

# Association for Library Collections and Technical Services Annual Report 2011–12

**Betsy Simpson, 2011–12 ALCTS President**

Each year serves as a foundation for future Association for Library Collections and Technical Services (ALCTS) activities, and this was no less true in 2011–12. ALCTS continued to make progress on several fronts and forged new ground as well. The implementation of an innovative strategic plan to guide ALCTS, effective use of task forces to address significant issues, and creative efforts to broaden virtual participation were among the steps taken during the year to strengthen and energize the association.

## Strategic Plan

At the 2011 American Library Association Annual Conference, the ALCTS board approved a new kind of strategic plan, one that is flexible and focused on critical issues. The Planning Committee, chaired by Norm Medeiros, collaborated across the division to track progress this year and monitor new areas of interest. The current target areas include (1) explaining what we are about and what we do; (2) improving how we operate; (3) sustaining ALCTS as a vibrant, relevant organization; and (4) supporting standards development, implementation, and dissemination. At each Annual Conference, the board will review the plan and adapt it to meet changing needs.

The Transforming Collections Task Force, chaired by Mary Beth Thomson, made great strides in its first year toward carrying out its charge to examine how ALCTS can complement the ALA *Strategic Plan 2011–2015* goal to provide “leadership in the transformation of libraries and library services in a dynamic and increasingly digital information environment.”<sup>1</sup> To this end, the task force launched a micro-grant program to support and encourage innovative practices, emerging technologies, and innovation in collections. Two micro-grants up to \$1,500 will be funded annually for small projects or research initiatives in support of transforming collections. “Transforming Collections,” a program at the 2012 Annual Conference sponsored by the task force, fostered stimulating discussion about advances affecting library collections.

In relation to ALA’s 2011–2015 *Strategic Plan* goal area about advocacy, the ALCTS board formed the Advocacy Task Force in fall 2011, chaired by Mary Beth Weber, to look at what advocacy means within the context of ALCTS. ALCTS’ liaisons to the ALA Advocacy Coordinating Group and the ALA Legislative Assembly are among the task force members. The task force will define

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ALCTS' role in advocacy and recommend what steps, if any, ALCTS should take to enhance its advocacy efforts.

## Education

ALCTS excelled in its continuing education and program offerings this year. With 3,000 subscribers, ALCTS's monthly e-forums attracted a broad range of practitioners to discuss topics as diverse as data management, telecommuting, and discovery tools. ALCTS's web courses continued to be of great interest, at times sold out. More than thirty webinars, 25 percent dealing with *RDA*, were presented during the year to sizeable audiences.<sup>2</sup> ALCTS held a five-day Virtual Midwinter Symposium, two three-day Virtual Annual pre-conferences, an in-person symposium at the 2012 ALA Midwinter Meeting, and two in-person pre-conferences at the 2012 ALA Annual Conference. ALCTS' sections and interest groups coordinated a wide variety of conference forums and programs. The ALCTS/Association of College and Research Libraries Joint President's Program featuring Duane Bray, Head of IDEO Global Digital Business, was an excellent example of cross-divisional collaboration. This remarkable track record is a reflection of much hard work on the part of ALCTS' sections, interest groups, and committees, especially the Continuing Education Committee and Program Committee, and, of course, the ALCTS office.

The Task Force to Convene a Meeting with Library Educators, co-chaired by Tony Olson and Heather Moulaison, successfully completed its charge to plan and convene a meeting with library and information science educators and ALCTS members to discuss education for bibliographic control. A program titled "Bibliographic Control: A Meeting between Educators and Practitioners," held at the Midwinter Meeting, was jointly sponsored by the Association for Library and Information Science Education (ALISE) and is expected to continue as a biennial ALCTS/ALISE offering.

## Publications

*eLRTS*, a searchable, digital version of the ALCTS division journal, *Library Resources and Technical Services (LRTS)*, was launched in April 2012. The *eLRTS* website (alcts.metapress.com) provides a searchable, digital archive of *LRTS* issues back to 1996. The *eLRTS* website offers unlimited simultaneous access for subscribing institutions, the ability to purchase individual articles, and personalization tools.

Two new editors began their appointments in July 2011. Alice Platt took the helm as the editor of the *ALCTS Newsletter Online (ANO)* and Jeanne Drewes as the editor of the ALCTS Paper Series. Mary Beth Weber assumed her role as editor designate of *LRTS* beginning July 2012, working with

current editor Peggy Johnson through December 2012, when Weber will take over as editor. ALCTS is very fortunate to have such an energetic and visionary publications team.

The Publishing Review Task Force, chaired by Mary Case, was charged by the ALCTS board in August 2011 to recommend strategic directions for the ALCTS publishing program, taking into consideration issues in the broader publishing world. The task force activities included drafting a mission statement for the ALCTS publishing program, conducting an environmental scan to identify challenges and trends in publishing, assessing the relationship among all ALCTS publishing segments, determining new and currently under-represented areas of focus and possible new opportunities for members to contribute, and identifying infrastructure needs to advance ALCTS' publishing program.

## Standards

In spring 2012, the ALCTS board appointed the Standards Task Force, chaired by Cindy Hepfer, to examine ALCTS's role in standards development and make recommendations for standards involvement. The task force will conduct an environmental scan of the standards universe relevant to ALCTS, review ALCTS's current participation in standards development, identify gaps in ALCTS standards coverage, and recommend a division-level approach to standards involvement.

