Barbarians at the Gate: *Civilizing Digital Information*

... An annotated bibliography

compiled by *Araby Greene*

Classic architecture, marble rotundas, sculptured lions, and gargoyles reflect the role of libraries as trusted guardians of the human record. The great libraries are public places of substance where history unfolds, and knowledge and truth may be discovered. The feminist writer, Germaine Greer, called libraries "reservoirs of strength, grace and wit, reminders of order, calm and continuity, lakes of mental energy, neither warm nor cold, light nor dark."[1] But what of digitized information? How authoritative is it? How do we adapt to, or influence, new ways of writing, publishing, and disseminating information? What is our reason for being?

Many books and articles that extrapolate the future of libraries in a world now labeled in library literature as "post-information-revolution." The best writings temper enthusiasm for a virtual future with common sense, and help us determine which technologies deserve our expenditure of time to learn and money to install and which are transitory and unworthy of either.

The selections in this bibliography are a small, personal sample of interesting scholarship and experience representing these concerns:

- Preserving scholarly publishing in a fluid electronic environment that indiscriminately mixes knowledge with mere information. Our self-inflicted role as preservationist has become a difficult calling, indeed.
- Providing better access to more expensive information with smaller budgets and fewer staff.
- Meeting the demand for equitable service to a multicultural audience and removing barriers to access for technological have-nots.
- Educating new library school graduates and retraining ourselves to be leaders and active participants in the politics of information. Necessity and the shadow of extinction produce a marketplace mentality.
- Maintaining awareness and respect for our collective ability to organize knowledge and deliver it in usable form to those who need it. We feel compelled to serve our patrons well, but the superbly crafted reference interview eludes anonymous cyberpatrons.

This list is divided into two sections: The first is about philosophy, theory, and planning; the second, practical electronic skills.

Philosophy, theory, and planning

Barron, Daniel D. "Staffing Rural Public Libraries: The Need to Invest in Intellectual Capital." *Library Trends* 44 (Summer 1995): 77-87. Rural library staff need continuing education that goes beyond occasional workshop training to education for problem solving and decision making. The vehicle will be distance education blended from teleconferencing, e-mail, the Web, discussion lists, books, and meetings. Distance education is no longer synonymous with correspondence school, but a way to create a "community of practice."

Birdsall, William F. *The Myth of the Electronic Library: Librarianship and Social Change in America.* Westport, CT: Greenwood, 1994. Explores alternative roles of the library in society. Birdsall accurately identifies the prevalent assumptions of the "myth" of the electronic library, but offers an alternative vision, the library as a "therapeutic" social institution. The prose is very dense, but the ideas are worth considering. Substantial bibliography.

Cheney, Debora. "Technology in Document Collections." *Management of Government Information Resources in Libraries*, 111-128. Ed. Diane H. Smith. Englewood, CO: Libraries Unlimited, 1993. Explains why GPO's headlong rush to electronic dissemination actually provides less access to more federal information. Should be required reading for library administrators and public services staff.

Crawford, Walt, and Michael Gorman. *Future Libraries: Dreams, Madness & Reality.* Chicago: American Library Association, 1995. According to the authors, progress is achieved through balance, by using appropriate technology appropriately. New technologies supplant the weak uses of older technologies, but also preserve and sustain their strong uses. Malicious wit exorcizes the vampires of "technolust" and skewers the "new Barbarians" of the information age.

Driscoll, Susan. "The Role of Publishers in the Digital Age." *Educom Review* 30, 3 (May/June 1995). URL: *http:// www.educom.edu/educom.review/review.95/may-jun/driscoll.html.* Hopeful essay on the continuing role of publishers in quality control and editorial guidance. The *Educom* Web site is an important source of information on current developments in educational technology.

Futas, Elizabeth, ed. *Collection Development Policies and Procedures*. 3rd ed. Phoenix: Oyrx, 1995. While the influence of the Internet has just begun to appear in written policies, other issues have been resolved since the second edition of this book. The author has not abandoned "collection development" for the trendier "collection management." There are some excellent policy examples here, and the author's survey of academic and public libraries is revealing. Responses from 384 libraries reveal how they distribute resources with declining budgets and rising prices.

Johnson, Peggy and Bonnie MacEwan. *Collection Management and Development: Issues in an Electronic Era. Proceedings of the Advanced Collection Management and Development Institute March 26-28, 1993*. Chicago: American Library Association, 1994. Addresses the problem of making print and electronic information work together to improve document delivery and to achieve a balanced pace of electronic acquisition. Electronic indexes still "point to print materials," which are not easily transferred to the user. More networked electronic full-text and multimedia resources are needed, along with technology to readily convert print and electronic information back and forth.

