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Public Services Working Group Annual Report Fiscal Year 2007

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Annual Report:
CARLI Public Services Working Group
Dane Ward, Chair
June 19, 2007

During its inaugural year, the Public Services Working Group was active and productive, and helped establish CARLI as a leader of coordinated public services initiatives among Illinois' academic libraries. Activities included 1) reinvigoration of an existing electronic discussion forum; 2) exploration and use of a wiki to conduct the Working Group's work; 3) creation of a three-year strategic directions document, and 4) organization and presentation of a successful social technologies workshop.

The Public Services Working Group held three meetings in FY07. Two in-person meetings were held at Illinois State University on September 22 and January 16, with an additional conference call meeting on November 14. Three meetings seemed to provide sufficient opportunities for us to accomplish our goals. The Working Group's work was facilitated as well by an internal committee listserv and wiki, both provided by CARLI.

During our first meeting, the Working Group conducted an environmental scan of the academic library and public services environment. This formal process provided us with important information to anticipate some future public services needs and, as a result, to plan for the Working Group's future activities. Out of this planning process, the committee generated a working document called "Three-Year Strategic Directions for the Public Services Working Group," which should guide our work over the next few years.

Three-Year Strategic Directions for the Public Services Working Group

Scope of Work

The CARLI Public Services Working Group will advise the CARLI Board and staff on the consortial aspects of public service issues. The PSWG will identify issues of critical concern and make recommendations on how these issues may be addressed through continuing education, best practices, shared tools, etc.

Strategic Directions

In consideration of this scope of work, CARLI's Public Services Working Group proposes a three-year strategic plan focused on exploring issues in four broad categories of concern:

- a. Building community and facilitating communication within the academic library community of Illinois,
- b. Recommending and providing training and educational opportunities on topics of concern to the public services community,
- c. Conducting surveys of professional development needs of public services librarians in order to facilitate CARLI's efforts to meet those needs, and
- d. Guiding the development of assessment instruments that assist academic libraries and their public services plan for their futures.

Subsequently, the Working Group focused its efforts on the first two of these strategic directions. Recognizing the importance of statewide sharing and communication about public services issues, the committee undertook the task of revitalizing the *Pubserv-ig* listserv. The Committee initiated discussions, generated a list of topics, and sustained several meaningful conversations about social technologies, selling weeded books and the comparative sizes of reference collections. As I write this report, *Pubserv-ig* seems to be sustaining itself without the continuing facilitation by the committee.

The Working Group also explored the use of a CARLI-provided wiki as a way to collaborate on projects and to preserve its work. Committee members contributed to the wiki, which includes minutes of meetings, our list of discussion topics for *Pubserv-ig*, blogging and wiki resources, and headings (with some content) for the four strategic directions. Though our committee has only begun to explore its collaborative possibilities, the wiki promises to become an invaluable tool in future years.

In one way or another, much of our activity this year revolved around the topic of social technologies. Our culminating project consisted of organizing and presenting a June 15 workshop called “Social Technologies and Academic Libraries: What They Are and How They Could Work for You.” This all-day workshop at Illinois State University delivered a solid professional development experience for 105 registrants. Experienced librarians and administrators provided expert opinion and guidance in the use of such technologies as wikis, blogs, *MySpace*, and *Second Life*. Presenters included a five-member Bradley University library team; an associate vice president for technology from Roosevelt University; and librarians from DePaul and Roosevelt universities, the Illinois Institute of Technology and Heartland Community College. The morning consisted of two plenary sessions while the afternoon was made up of three simultaneous sessions during three one-hour blocks. My conversations with participants and observations of the sessions lead me to believe the workshop was well-received and very successful. I am attaching to this report a copy of the workshop agenda and several handouts.

I want to also highlight the work of the Public Services Working Group members. Our two CARLI liaisons, Elizabeth Clarage and Jennifer Masciadrelli, provided outstanding support throughout the year and were instrumental to the success of the committee’s first year of operation. They gave us invaluable help in navigating through unfamiliar processes and logistical issues. I would also like to commend the tremendous group of librarians who made up this committee: Paul Anthony, Southern Illinois University; Anne Armstrong, University of Illinois, Chicago; Julie Chapman, University of Illinois, Springfield; Kelly Fisher, Eureka College; Lisa Janicke Hinchliffe, University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign; Gretl Kramer, Elgin Community College; Greg MacAyeal, Roosevelt University; and Nancy Weichert, Illinois Institute of Technology.