

College & Research

Libraries *NEWS*

No. 9, October 1974

ACRL News Issue (B) of College & Research Libraries, Vol. 35, No. 5

RLG Chooses Director, Gets Mellon Grant

The Research Libraries Group (RLG), a recently formed consortium of the research libraries of The New York Public Library, Yale, Harvard, and Columbia universities, has announced the appointment of Dr. James E. Skipper as director and the award of a \$750,000 grant from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation. The grant will be applied over a three-year period and represents approximately 40 percent of the total amount budgeted for that period. Additional funding will come from other private sources, the federal government, and from the participating institutions themselves.

RLG was established to improve availability of and access to recorded materials in member libraries. It contemplates the use of highly developed computer and communications technology on a concerted basis. Among the first plans of RLG is the establishment of a bibliographic data center at New Haven to provide effective access to a combined collection of approximately 26½ million volumes. The consortium will also be able to help each institution cope realistically with the compounding financial concerns which each of the member libraries face.

The newly appointed director of RLG, James E. Skipper, is currently executive vice-president of Kraus Thomson Organization. He is a gradu-

ate of the University of Michigan and has held library posts at Washington and Jefferson College, Ohio State University, University of Michigan, Michigan State University, University of Connecticut, Princeton, and the University of California at Berkeley. He also served as the first executive director of the Association of Research Libraries.

* * *

In a related development, the Research Libraries Group has issued a reply to recent cries of anguish from the publishing world regarding the effect such consortia will have on book and serial sales. Since this issue will undoubtedly affect similar arrangements around the country, the editors of the News publish this statement in its entirety below.

The Research Libraries Group (RLG) has noted a number of published statements that misconstrue the objectives of RLG with respect to copyrighted materials and future acquisitions. The RLG, which comprises the research libraries of The New York Public Library and the libraries of Columbia, Harvard, and Yale Universities, hopes that the following statement will clarify this matter.

The participating libraries are convinced that

News items for inclusion in C&RL News should be sent to Allan J. Dyson, Moffitt Undergraduate Library, University of California, Berkeley, CA 94720. Advertising (including classified ads) should be sent to Janice Sher, Advertising Office, American Library Association, 50 E. Huron St., Chicago, IL 60611. Production and circulation matters are handled by ALA Central Production Unit, at the above address.

News editor: Allan J. Dyson, Head, Moffitt Undergraduate Library, University of California, Berkeley. Associate News editor: Susana Hinojosa, Assistant Librarian, Reference Department, Moffitt Undergraduate Library. Editor: Richard D. Johnson, Milne Library, State University College, Oneonta, New York 13820. President, ACRL: H. William Axford. Executive Secretary, ACRL: Beverly P. Lynch.

College & Research Libraries is published by the Association of College and Research Libraries, a division of the American Library Association, 17 times yearly—6 bimonthly journal issues and 11 monthly (combining July-August) News issues—at 1201-05 Bluff St., Fulton, MO 65251. Subscription, \$15.00 a year, or to members of the division, \$7.50, included in dues. Second-class postage paid at Fulton, Missouri 65251.

they individually now operate within the fair use doctrine as it has evolved from judicial interpretations of the Copyright Law. They will, of course, continue to abide by that law as members of the RLG.

The misunderstanding of the intentions of RLG probably stems from an inadequate understanding of the present and future state of research libraries and of the role that the RLG is expected to play. For two decades the costs of university libraries have advanced annually at approximately 11% compounded, thereby substantially exceeding the increase in higher education budgets, the cost of living, the expansion of endowment portfolios, and a number of other related indexes. It is categorically certain that these library costs cannot continue to rise at this rate; inevitably there is going to be—in fact already is—a reduction in the capacity of research libraries not only to buy publications but to sustain the related costs of creating the bibliographical controls for ever larger masses of material and the ever more extensive physical plants to house these materials. The future of the research library that tries to go it alone is bleak: the users of such libraries will have to accept the sharply reduced availability of publications at their disposal, an inexorable consequence of budgets that cannot keep pace with inflation.

The RLG is a mechanism created to alleviate these adverse effects in several ways. By cooperative use of the computer it is expected that unit costs of cataloguing will be kept far below what they would otherwise be in what is now a very labor-intensive operation. This technology also has the capacity of making known instantaneously the holdings of the participating libraries.

As librarians with decades of experience, the directors of the RLG libraries know that

- English language materials are the most used; nonetheless, for research purposes we acquire more publications in foreign languages than in English;
- many “serials”—by which we mean periodicals, government documents and reports, publications of learned societies, statistical annuals, etc.—are called for from time to time, but there is conclusive evidence that 90% of the use of such serials tends to be concentrated in about 10% of the titles. A substantial percentage of these publications are not covered by copyright.