Karp, Rashelle S. *The Academic Library of the 90s: An Annotated Bibliography*. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1994. Unlike most annotated bibliographies, this one summarizes what is new in each source cited. Essential resources gathered in one well-crafted volume.

Kohl, David. "OhioLINK: A Vision for the 21st Century." *Library Hi Tech* 12, 4. (1994): 29-34. A model of statewide cooperation and high technology brings together over 40 Ohio libraries into a consortium of 8 million titles and 20 million volumes available for user-initiated circulation. OhioLINK, which has benefited from a creative funding arrangement separate from the State University system, includes the development of access to many non-catalog databases and full-text document delivery.

Lamolinara, Guy. "Metamorphosis of a National Treasure." *American Libraries* 27, 3 (March 1996): 31-33. The Library of Congress's National Digital Library Program (NDLP), endorsed by *both* Al Gore and Newt Gingrich, will digitize five million items from LC's "treasure trove of Americana" at a cost of $60 million over five years. This project is an attempt to put substantive, unique book and media collections previously available to only a few scholars out where everyone can appreciate and learn from them. Unfortunately, even if wildly successful, it's a drop in the bucket. Visit the *American Memory* Web page at http://www.nps.gov/management.

McNulty, Tom, and Dawn M. Suvino. *Access to Information: Materials, Technologies, and Services for Print-Impaired Readers*. Chicago: American Library Association, 1993. To give people with vision impairments access to print materials, libraries have used braille, computers that synthesize speech, large screen and printer fonts, and audiocassettes. The growing use of the graphical user interface (GUI) presents new challenges. This slim volume explains and evaluates the options. Appendices list helpful agencies and associations, product vendors, reference resources, and a bibliography.

Pitkin, Gary M., ed. *The Impact of Emerging Technologies on Reference Service and Bibliographic Instruction*. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1995. Detailed and practical in its recommendations and historically rich with fascinating background material, this is a book worth reading. Levelheaded and grounded in real library work, it is an interesting companion for its evil twin, below.

Pitkin, Gary M., ed. *The National Electronic Library: A Guide to the Future for Library Managers*. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1996. A pleasant book that seems to be bent on making the "vaporware" National Electronic Library a self-fulfilling prophecy. The chapter on library education endorses a somewhat chilling future of behaviorial studies, management techniques, and library patrons, including students as clients or customers. The antithesis of Crawford's, *Future Libraries: Dreams, Madness & Reality*, above.

Riggs, Donald E., and Patricia A. Tarin, eds. *Cultural Diversity in Libraries*. New York: Neal-Schuman, 1994. Cultural diversity is one of today's compelling issues of library planning and collection development. Serving a diverse community well is an art, a challenge, and an absolute necessity.

Shiller, Herbert I. *Information Inequality: The Deepening Social Crisis in America*. New York: Routledge, 1996. Impassioned, opinionated, and biased, but a real warning about the increasing control of information by media conglomerates and business interests.

Watson, Robert E. "On Gatekeepers and Librarians." *Public Libraries* 35 (January/February '96): 36-43. Watson inverts the library curriculum with the suggestion that library schools should first concentrate on ensuring the acquisition of broad cultural literacy before ever getting into practical "how-to" courses. This old idea would not seem fresh or radical if the current generation of college students seemed more driven by intellectual curiosity than job training, as Robert Bly also asserts in his curmudgeonly bestseller, *The Sibling Society*.[2]

Wood, Richard J., and Frank Hoffmann. *Library Development Policies: A Reference and Writers' Handbook*. Lanham, MD: Scarecrow, 1996. A library without a development plan is a library at risk. Frustrated users will go elsewhere for information; worse, they may cut the budgetary and political support that allows the library to build a community-responsive collection. The authors have collected successful policies from all types of libraries as examples that can be used to speed up the preliminary steps of policy-writing, and to serve as reminders of essential points.

Learning and teaching new electronic skills

Courtois, Martin P. "Cool Tools for Web Searching: an Update." *Online* 20 (May/June 1996): 29-36. An excellent summary of trends in Web services and search engines and services. A good companion article to "Web Searching: Tricks of the Trade," below. Both articles illustrate that choosing the right search service and knowing its characteristics are the key to locating information on the Web.

