

Scholarly Communication System in Peril

Dean Don Craig



According to the February 9, 2004, issue of *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, the board of directors of the *Journal of Algorithms* has resigned en masse. The board accused the journal distributor,

Elsevier, of charging so much that many college libraries could no longer afford to subscribe to it. These board members will now create a new journal, *Transactions on Algorithms*, which will be distributed by the Association for Computer Machinery at a reduced price. This is not the first such incident in recent years. Concerns over scholarly communication led the National Association of State Universities and Land Grant Colleges to identify this as a key academic challenge at its 2003 summer meeting.

How did the scholarly communication system get to such a point in its history? To understand, one must look back to the time when the producers and buyers of scholarship were the same people who often volunteered their labor to benefit their disciplines. When scholars did not want to self-publish, they turned their scholarship over to societies of their colleagues or to small publishers that did well to cover expenses or to make a very small profit.

The growth of higher education in the twentieth century demanded increased production of scholarship, which many societies were not

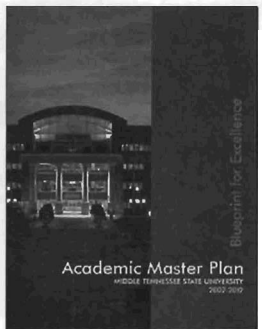
equipped to handle as before. Many of them contracted with commercial publishers to manage their journals and other commercial publishers began to create their own scholarly journals. By 1991, there were an estimated 118,500 journals being published, with 70,000 of these having been founded since 1971. During the latter half of the twentieth century, commercial publishers have taken advantage of a scholarly communication system in which many faculty members give their research to publishers for free (or in some cases actually pay for publication) and then the publishers sell it back to university libraries at very high prices. Libraries are thus in the middle, receiving increasing demands for additional published works while publishers continue to raise prices dramatically. For example, in the fifteen years prior to 2002, journal prices increased 215 percent compared with the 62 percent increase in the Consumer Price Index.

With such major increases in journal prices, libraries have tried various approaches to expand access to additional resources at more affordable costs. One such approach has been made possible by the availability of journals in electronic databases. Large publishers have been willing to enter into contracts with individual libraries for access to the entire electronic offerings of the publisher's titles, which have come to be known as "big deals." An extension of this "big deal"

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Library Initiatives to Support Academic Master Plan

Walker Library has started three programs in support of the University goals of fostering academic quality and creating a student-centered environment. These programs consist of a greeter program, grade the Library, and the inauguration of the roving librarian program.



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WALKER LIBRARY

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concept has been offered to groups of libraries, enabling each library to have electronic access to the titles owned by any library in its consortium. However, this bundling of many titles into one package results in libraries being contractually locked into multiyear subscriptions that can preclude the canceling of individual titles in print, regardless of usage of the titles or changing budget situations. Many libraries are rethinking this approach even though they have seen benefits in the form of discounted prices and caps on inflation. In fact, Cornell University Library has cancelled its bundled subscription with Elsevier, the largest science-technical-medical publisher. Also, Massachusetts Institute of Technology has declined to renew its multiyear deal with major publishers Elsevier and Wiley.

Walker Library has benefited for the past three years from a multi-institution "big deal" purchase of the online journal package *ScienceDirect* from Elsevier through a consortium of Tennessee libraries that included Vanderbilt University and the University of Tennessee. This purchase gave our users access to the electronic version of all our current print subscriptions to Elsevier publications as well as to the electronic versions of 758 titles subscribed to by the other consortium members. The cost of this access rose from \$21,000 to \$25,000 in the three-year contract period. When negotiations began for a renewal of the contract in 2003, Elsevier indicated that the consortium

purchase would not be allowed. This meant that we would have to pay \$32,000 to access electronically only 109 titles we currently owned in print, thus losing access to all titles owned by other consortium members. At this point a decision was made to shift the funds already being paid to Elsevier to another electronic resource, the *Web of Science*. This information product contains online citation databases of the *Science Citation Index* and the *Social Sciences Citation Index*. Several months after the purchase of *Web of Science*, Elsevier reopened negotiations with the consortium although at much higher costs. The cost to MTSU would have been \$32,000 for the initial year, rising to \$60,000 over the five-year contract period. Since a commitment had already been made for the *Web of Science* product and due to continuing budget problems in Tennessee, the library had to decline participation in the consortium purchase of *Science Direct*.

The library continues to monitor changes taking place in the traditional system of scholarly communication. Such changes include the development of nonprofit publishers for new journal titles and the creation of electronic repositories of faculty research output that do not require the involvement of commercial publishers. Future issues of *Update* will highlight recent developments in this area and the library's response to them.



