If You Preserve it Will They Come?
One Library’s Experience with Converging News Content

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What’s happening in Academic Libraries

• How successfully are Libraries providing access to news content
• Will researchers be able to rely on libraries for news content in the future
• To what extent will mediated help be required
Library news collections

Have converged from physical to digital format “collections”—reflects trend within the news industry—Libraries have followed each of these changes and have traditionally had a role in the news “food chain”—our role is changing (and may be disappearing) unless we begin to think about news content differently.
Three challenges...

I. Libraries believe they have little role to play in providing physical news formats and are relying almost entirely on electronic products

II. Investment in news content is now unsustainable for many academic libraries [impact on future access; could stress service component]

III. The Libraries role in providing news content and services is eroding and less visible

Trend 1: Trend #: Library Investment in news content is now unsustainable as currently

- Libraries provided Browsing, Archival and Digital formats
- Transition from physical to digital formats [convergence from physical to digital formats]
- Have begun to cut physical formats to retain digital formats

Trend 2: Heavily invested in aggregator databases [Just-in-case collections no longer sustainable]—licensing/cost issues

Trend 3: Decline in library visibility in news content [market share--libraries may no longer be associated with news content]
What changed along the way...

- **Libraries**
  - more user focused; more electronic distributed access; budgets

- **Research/teaching needs**
  - More overlap between casual/teaching/research user
  - More research uses news content—visibility
  - History timeline is shorter

- **User expectations**
  - Additional search functionality
  - Content, titles and year expectations

- **News industry, news formats, and news content**
  - Paper/web formats; visual formats; informal news sources
I. “Most” academic libraries believe they have little role to play in providing physical news formats and are relying almost entirely on electronic products.

Newspaper collections are disappearing--libraries are no longer associated with newspapers. Will that soon extend to news content, generally?
First to go...

- Cancel print newspapers because:
  - No one reads newspapers anymore
  - It's all on the Web anyway
  - All content in LexisNexis when I need it

- Cancel microfilm because:
  - No one uses microfilm
  - I can get it in LexisNexis when I need it
  - I can get it from someone else when I need it if it's not in LexisNexis
    - CRL
    - Library of Congress
    - State Library
    - Other universities with more money who still have it
A Case Study

- La Nacion, Pagina 12, Clarin
- Need issues between: July 19-Oct. 29, 2007
- No online source with page image—study of visual images associated with women presidents

Who could supply:

- La Nacion—Center for Research Libraries (microfilm)
- Maybe/Visit: Library of Congress, Harvard or Princeton
II. Investment in news content is now unsustainable

- Many libraries are expressing concerns about how much budget is devoted to news sources
- Our ability to provide access to news content in the future is being compromised by what we are and are not “collecting” or preserving today
- With microfilm cancelled, what are our options?
- How complete is the content we’ve paid for—serious gaps in news content—”I didn’t realize how extensive it was...”
Money, Money, Money

$ The technology turn-over problem
$ The duplicate title problem
  example: New York Times

$ Purchasing more electronic formats
  - Aggregator databases
  - Historical digital archives
  - Page display vendors

$ Initiating local digital projects
  - PSU Campus newspapers
  - Pennsylvania Civil War Newspapers
  - Lancaster Farming
Collections: Just-in-Case Model

- Attempt to “collect” [provide access] comprehensively or at least broadly to meet a wide range of research needs and interests—a security blanket
- Collect “core/key sources” in multiple formats to ensure Completeness
  Search-ability
What do our users really use from all this content we’re providing “just-in-case”?

LET’S LOOK AT SOME DATA SNAPSHOTs
Documents Viewed
Top 20 U.S. Newspapers [Aggregator databases]
[“current” content]

Does not include:
Business, Law, Medical/Health, Undefined, Transcripts, Newswires, Magazines & Journals
The Top National Titles:
- New York Times
- Washington Post
- Los Angeles Times
- Boston Globe
- Chicago Tribune
- USA Today
- Houston Chronicle
- San Francisco Chronicle
- Atlanta Journal-Constitution
- St. Louis Post Dispatch

The Bottom National Titles:
- Denver Post
- Christian Science Monitor
- Times-Picayune
- Wall Street Journal
- Seattle Times
- Miami Herald
- Orlando Sentinel
- Star Ledger, (Newark, NJ)
- Rocky Mountain News
- Courier Post (Cherry Hill, NJ)
What Content do we really have:
A Case Study: An American soldier

Where could I find: “online commentary”
About: Lori Piestawa--first women soldier
killed in Iraq (also Native American)
Example: Arizona Republic readers’s blog—
300 postings
Want to: analyze using critical
race/feminist theory
Use a Little, License a Lot, Missing More

• Heavily invested in products that limit the Library’s ability to move one direction or the other.