Graham, Ian S. *HTML Sourcebook: A Complete Guide to HTML 3.0*. 2nd ed. New York: Wiley, 1996. The absolute best book on the current state of HTML. Every librarian should know something about how World Wide Web documents are constructed. Discusses experimental developments in HTML, such as style sheets and JAVA applets. Includes two informative chapters on the Common Gateway Interface and CGI scripting. Web authors also will want to acquire the Musiciano book below.

Kovacs, Diane K. *The Internet Trainer's Guide*. New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold, 1995. Diane Kovacs has moderated professional electronic library discussion lists and edited the e-journal *Library Research*. This book is a guide to developing accurate but non-technical training presentations for novice to intermediate Internet users. Visit the Web site of Kovacs Consulting at *http://www.kovacs.com* for a link to the author's training support pages and more information.

Kuhlthau, Carol Collier, ed. *The Virtual School Library: Gateway to the Information Highway*. Englewood, CO: Libraries Unlimited, 1996. A praiseworthy book that explains the concept of the "virtual library" and how school media centers can integrate Internet resources into a "library without walls." Presents models of the "Information Curriculum" that prepare students to select and interpret information from a flood of resources. Includes examples of distance education programs and workshops in new technologies.

McClure, Charles, William E. Moen, and Joe Ryan. *Libraries and the Internet/NREN*. Westport: Mecklermedia, 1994. The National Research and Education Network is close to home for North Carolina librarians nurtured by the North Carolina State Library's network-based library services. This book is for managers in all types of libraries. The chapter "NREN and Library Education," by Christopher Tomer emphasizes that future librarians must understand the technical underpinnings of information systems for the purpose of becoming problem-solvers and decision-makers, not just well-trained users. An adequate curriculum would include basic network navigation courses, related and rigorous electives in data management, programming, and so on. Practicing librarians need to retrain continuously in order to keep up with the vision and direction of our profession in North Carolina.

Mellendorf, Scott A., "Working the Web with a No-frills 'Work Page.'" *Online* 20, 1 (January/February 1996): 21-24. Answers the question, "Where did I leave my Web tools?" This is a useful concept, easily overlooked in the excitement of building visually stunning Web pages. Mellendorf's work page is eminently practical and can be adapted to the needs of any library reference desk. It puts the most-often used resources and tools on one screen, allowing us all to use the "excellent work of others." One great Web site to include on such a page is Northwestern University Library's "Library Research on the Internet," with links to associations, major library studies, reference tools, online publications, and other goodies. The URL is *http://www.library.nwu.edu/library/*.

Musciano, Chuck and Bill Kennedy, *HTML: The Definitive Guide*. 1st. ed. Sebastopol, CA: O'Reilly & Associates, 1996. Succinct and clearly written, this book will be an indispensable handbook for any Web author. Includes quick reference guides for HTML tags, special characters, and colors.

Simpson, Carol Mann. *Internet for Library Media Specialists*. Worthington, OH: Linworth, 1995. This is a very clearly written guide to basic Internet concepts for newcomers. Simpson includes technical hints that are left out of other guides by people who have forgotten what it is like to be alone and clueless with a modem manual. Leads the reader gently through the basics, then to many outstanding Internet resources in education and ideas for using them effectively. "Uses of the Internet in School Libraries" and "Uses of the Internet in Specific Content Areas" could be used as a basis for some very practical, self-directed learning projects for the school librarian. Unfortunately, the emphasis on gopher resources in this guide highlights the transitory nature of current technology.

Still, Julie, ed. *The Internet Library: Case Studies of Internet Management and Use*. Westport. CN: Mecklermedia, 1994. Each chapter presents a real, implemented library project involving practical use of the Internet. Organized into sections about services, various library settings (from the Bodleian to the one-person library), and training issues, the book satisfies an often ignored hunger for project details, such as setting up an FTP site or establishing electronic reserves. Includes teaching strategies and lesson plans for Internet trainers.

Zorn, Peggy, Mary Emanoil, Lucy Marshall, and Mary Panek. "Web Searching: Tricks of the Trade." *Online* 20 (May/June 1996): 15-28. This substantial analysis of Web search engines for the information professional clarifies the subtle and not-so-subtle differences among search services offered to everyone on the Web. Knowing the strengths and weaknesses of one search service over another will reduce fumbling at the reference desk.

References

[1] Germaine Greer, "Still in Melbourne, January 1987" in *Daddy, We Hardly Knew You* (New York: Knopf, 1990), 70.
[2] Robert Bly, *The Sibling Society* (Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley), 1996.