects cause technostress.

There are five types of revenge effects: repeating, recomplicating, reconstituting, rearranging, and resurging, according to Tenner, and electronic information reflects the full range.

Repeating represents the problem of being asked to do more because, with technology, we can.

Recomplicating refers to the hidden requirements of

technology. In return for the simplification of plug and play technology there is an underlying complication to cover all the possibilities that may be required of a system. Managers assume that higher production can realize savings by reduction of support staff but then the expensive time of professionals is being used for simple tasks.

As technology improvements become popular and more people make use of them the high use can stress the system causing it to breakdown. We need look no further than the example of the Internet's growing popularity which has often resulted in slow response time. This effect is reconstituting.

When a technology seems new and improved but really just moves the problem, it is known as rearranging. One example is

Access Services SIG, Anyone?

Amy Beth, Chair of the New York Geographic Section and Coordinator of Access Services at Queens College, wants to start a Special Interest Group for Access Services. If you're interested, contact Amy at 718/997-3761 or by e-mail at Amy_Beth@QC.edu.

the installation of air conditioning in subway trains which cools the cars, but results in stifling hot platforms in the stations.

Resurging is the way our means of controlling a system rebounds on us. An example in nature is antibiotic-resistant bacteria. In technology, the attempt to control the Y2K bug in computer systems may have introduced other bugs.

Tenner asserted that technique can replace the illusion of control with the reality. There is an ideal that technology will eliminate the need for technique, but this is probably not possible. Techniques develop from experience with technology and techniques result in improvements to technology. For example, typists on early typewriters found better rhythm possible by not looking at the machine or the paper in it leading to the technique of touch typing and changes in the layout of the keyboard to facilitate the new technique.

Tenner ended with the advice to encourage experimentation and the development of new techniques to control technology. In answering a question he advised that nothing should be implemented in an irrevocable way. Doing nothing new has its own revenge effect. New technology does things better in a more expensive way and should not be portrayed to the public as being done only to save money but to improve service.

David Magier, the second featured speaker, is the director of Area Studies at Columbia

University and the South/Southeast Asia Librarian. He has been an active user of the Internet for over twenty years, and has operated an Internet training business and consultancy for the last seven years.

Magier highlighted some of the extraordinary advances of technology and their impact on libraries. Although, he noted that the relationship between technology and libraries has not been an equal marriage. He cited recent technological developments involving the Columbia University libraries, such as the *netLibrary* project, a consortial partnership with Cornell University, Dartmouth College, and Middlebury College in the use of a virtual library of over 6,000 contemporary electronic monographs. Magier also mentioned *Borrow Direct*, a new online service that allows patrons at the participating libraries (Columbia, University of Pennsylvania, and Yale University) to borrow materials directly from each other's collections.

In his presentation, Magier raised some interesting issues such as the reliability of information sources. Now that anyone can self-publish on the Web, the number of Web pages has exceeded the population. He noted that print is not always reliable either, but in digital form it is more easily manipulated.

Technology provides bibliographic access, keyword searching, for instance, that was not possible before. It also allows for improved processing

and the ability to create management reports.

On the issue of librarians' role in adding value to Web resources, he affirmed that librarians still have the same mission as ever: to collect, evaluate and select information; to organize and classify information; to make information accessible, preserve it and connect users to the information they need. As an example, he described some of the work done by librarians at Columbia on *SARAI: South Asia Resource Access on the Internet*, a Web-based subject-classified collection of online resources, which is part of the World Wide Web Virtual Library.

Peter Liebscher, Dean, School of Library Information Science of Catholic University of America, began the panel presentations by proposing an innovative way to help relieve technostress: the creation of conceptual maps.