Noted Printing Historian to Visit Library

Raymond Stanley Nelson, an emeritus member of the Smithsonian Institution's museum staff, is scheduled to visit campus on April 15 as part of a public service grant awarded to Walker Library and the MTSU Book Arts

Program. During his visit, Mr. Nelson will present a lecture, "Print Culture and Society," at 3:30 p.m. in Walker Library Special Collections. Mr. Nelson, a distinguished print historian, has long worked to further the public's understanding of print and other information technologies. He will share insights from his 30-year career at the

Smithsonian Institution and engage in a dialogue on the impact of print and other information technologies on the development of American society and culture.

Also during his visit, Mr. Nelson will consult on the MTSU Printing Press Project, a collaborative effort between Walker Library, the MTSU Book Arts Program, Facilities Services, Audio/Visual Services, and Engineering Technology and Industrial Studies to build and document the construction of a replica of Benjamin Franklin's printing press. Mr. Nelson is one of the few persons who has actually worked with the original Franklin press, which is housed at the Smithsonian.

University Library Update

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Additional contributors to this issue: Alan Boehm, Don Craig, Eloise Hitchcock

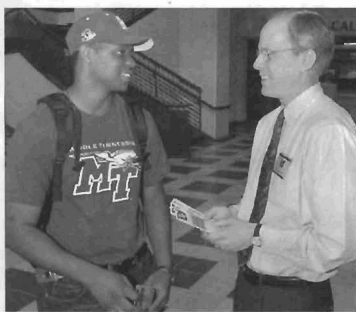
Library Hours

Monday-Thursday	7:30 a.m.-midnight.
Friday	7:30 a.m.-5:00 p.m.
Saturday	8:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m.
Sunday	1:00 p.m.-midnight.

Library Initiatives continued from cover

Greeter Program

Begun during the first week of the semester, this program focused on new students who had never been in the building before but also provided information about hours and services that was beneficial to more experienced students. Each person entering the library was greeted by a staff member who provided information about hours and services. The program provided an opportunity to let students know about certain services and to help make them feel comfortable about using the library.

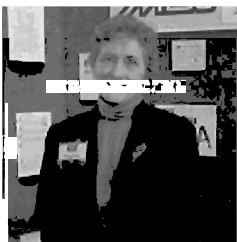


Grade the Library

Following the Thanksgiving break, students, faculty, and others were given the opportunity to grade the library on how well it was meeting their needs. Grade cards were handed to students entering the building asking for their year in school, their purpose for using the library that day, whether or not they received the service they needed, and if they were treated courteously. Space was provided for comments, and many were provided. Students are frequently graded during their time at the University, but rarely have the opportunity to grade any of the services they receive. This program gave them that chance and provided valuable feedback. There were 1,363 cards returned, and the grade point average was 3.8. The library received a grade of "A" from 92 percent of the respondents

New Program Inaugurated

Walker Library began a Roving Librarian service this semester. Modeled on a similar program at Harvard University, the MTSU service aims to bring the library to the students where they attend class, eat meals, and socialize. For the first two weeks in February, Diane Baird set up in the Business and Aerospace Building, the Bragg Mass Communications Building, and the Keathley University Center. Armed with a display board, library handouts, and a laptop computer, Ms. Baird briefly demonstrated how to use databases, answered questions about resources, helped students discover how to locate materials, and reinforced the importance of using the library and asking for the librarians' help.



The program is seen as a way to publicize services of the library and make students feel more comfortable about using those services. "We served 138 students during those first two weeks in February," said Baird. "One of the students I helped came back and told me, 'You made me a hero; no one in our group knew how to use that database.'"

The program is reaching students who may have never set foot in the library, introducing them to the value of the library in a quality education. It is expected that the program will be repeated during the month of April.

Book Donations

Walker Library has recently acquired several book collections. We are very pleased to be the recipients of the collection of Dr. Thelma N. Jennings, a professor of history at MTSU from 1966 to 1985. The collection was donated by Dr. Jennings' cousin, Lois Grippen, and consists of over 1,250 books on Southern history. Walker Library also acquired the miscellaneous book collection of Dr. Helmut Pfanner upon his retirement from Vanderbilt University, where he was a German professor. Approximately 700 books on German language and literature have been added to the library's collection. Mrs. Evelyn Huggins has made several book donations in honor of her husband, Dr. Clyde Griffin Huggins. Most notably, she has completed our limited edition set of the *Original Journals of the Lewis and Clark Expedition, 1804-1806*.