In addition, the ALCTS board approved in principle the creation of an ALCTS/Library Information and Technology Association (LITA) Metadata Standards Committee and is seeking the support of the LITA. The Reference and User Services Association (RUSA) has been asked to appoint a liaison to the group. The board expects the committee to play a leadership role in the creation and development of metadata standards for bibliographic information. Specific tasks will include reviewing and evaluating proposed standards; recommending approval of standards in conformity with ALA policy; establishing a mechanism for the continuing review of standards, including the monitoring of further development; providing commentary on the content of various implementations of standards to concerned agencies; and maintaining liaison with concerned units within ALA and relevant outside agencies.

## Virtual Participation

To improve how ALCTS operates virtually, the board approved a change in the date when appointments are effective. Beginning with the 2012 Annual Conference, appointment terms will begin at the Annual Conference and run through the next Annual Conference. This will permit the majority of ALCTS division and section committees to meet

in-person only at the Annual Conference and rely on virtual meetings throughout the year. The change offers several advantages, including a smoother transition from one committee to the next due to the membership overlap at the Annual Conference and the incoming committees' ability to jump start next year's agenda, based on consultation with outgoing committee members. Face-to-face introductions at the Annual Conference will bolster connections for virtual interactions. The move will promote a virtual meeting mindset because committees will be less inclined to focus productivity around two in-person meetings and encouraged to meet throughout the year virtually. Appointing officers will be asked to minimize multiple appointments for individual members, thus reducing meeting conflicts at the Annual Conference, which should increase volunteer opportunities. ALCTS hopes this move demonstrates an understanding of the financial constraints affecting member attendance at conferences and a desire to be responsive to member input. Finally, the shift away from in-person meeting at the Midwinter Meeting will be consistent with ALA's plan for an education focus, rather than a business focus, for the Midwinter Meeting.

The Preservation and Reformatting Section (PARS) was instrumental in furthering ALCTS' goal to expand virtual participation. At the 2012 Midwinter Meeting, PARS offered a live stream of the PARS Forum, which included five speakers in three separate locations, a live audience, and numerous virtually connected attendees. PARS also spearheaded an Emerging Leaders project to investigate virtual conference attendance.

This spring the ALCTS board held its first virtual meeting, following the lead of a growing number of ALCTS committees, interest groups, and task forces that are using the GoToMeeting software to interact between conferences and are experimenting with synchronous communication tools at conferences. ALCTS has reached a tipping point where members are more familiar with and welcoming of a virtual meeting environment for accomplishing association business.

### Bylaws Revision

Through a special ballot held in fall 2012, ALCTS members overwhelmingly voted in favor of the Bylaws revisions resulting from the dissolution of the Council of Regional Groups (CRG). The ALCTS Affiliate Relations Committee is continuing the work of CRG under a more versatile structure for promoting the activities of ALCTS affiliate groups by assisting them with information and advice for their programs and providing a forum for networking and sharing best practices and program ideas. The committee also advises ALCTS about the interests and continuing education needs of the affiliates and serves as a major communications medium between the affiliates and ALCTS

and among the affiliates themselves with a large focus on continuing education efforts.

### Preservation Week

The third annual Preservation Week, chaired by Julie Mosbo, was held April 22–28, 2012. Steve Berry, bestselling author and preservation activist, was named the first national spokesperson for the event and keynoted the kickoff event at the Midwinter Meeting with a very entertaining and well-attended talk. Through his Preservation Week presentations and public service announcements, Berry brought additional attention to the need to preserve our community and cultural heritage. With hundreds, if not thousands, of social media posts, tweets, and Facebook "likes" during the event, as well as a series of successful webinars, 2012 was a winning year for Preservation Week.

### Awards

Pamela Bluh, associate director for technical services and administration at the Thurgood Marshall Law Library of the University of Maryland, received the Ross Atkinson Lifetime Achievement Award for her long and distinguished record of service to ALCTS. For their seminal article, "Assessing the Cost and Value of Bibliographic Control," Erin Stalberg, head of Metadata and Cataloging at North Carolina State University, and Christopher Cronin, director of Technical Services at the University of Chicago, were awarded the Edward Swanson Memorial Best of *LRTS* Award. The Esther J. Piercy Award, which recognizes outstanding contributions to the field by a new librarian, was given to Tim Strawn, director of Information Resources and Archives at California Polytechnic State University. These and other meritorious ALCTS members were honored at the 2012 ALCTS awards ceremony.

With a forward-thinking and engaged membership and outstanding support from the ALCTS office, ALCTS is well positioned to build on past achievements and face the challenges ahead with confidence. ALCTS will succeed in its mission because ALCTS members are open to new ideas and willing to take strategic risks for the betterment of the association and our libraries.

### References

1. American Library Association, *Strategic Plan 2011–2015* (Chicago: ALA, 2011): 4, [www.ala.org/aboutala/files/mission\\_history/plan/strategic%20plan%202015%20documents/strategic\\_plan\\_2.pdf](http://www.ala.org/aboutala/files/mission_history/plan/strategic%20plan%202015%20documents/strategic_plan_2.pdf) (accessed May 30, 2012).
2. *RDA: Resource Description & Access* (Chicago: ALA; Ottawa: Canadian Library Association; London: CILIP: Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals, 2011).