By providing a conceptual map of an entire process, a user can see the whole picture rather than being limited to his or her own limited knowledge or having to rely on step-by-step instructions. While a conceptual map still is no guarantee of success, it can give the user a sense of confidence and lower his/her level of stress. He pointed out that we often are so familiar with what we do, that we do not stop to build maps for others who are not familiar with what we take for granted. Without a map, if one does not use a

certain technology often, it is easy to forget how to do something. Using examples from his own life, he cited instances where a conceptual map would have benefitted him. One example was on the use of new office machines. New machinery requires a certain technique which must be learned and is often not transferable from one machine to another, such as a new photocopy machine. Using a photocopy machine for the first time can be quite intimidating, especially the newer more electronic models with messages that the maker understands but which may be like Martian to the user. It takes a while to master the intricacies and nuances of a new machine until one is comfortable in its operation. There is stress during this learning period. That stress could be reduced if there were a simple map above the machine showing how it operated. Other examples included transferring

phone calls on a new phone system; online registration for classes when the courses being offered keep changing; looking for books in the book stacks when call numbers do not appear in sequential order. One very good example involved the use of the London Underground. Liebscher had a ticket that was good for zones one through six, but no map to tell him what areas of London constituted these zones. Thus, he did not know if his ticket was good for where he wanted to go. A map showing each of the zones and areas outside of the zones would have given him the information he needed.

Greater standardization of systems would also help. This has already begun with the wide use of the Web interface. It is now being used for online library catalogs and online databases. Some practical suggestions included moving things so that they are easier to find and use, putting up signs to help users find things and creating maps that will cut down on the stress that is involved in using new technology.

Cerise Oberman, Dean of Library and Information Services, SUNY at Plattsburgh, began her presentation with the question, "How do we deal with technology in libraries?" She made observations based on an article by Howard Rheingold, noted author of *The Virtual Community*. In this article, Rheingold discussed how he "turned a corner" in his understanding of technology after observing a small segment

of the Amish population in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania.

Historically, it was assumed that the Amish shunned the creature comforts of technology.

Symposium, cont'd on p. 7

Rare and Unique Jewels Discovered at American Museum of Natural History New York Geographic Section Sponsors Tour

On November 1, 1999, 13 ACRL/NY members met at the Library of the American Museum of Natural History for a tour hosted by Michelle Anastasia, one of AMNH's reference librarians, and organized by Mary Habstritt, ACRL/NY Geographic Section Chair for New York City. Half the group shared a tasty lunch at the nearby Café Frida before the start of the tour.

The tour began with greetings from Tom Moritz, Director of the Library, who gave us an overview of the library's services and collections. The Library was founded together with the American Museum of Natural History in 1869 and has grown to 440,000 volumes, making it the largest library of natural history in the western hemisphere. The collections cover the fields of anthropology, mammalogy, ornithology, geology, paleontology, oceanography, among others, retrospectively to the 15th century. Although its primary mission is to support the scientific work of the Museum, the Library is open to the public Tuesdays through Fridays, 11:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.. Museum admission fees are not required to enter. More information and the Library's catalog is available at <http://nimidi.amnh.org>.

Moritz described a new digitization project for which the Library has been awarded a \$2 million grant from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation. Seven additional staff members will be hired to digitize rare books and manuscripts documenting 500 years of scientific exploration. Library materials will be integrated with artifacts

and specimens from the Museum collections enabling public access to unique research material via the World Wide Web.

After a brief look around the Reading Room which, along with housing the reference collection, provides display space for some of the Library's art and realia, we were introduced to the Library's Special Collections by Barbara Mathe. She showed us selected photographs, slides, and glass slides and took us through the climate-controlled stacks where these images, as well as the film and archival collections, are stored. Anastasia then showed us a few of the monographic rarities with glowing plates in jewel-like colors of birds, insects and mammals. These included *Illustrations of the family of Psittacidae*, an 1832 work by Edward Lear, and John Gould's 1863 folio, *Mammals of Australia*. Finally, Paula Wiley described the Microsoft Access database she has created to organize descriptive information on the images in the Special Collections.

The tour was a fascinating mix of history and up-to-date computer technology. Admission to the Museum was a bonus graciously provided to attendees by the Library.

Mary Habstritt

Pace University-New
York City



Image from http://www.amnh.org/welcome/history/smp_index.html

Symposium, cont'd from p. 5

Upon observing a traditionally dressed Amish woman talking on a cellular phone in a field, Rheingold questioned his guide and was informed that the Amish are large users of cellular telephones, but restrict their use. For example, incoming calls via cellular telephones are not allowed in the home so that family conversations are not interrupted. The telephones must be utilized in a solitary place such as a field or barn, and only to call out. In effect, Oberman says, the Amish have adopted a framework against which all technology is judged; simple, direct, and it is core to their culture.