Staff News



Molly Holland (Collection Management Librarian) retired after 16 years of service at the MTSU Library in November, 2003. She worked as cataloger in Collection Management.

David Altenhof joined the library faculty in January. He is a recent graduate of Indiana University at Bloomington, where he earned a dual master of library science and information science degree. David will work at the reference desk and will also be involved in library instruction assignments as well as Web page design and Web-based tutorial projects.



Ann Clapp and Michael Hooper are interns in the User Services and Collections Management departments, respectively. They are enrolled in the University of Tennessee's distance education program. Each expects to earn the master's in information science degree in May.

Prior to pursuing her library degree in fall 2001, Ann spent seven years as district manager for Waldenbooks/Brentano's, a division of Borders Group, Inc. She has also worked for Barnes & Noble and the Williamson County (Tenn.) Public Library.

Michael has been a full-time staff member in Circulation here at Walker Library since March 2000. He enrolled in the distance education program during the fall semester of 2001.

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At the Library, It's All About Service! (L-R): **Kathy Field** (15 years), **Kaye Condit** (10 years), **Ken Middleton** (10 years), **Joyce Lane** (20 years), and **Sue Thetford** (15 years) were among almost 200 MTSU employees who received years-of-service recognition from the University in December.

For a Good Cause: **Nan Matson** (left) and **Kaye Condit** wrapped presents bound for the angel tree program, "Santa's Little Raiders." Last December, Walker Library staff again participated in the program, which donates Christmas gifts to the children of MTSU students. The program is sponsored annually by MTSU Public Safety.



The Mid-State Library Association (MSLA) held its fall meeting at the Walker Library on the MTSU campus in October last year. MSLA serves libraries in middle Tennessee and affords its members a forum for professional growth. Here, members learn about services provided by the various types of libraries in the mid-state.

Sue Alexander and **Rachel Kirk** presented *Research Coach: A By-Appointment Service of the Walker Library* at the meeting of the College and University Libraries Section of the Tennessee Library Association in October 2003.

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Sue Alexander's review of *Tennessee Technological University* by Mancil Johnson and Calvin Dickson was published in the *Tennessee Librarian*, Vol. 54. In November, she attended a Leadership Essentials workshop.

Alan Boehm has a forthcoming book review in *Libraries and Culture* of David Finkelstein's *The House of Blackwood: Author-Publisher Relations in the Victorian Era*, published by Penn State University Press.

Alan Boehm, William Black, and Janet Higgins (Book Arts Program, Art Department) were awarded a Public Service Grant from MTSU to bring Stanley Nelson to campus for a public lecture and consultation. Mr. Nelson is a printing historian who is an emeritus member of the Smithsonian Institution and has taught at the Rare Book School of the University of Virginia.

Alan Boehm, William Black, and Janet Higgins procured funds from a private donor to match a \$7,000 Special Projects Grant from the MTSU Development Office. The funds are being used to build a replica of Benjamin Franklin's printing press that can be used in academic programs of the University and in a partnership with the Rutherford County Schools to enhance literacy.

Mayo Taylor is co-author of the new Greenwood Press book *The Story behind the Song: 150 Songs That Chronicle the 20th Century*. Co-authors are Rich Barnett, Recording Industry professor, and Bruce Nemerov, audio specialist with the Center for Popular Music.

Mayo Taylor and **Rachel Kirk** conducted a TennShare summer workshop titled "Assessing the Use and Cost Effectiveness of Electronic Resources."

Eloise Hitchcock and **John Hitchcock** published *Tennessee Electronic Library & TennShare Teacher's Manual: Curriculum Integration with Tennessee Department of Education Standards*, revised edition, Gale Group, 2003. In addition, they authored "Tennessee Bibliography 2002" in *Tennessee Librarian* (online), V. 53, No. 4.

Eloise Hitchcock has written reviews of the following books: *African Folklore: An Encyclopedia* in *Library Journal*, February 1, 2004, p. 72.; *Appalachian Studies Bibliography [Internet Resource]* in *Choice*, January 2004.; *In the Light of the Moon: Thirteen Lunar Tales* in *Library Journal*, December 2003, p.130. ; *Historian's Toolbox: A Student's Guide to the Theory and Craft of History* in *Choice*, September 2003, 41-0075.; *Songs of Life and Grace* in *Library Journal*, August 2003, pp. 94-95.; and *Tales from Sacred Wind* in *Library Journal*, July 2003, p. 111.