

Letters

From Birdie MacLennan, SERIALST Listowner/Moderator (Serials Coordinator, University of Vermont); Marcia Tuttle, SERIALST Associate Moderator (Head, Serials Department, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill); and Ann Ercelawn, SERIALST Associate Moderator (Original Cataloger, Vanderbilt University):

Thank you for including SERIALST among sources cited in the review article, "Electronic Discussion Lists and Journals: A Guide for Technical Services Staff" by Reich, Brooks, Cromwell, and Wicks (*LRTS* 39, no. 3: 303-19).

The SERIALST moderators wanted to take this opportunity to respond to the SERIALST reviewer's comments regarding the "controversy over moderated lists when discussion of the FAXON company and news about its sale negotiations were stifled" in the summer of 1994 (p. 311).

For what it's worth: What the review doesn't say—and what most people probably don't know—is that the moderators worked with each individual who sent a message that didn't get printed to put them in contact with others who had also sent messages and were facing the same

dilemmas. Additionally, permission was obtained from serials professionals at various institutions who had done recent vendor evaluations and made decisions to give their addresses to those few people who submitted questions. In other words, there was a strong effort to put people who requested information in touch with each other so that they would have an avenue to discuss issues privately. The rationale in calling for the moratorium is documented in the SERIALST archives of July 27, 1994; the rationale for calling an end to it is noted in the August 9, 1994 archives. List discussion about this topic resumed after August 9—i.e., after the first round of sale negotiations had been completed, but before the Dawson press release that was to come in early September.

This is not intended to allay an old controversy nor to vindicate or admonish our actions as moderators. Indeed, the reviewer's perspective in describing the events of that time brings to light much about the professional responsibilities and ethical dilemmas of list moderating—especially during a time of high stakes. The choices aren't always easy or clear-cut, but we live with them, nonetheless.