

Thirty people attended the Public Services Discussion Group Saturday, July 11, 2009, from 3:30-5:30 p.m.

The meeting began with introductions and the announcement of a new Head of Special Collections Research and Instructional Services Department position at University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

Discussion first focused on the topic of Google Books and some of the problems that have arisen from having links to Google Books in the OPAC, including search results that lead to dead ends, to incompletely digitized copies, or to digitized copies patrons then think are from one's one library's collection. This leads to frustrations for librarians and users. Some were concerned about the speed of the digitization project, and hope was expressed that the worthwhile pre-conference session on "googlization" would be turned into an article for *RBM*.

Statistics, their usefulness, the challenges of convincing people to record them, and use of tracking systems, was the next topic. Not everyone in attendance was a member of an ARL library, so not everyone kept the ARL-specified statistics, and some record stats on a sample basis, during certain days or weeks. Differences in how circulation stats are recorded were noted—whether to count every time a patron looks at an item during their multi-day visit or whether an item is counted every time it is returned to be reshelfed in the stacks. People talked about how stats are used—in one case they helped the library decide what hours to be open, in another, knowing the status of users (who they are) can be used to justify commitment to the community and make management decisions, and in another, to help decide where to store an item, based on demand. Various systems were reportedly used to track stats, including paper, automated systems like RefTracker and Desk Tracker, the Aeon system. The discussion led to the topics of barcoding and remote storage which in turn led to Reference services and sources, staffing, and keeping up-to-date on new sources and reference acquisitions. Perusal of professional literature for reviews seemed the most common way to identify new reference sources, and while some use email to alert to new databases and electronic sources, others use a new-books RSS feed, and still others use a shelf at the reference desk with new sources for all to become familiar with before the books are reshelfed. Many expressed enthusiasm for a repeat of Joel Silver's 1-day Reference Sources workshop, last offered in St. Louis, at some point in the future.

Outreach efforts to state and regional groups had also been brought up earlier in the day at M&PD, and the few who had had experience getting together with colleagues from consortia or state libraries associations reported on the value of these interactions.

Finally, talk turned to Automated Systems for patron registration, circulation, and paging and shelving. While most still rely on paper, three of those in attendance use home-grown systems, and two have begun to use Aeon. Benefits include flexibility, customizability, increase in accuracy, and savings in time. It was noted that the Aeon photoduplication module is not working yet. Tracking item locations and status, identifying which staff do a particular action with which item, having records linked to the Marc records in the catalog so paging slips are legible and accurate, and registering patrons are some of the activities facilitated by automated systems. Talk of patron registration brought up the issue of retaining the link between the patron and the item for security as well as keeping that information itself secure as a privacy issue. The issue of patrons placing requests for items in remote storage returned the discussion to barcoding and off-site storage.

Discussions were lively and informative.