• Missing a great deal of news content
  » Content incomplete
  » Doesn’t preserve original form and function
  » Doesn’t reflect current news forms
  » Focuses too much on paper/print
  » No official source—editions, web vs. print content
III. Libraries Role is Eroding and Less Visible

- How much are these aggregator databases and digital archives being used?

LexisNexis has been one of Penn State’s top 5 databases since 1999.
% Change in Documents Viewed

Cost per search: $.01-$1.23
% Change in Total Searches

Cost per document viewed: $.07-$1.93
Does the Library come to mind when they need news content?

- How many users would come to the Library for content from the NYT website?
- How many faculty are sending students to library databases for NYT content or just sending them to the website?
- How is the Library related to the content on your Iphone/Blackberry?

Anyway: How much of that content could we supply?
Eroding role for libraries in news content

Previous data seem to force us to ask:
• Do today’s news readers associate libraries with news content?
• Has our position as one-stop-shop for news content begun to erode away?
• Are we still a player in this market?
• We’ve given up newsprint are we also giving up news content?
This Data Suggests

• Libraries may no longer be “players” in the news marketplace
• Probably can’t buy/license/digitize enough content to meet all needs—even if we could afford it—gaps beginning to show
  • We may not be collecting/licensing/preserving the “right” things for tomorrow’s researchers
A Case Study: Historical News

• Factors that increased use of historical news content
  - Instruction—Librarian and faculty
  - NewsCat—local database allowing students to locate newspapers by geography, time period, and format
  - Reference assistance—at point of need

Able to meet the needs of the teaching assignment—Students were able to find what was required
% Change in Total Searches
Historical Newspapers

- America's Historical Newspapers
- PQ NY Times Historical

-40% -20% 0% 20% 40% 60% 80% 100% 120% 140%

- 2005/2006
- 2006/2007
% Change 2006/2007
Historical Newspapers

- America's Historical Newspapers
- PQ: NY Times Historical

Searches
Documents Viewed
Staying in the News Marketplace...

- Emphasize Services—BUT extend definition beyond traditional library services [example: News Room]
- Focus on access not collections—extending services beyond traditional “own and store” (“license and digitize”) models—does it matter if we own/license/digitized it--if we can find it for our users when they need it? [Campus newspaper example]
- More Collaboration with other stakeholders

Create News Rooms—Read, Watch, Research—Leisure reading areas
Focus on television, newspapers, news magazines
Create news events—Watch the debates
Attempt to partner with campus readership programs
Create high quality Niche reference services
Provide a mix of formats in one area
Teach a lot—your colleagues and students/faculty
Print newspapers to ensure they are current and vital!
The three C’s--

• Control costs - can create one format that achieves what we need?
• Improve and extend the content we “preserve”
• Collaborate closely with other stakeholders

> Other Libraries
> News industry
> Database vendors

We need to contain costs for news content—need to be able to purchase content once and meet all needs

Establish the “official source”—
Full functionality of searching and format preservation—today its newsprint, tomorrow its websites

Need to establish our niche within the Market—services

Need to compete in yesterday’s news—but not all of yesterday’s news is used equally
Can’t compete with Iphone or websites for today’s news

Need to establish what Libraries do best

Provide services to support information; provide what others don’t provide—After its no longer free who keeps it
Unique collections
Re-define collections as “access”

Become less text and paper oriented—more visual/audio visual oriented
Failure to recognize opportunities on campuses where news content is vital
Collaborators

• Libraries will need to work closely with:
  - one another
  - the news industry
  - database vendors

if we are to piece together a structure that will allow libraries to move from focusing on collections to services

News Industry creates content but is only interested in preserving content for its own uses
Database vendors provide content but don’t see themselves as providing preservation
Libraries preserve, provide access and services to assist in locating and using news content for education/research—but aren’t part of the production and distribution cycle.
What is our role in preservation?—should newspapers or aggregators be providing that role?

In this type of environment we will need more services, as collections become more decentralized and libraries collect/own less but their users seek a wider range of sources and formats

May need to move toward a just in time delivery for non-core titles [service implications]
Need to reduce duplicate content
Need to begin with an archival format which preserves both form and content
Conclusion

- How successful? the safety net is slipping significantly
- We will be challenged to provide the type of news content tomorrow’s researchers will request
- Mediated help will certainly be needed, but will we be the ones providing it?

We cannot assume:

If we preserve it, they will come.
However, my own experience in reference and instruction services indicates