Oberman cited other works as sources of enlightenment and thought. In their book, *Information Ecologies Using Technology With Heart*, Nardy and O'Day discuss the concept of "information ecologies," which Oberman regards as relevant for academic librarians. According to the authors, in information ecologies, "the spotlight is not on technology but on human activities that are served by technology." The authors define an information ecology as a complex system with diverse parts and relationships that change over time and has a keystone species necessary to sustain the ecology. For example, grasses on dunes prevent the dunes from eroding. They are there for a keystone species; remove the grasses, and the dunes will no longer

exist. Similarly, remove the librarians and the information ecology will not exist.

According to Oberman, librarians need to control the information ecologies at their institutions by creating core values that hopefully, will prevent the overwhelming feeling of "technostress." In effect, the Amish have accomplished this for the last one hundred years. Their "techno-selectivity," coupled with personal core values, has created their own rich ecology.

To apply these lessons, Oberman suggested that we first have to recognize that academic libraries are complex and diverse ecologies with interacting parts. Second, we must recognize ourselves as a keystone species in the institution of higher education and identify irreplaceable traits, similar to those grasses on the dunes. Third, and most difficult, we must articulate our own core values.

When those core values are defined, services and programs must be built around them and the reasons for the choices communicated to the administration, faculty, and student body. At her institution, Oberman identifies two core values: connect users with information; and teaching, as part of programs and services rendered. Oberman urged everyone to return to his or her institution and establish core values so that they too, will be ready to make judgements relating to technology.

Dr. Marie Radford,

Associate Professor, Pratt Institute, spoke on technostress in the library. Staying current with continuous change in technology and the Internet can be very stressful. Radford said that it doesn't help that there is often a lack of technical support in the library, especially on evenings and weekends. She asserted that technology has made libraries more complicated to use and has caused librarians' responsibilities to multiply. Librarians often have to deal with several problems at the same time.

Radford acted out a scenario of the beleaguered librarian at the reference desk, pulled in many directions. Reference librarians have to enforce time limits on patrons using the Internet, deal with paper jams, keep up with shifting interfaces, and help patrons formulate searches, among other pressing responsibilities.

Patrons insist on using the Internet for research, even though using search engines results in many thousands of hits, 99.9% of which are useless. Radford asserted that currently, most Internet users are naïve, and want instant gratification. She queried, "Do they have one clue of what they are doing?" She stated that only 6% of Internet users know how to use Boolean search terms, and most people can't tell the difference between a search engine and a browser. Dr. Radford nevertheless concluded her talk on a positive note, asserting that libraries have a dual role in

relation to technology – as change agent and as manager of change.

Symposium, cont'd from p. 7

collection development at Auraria Library (Colorado) and at Bay Path College (Massachusetts). Auraria College Library in the mid-1970s was underfunded and suffering from inadequate collections. A flat budget forced a reevaluation of collection development priorities and extensive serial cancellations. Only heavily used journals were retained and the library bought one time access to lesser used journals, at a considerable savings. With money saved on cancellations,

Dr. Jay Schafer, Director, Library and Information Services, Bay Path College, was the final panelist. He described

funds were redirected and commercial document delivery and electronic accounts for faculty ordering were instigated. Faculty were also given copy cards (up to \$20) for use at a nearby university library. These changes improved user satisfaction.

At Bay Path, Dr. Schafer faced an inadequate library in 1996. He constructed a virtual library of information resources using: Web resources; online, full text journal subscriptions; document delivery; and by entering consortial buying arrangements with other local

his use of technology in improving

Symposium, cont'd on p. 8

colleges. Technology and inter-institutional cooperation helped bring innovative solutions to a library struggling to maintain adequate and timely information resources for its students and faculty.

Contributors to this article: Mary Habstritt, Pace University; Anca Meret, Columbia University; Dona McDermott, Long Island University; Bellinda Wise, Nassau Community College; Laurie Lopatin, Hofstra University; Janet Butler Munch, Lehman College Library

ACRL/NY Connections

Greater Metropolitan Area Chapter
Association of College and Research Libraries
P.O. Box 8331
New York NY 10116-4652

Winter1999/2000