

## Letters

To the Editor:

In "Scholars, Librarians, and the Future of Primary Records" (*College & Research Libraries*, 54 [Sept. 1993]: 397-406), Phyllis Franklin has used my book, *The Librarian, the Scholar, and the Future of the Research Library*, as a foil to mount a forceful argument for the preservation of primary print records in libraries during the electronic era. Unfortunately, in doing so, she has construed attitudes that I do not hold and assertions that I did not make. She has also, I believe, distorted the basic thrust of my book.

Franklin is quite correct that my book focuses on the "record of scholarship" and largely ignores "primary records." She infers from this that I have "missed . . . the role that libraries play in collecting and providing access . . . to [such records]." Yet the very quotation from my book that precedes and is apparently intended to support Franklin's statement notes that research libraries conserve not only the record of scholarship ("the written, printed, and now electronically encoded information generated by the scholarly process") but also "other information of immediate or potential value to research." This "other information" necessarily includes primary records. Moreover, I am clearly and consistently on record, in a variety of other writings, with respect to the importance of primary records in research library collections, as well as the need to maintain them in the electronic era. (See, for example, p. 392 of my article, "How to Survive the Present while Preparing for the Future: A Research Library Strategy," that precedes Franklin's article in the same issue of *College & Research Libraries*.)

Similarly, Franklin infers, from the discussion of librarians' and scholars' differing and even contradictory objectives in my book, a view that librarians find scholars to be "difficult—even ornery" and "disagreeable." This personalizes and trivializes my effort to analyze dysfunctions in the critical relationships of librarians and scholars to the record of scholarship and to each other. It also enables Franklin to conclude that my book emphasizes "tensions" and deemphasizes "positive connections." I do not believe that a careful reading of the book can support such a conclusion.

Actually, I am convinced that Franklin and I are in considerable agreement on the fundamental issues of the librarian-scholar relationship in both the print and the electronic eras. I share her view of the importance of continuing to preserve print primary records in special collections, alongside the pre-print manuscript records that have been maintained through the print era. I also hope that we agree about the need to shift the "record of scholarship," as defined above, from print to electronic format as quickly and completely as we can. Such a shift, I am convinced, is in the interest of all participants in the scholarly process.

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To the Editor:

We were gratified to see that California State University, Long Beach was listed among the "Leading Academic Institutions—Those with the Most Author Submissions" in the article "Publication in *College & Research Libraries*: Accepted, Rejected, and Published Papers, 1980-1991" (*College & Research Libraries*, 54 [July 1993]: 303-21, 308). As the only university ranked that does not have as its primary focus the conduct of

research (and one of only two not holding membership in the Association of Research Libraries), we are pleased that our efforts to contribute to the literature of librarianship were recognized. By our count, however, four of our articles, "Evaluation of a Self-Paced Bibliographic Instruction Course" (Nov. 1983), "The Academic Librarian and Faculty Status in the 1980s: A Survey of the Literature" (May 1987), "Librarians and Faculty Members: Coping with Pressures to Publish" (Nov. 1987), and "Bibliographic Instructors in the Sciences: A Profile" (May 1988), were accepted for publication within the period studied, rather than just the two indicated.

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To the Editor:

Eldred Smith and Peggy Johnson have written an interesting article, "How to Survive the Present while Preparing for the Future: A Research Library Strategy" (*College & Research Libraries* 54 [Sept. 1993]: 389-96), but it does not offer an adequate strategy for preparing research libraries for the future. Like others who have addressed this topic, these authors assume they can see the shape of the future and prescribe accordingly. Unfortunately that assumption does not apply in the current environment. In the world in which academic research libraries are struggling, the future is not predictable. Too many variables are changing too rapidly for predictions to be reliable.

There are strategies that do not require futuristic predictions. Research libraries can focus their efforts on those organizational components which will contribute to the transition and be an essential part of any information future. Three components come quickly to mind:

**Staff:** Whatever the shape of the eventual electronic information environment, staff will need a more sophisticated understanding of hardware, software, and the construction of information resources. A budget commitment to staff education, in addition to the usual staff training, is a primary target in a strategy for preparing for the future.

**Equipment:** Technical changes come quickly in the early part of a development curve. Couple that with our existing need for more reliable and powerful computing and communications equipment to handle the amount of traffic and the size and complexity of information resources and a budget commitment to periodic upgrades of equipment and the communications infrastructure becomes a second target in a strategy for preparing for the future.

**Information resources:** Smith and Johnson are right when they state that academic libraries don't have everything now and won't have everything in the future. But they offer a mechanism (delivery on demand) for provision of information with only the hope that ARL, a voluntary organization, can develop it in the future. A more useful strategy is for research libraries to maintain strong information resource budgets, buying the print collections they need, adding electronic resources as need and interest dictate. A series of alliances, each targeted to specific curriculum of research needs and based on the long-term priorities of participating institutions, can supplement high-demand, campus-based resources of all formats. Rigorous experimental investigation of emerging resources is the final essential part of the third target in a strategy for preparing for the future.

Staff, the technical infrastructure, and information resources are the building blocks of research libraries now and will be integral parts of the research library of the future, whatever form it takes. Research libraries should give up the use of speculative futures as the basis for planning and concentrate on using the tools at hand to renew and recreate our resources as we move toward the future.

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