There appears to be the mistaken presumption in some quarters that if RLG were not established the participating libraries would somehow have more funds for acquisitions. This is a sad, even a pathetic illusion. It is the existence, not the absence, of RLG that should have this effect. The planned joint computer

operations of RLG will control unit cataloguing costs in the long run, and funds thus saved can be diverted to other purposes, and certainly of high priority among these purposes will be acquisitions.

The Research Libraries Group plans to deploy available funds to achieve maximum availability of material. One obvious device is not to duplicate lesser-used materials unnecessarily, particularly serials largely of foreign origin. This should not be interpreted to mean that fewer *total* journal or periodical subscriptions will be placed. It is quite likely that the number of different titles will be increased. On the other hand, the cost of binding, housing and preserving volumes is so substantial that the number of files permanently retained—especially files of little-used government publications, annual reports and the like—may very well be reduced.

The RLG directors have the greatest sympathy for the interests of authors, but the effect of RLG on authors, commercial publishers, and particularly monographic publishers is so minimal that the allegations to the contrary that have been published are seriously misleading. The suggestion that the RLG will somehow adversely affect the antiquarian book trade is even more improbable.

The editors have received the following communication from Garland Publishing, Inc., 10 E. 44 St., New York, NY 10017:

Garland is a young (four years old, to be exact) publisher that has heretofore published scholarly reprint series. Recently, however, we launched a rather ambitious new program to publish original reference works, mainly bibliographies. We have about twenty-seven under contract and will publish the first seven or eight this fall (we have previously published only one, William Ward's two-volume bibliography, *Literary Reviews in British Periodicals, 1798-1820*, and it has done very well).

I know that reference librarians are one good source of bibliographies and checklists, and we would be most grateful if you would let your readers know that we would be delighted to consider for publication any projects they may have in mind or are now working on. We offer good royalties and distribution throughout the world.

Many thanks for your help.

Peter Kemeny
Editor-in-Chief

By a process of rigorous selection, publications believed to have the greatest present and future utility are now acquired. A future characterized by more restrictive acquisitions budgets will require even more rigorous selection, and the legitimate fear of publishers is not that RLG will harm them but rather that the publications they offer may not be sufficiently meritorious to be chosen in a highly competitive market. The really worthwhile title will be acquired by all RLG participants, sometimes in multiple copies. And it must be understood that there is nothing in the RLG program that prevents any participating library from buying any publication it wishes in any number of copies considered essential for local demand.

In summary, the RLG directors reiterate that they will continue to operate within the fair use doctrine applicable to the Copyright Law. We are convinced that the existence of RLG will in no way significantly affect the number of publications that the participating libraries would purchase if RLG did not exist. It is our intention to avoid unnecessary duplication of lesser-used publications, particularly those serials in the more exotic foreign languages and in the more abstruse subject areas. The significance of wise buying conducted on this principle is that funds will be available for a greater

range of publications and for duplication of titles where demand so dictates.

The ultimate goal of the Research Libraries Group is neither narrow nor parochial but rather to serve the needs of research and scholarship and, therefore, the broader public interest. We are entering a period that demands ingenuity in the deployment of resources and in the creation of new systems for delivering information. Either we will be equal to the task of meeting these exacting new imperatives or we will fail in our mission to the very considerable disadvantage of society generally.

Warren J. Haas
Vice President for Information Services
and University Librarian
Columbia University

Rutherford D. Rogers
University Librarian
Yale University

Douglas W. Bryant
Director of the University Library
Harvard University

Richard W. Couper
President and Chief Executive Officer
The New York Public Library



The 5-Minute. Whole-Earth. Researcher's Computerized Dream:

An Individually Tailored
Research Source List.

Help. We can help you provide new refinements in research assistance. In our data banks are the titles and authors of every article ever published in any of 535 history, sociology and political science journals published the world over, both well-known and obscure, since those journals began—more than 350,000 articles in all, going back to 1834. We'll search the file by computer for any topic, furnishing a preliminary bibliography with enlightening speed—for only 10 cents per citation, plus a \$5 computer use fee (and, of course, the applicable sales taxes). With a research source list individually tailored to the scholar's needs, more time can be devoted to the heart of the matter: the reading, thinking and writing involved in preparing the paper, thesis, dissertation or monograph. We even have direct telephone service to speed things up; replies come airmail, C.O.D. Refer your researchers to us; call toll-free to place an order: **800-854-3379** (In California, call us collect at 714/558-0715.) Or send for detailed self-mailer order forms.

© Copyright 1974, W.R. Grace & Company

NEXUS™

A Baker & Taylor Information Service

Department L-51
P.O. Box 1517
Costa Mesa, California 92626

Rush computer bibliography service order forms. (L51)

NAME (Please Print) _____ TITLE _____

COMPLETE MAILING ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____