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Editorial

Serials Review, a Changing World, You and I

Connie Foster

I never really thought about being an avatar in a virtual world, but then I never really thought I'd want to own an iPod either. Taking on a Second Life® could have interesting implications. As one of my colleagues said, "Living a real life is hard enough. Why take on a virtual life too?" Granted, Second Life is an exciting and intriguing 3-D approach to tap into our next generations of students and those who truly "got game." And librarians are beginning to explore options and applications. So why look back? Somehow there's comfort in reflection and retrospection, feet firmly planted, ground that really contains dirt, and ears that can selectively enjoy "Born to be Wild" and "Ain't No Mountain High Enough." If an iPod has made me a happier person, maybe Second Life holds mysterious benefits for serials and scholarly communication as well. Who knows? Virtual librarians dispense virtual articles on captivating topics and zoom in and around thousands of Google hits in the stratospheres of information seeking and seekers.

I have borrowed loosely (and admittedly unimaginatively) from the title of the first editorial for *Serials Review*, "Serials Review and You," to get some inspiration. In 1975 the real editors introduced the new journal as a sister publication to *Reference Services Review*, known as *RSR*, published by Edward Wall, owner of Pierian Press. Evaluating the relevancy and suitability of serials for libraries and how to find articles through indexes is a mainstay of the profession. Indexes, abstracts, bibliographies, and now online

databases, or more generally a Google search, allow researchers timely ways to identify resources for their use within and outside the confines of the library. While the scope of *SR* has changed over the years, one of the seminal contributions remains--“Serials Review Index,” a column featured since 1975, with citations to serials reviewed in select journals. Despite all of the advantages technology has to offer in terms of finding aids, we still use whatever sources we can to pinpoint that definitive date for the first issue of a periodical, whether it be rummaging through Poole’s index, *Index to Free Periodicals*, Katz’s *Magazines for Libraries*, an OCLC record, or other resources. The need for thorough and complete information still exists, at least for those of us who are borderline compulsive about accuracy and finality.

SR began as a quarterly and remains so; however, the first year of publication had only three issues, “this first combined issue followed by two quarterlies.”¹ While the emphasis on pure reviews as the entire focus has diminished, the expanded scope captures a movement forward to meet needs of scholarly communication and issues not yet even dreamed of in 1975—issues presented in a very exciting selection of articles for *Serials Review* in 2007. We appreciate and value the continued interest in and contributions to *SR* in so many ways, from members of the editorial board to column editors, to authors and peer reviewers. My associate editor Beverley Geer and I are always impressed with the ideas and variety that come our way.

Eclecticism at Its Best, Here and Now

As manuscripts pop into the EES (Elsevier Editorial System), the word “eclectic” popped into my head for the content of this particular issue. I have the opportunity to review

topics from diverse countries submitted by authors from various backgrounds within and outside of libraries. During the past few years *Serials Review* has gained an international dimension and also has focused on special issues like federated searching, archiving of journals, open access, and initiatives for developing countries, alongside articles about Chinese periodical databases and national libraries.

The first issue of 2007 presented readers with ideas and research in Africa, the Netherlands, and the United States. “Coverage of Periodicals in National Deposit Libraries,” “Serials Management in Africa,” “Datasets, a Shift in the Currency of Scholarly Communication,” “Shifting away from Print Journals in ARL Libraries,” and one of two articles to be published on institutional repositories.

This second issue offers just as much variety with Jingfeng Xia and Li Sun’s article on “Factors to Assess Self-Archiving in Institutional Repositories.” Golnessa Galyani Moghaddam analyzes the challenges of archiving electronic journals. Robbin Glaser debates small and medium-sized libraries dilemmas of how to arrange periodicals (a never-ending quest, judging from discussion lists and surveys). Michaelyn Haslam and Xiaoyin Zhang present an interesting method of tracking accuracy in serials subscriptions ordered by format, while Angel Clemons and Tyler Goldberg capture the history of the Ohio Valley Group of Technical Services Librarians, a regional library group in existence since 1924, and one we have reported on many times in “Serials Spoken Here,” for relevant presentations on serials and electronic resources.

Of course, the columns continue to uphold their own special slants and personalities with interviews, visits, analyses, and reviews, and they maintain a presence in the “Top 25”

downloaded articles each quarter. Allan Scherlen and Xiaorong Shao focus on Chinese editors of academic journals, an extension of Jue Wang's article about Chinese databases in the last issue.

Maria Collins interviews Selden Lamoureaux to keep us updated on the best practices change for licensing, as first drafted by Judy Luther and known as SERU. Equally fascinating is Jessamyn West's interview with members of the Kate Sharpley Library, a library devoted to publishing and housing anarchic literature.

The long-reigning "Little Magazines Interview Index" carefully prepared by Yvonne Schofer, Barbara Richards and others appears in the second issue annually. Mark Needleman keeps us informed about standards, this time with NISO Web Services documents. "SR Visits" EBSCO Publishing in Massachusetts and the always useful cue to order books comes from Teresa Malinowski's column "Tools of the Serials Trade."

In anticipation of a real coup for interviews, a forthcoming "Serials Conversations" will feature one with Jaron Lanier, whose Digital Maoism was so wonderfully analyzed in the previous "Balance Point." We thank Ted Freeman very much for making this opportunity available. It *is* exciting to look ahead and reflect on the past while staying in the present. Stay tuned. The avatars are paging me through my iPod.

¹ "SR Editorial," *Serials Review* (January/June 1975): 6.