



Association for Library Collections and Technical Services Annual Report 2008–9

By M. Dina Giambi, 2008–9 ALCTS President

This year was full of accomplishments, new initiatives, and the start of a thorough review of the Association for Library Collections and Technical Services (ALCTS) organizational structure. The effect of the current global economy has been far-reaching and has affected ALCTS members, their libraries and organizations, membership renewals, division participation, conference attendance, and the operation and financial management of the division.

Data Gathering

The survey of the ALCTS membership conducted in 2007–8, based on *The 7 Measures of Success: What Remarkable Associations Do That Others Don't*, continued to provide valuable insight into member needs, concerns, perceptions, and expectations.¹ Additional analysis, including the Preservation and Reformatting Section (PARS) study titled “Changing PARS Discussion/Interest Group Structure” and the Membership Committee review of ALCTS members in public libraries provided additional useful information. The “Membership Research Study,” conducted by the American Library Association (ALA) Office for Research and Statistics also revealed demographic and employment data.

Communication

Increasing and improving communication with and between the membership and implementing new modes of communication were accomplished. The *ALCTS Newsletter Online* and a rejuvenated *ALCTS@aGlance* featured conference and meeting previews as well as reports, news, and announcements of education opportunities. An assortment of discussion lists enabled members to examine topics ranging from digital preservation to the future of subject headings. The ALCTS E-forum, which debuted in May 2008, has attracted more than nine hundred subscribers for lively discussions on subjects including disaster preparedness, coping with shrinking resources, and national cataloging standards versus local policies. The ALA Connect introduction, in spring 2009, offers another communication tool that ALCTS members will find very useful for sharing documents and information.

M. Dina Giambi (dinag@udel.edu) is Assistant Director for Library Technical Services, University of Delaware Library, Newark.

2009 ALA Midwinter Meeting and Annual Conference

Forums during the 2009 ALA Midwinter Meeting in Denver attracted large audiences listening to experts discuss a variety of hot topics. Particularly noteworthy were “RDA [Resource Description and Access] Update Forum” and “Who’s at the Wheel? What We’ve Learned About Patron-Driven Collection Development.” “Creating and Sustaining Communities around Shared Library Data,” a forum that focused on OCLC’s proposed change to its record use policy, drew more than 150 attendees. The 2009 Annual Conference in Chicago featured an excellent schedule of events. “ALCTS 101 Primer: Who We Are, What We Do, and How You Fit” provided new members with an overview of the opportunities the division offers. Programs included “Leadership Development in Transition: Steering the Ship from the Helm and Deck,” “Swingin’ with the Pendulum: Facing Cancellations in the Age of E-Journal Packages,” and the ALCTS President’s program, “Who Owns Antiquity? Museums and the Battle over Our Ancient Heritage,” featuring James Cuno, president and Eloise W. Martin director, from the Art Institute of Chicago. The recipient of the 2009 Ross Atkinson Lifetime Achievement Award, Cindy Hepfer, was recognized at the awards ceremony for her exceptional service to ALCTS and to the library profession at-large, as a library leader, educator, author, scholar, and mentor.

Library Resources and Technical Services

The division’s highly respected peer-reviewed journal, *Library Resources and Technical Services (LRTS)*, adds to its deserved reputation for quality articles under the leadership of Editor Peggy Johnson. The *LRTS* article “Approaches to Selection, Access, and Collection Development in the Web World: A Case Study with Fugitive Literature,” by Karen Schmidt, Wendy Allen Shelburne, and David Steven Vess, won the 2009 Blackwell’s Scholarship Award and the 2009 Best of *LRTS* Award.² *LRTS* has seen slowly declining subscriptions over the last several years. A new marketing effort will be launched in the next year along with an electronic version.

New Initiatives

In July 2009, PARS implemented a streamlined organization structure with fewer committees and interest groups. A comprehensive review of the bylaws by the ALCTS Organization and Bylaws Committee resulted in a bylaws document with greater consistency. The newly established Public Libraries Technical Services Interest Group held its first meeting at

Annual Conference. The Institute of Museum and Library Services awarded ALA and the Western Council of State Libraries a Laura Bush 21st Century Librarian grant to maintain the Library Support Staff Certification Program. ALCTS was awarded \$2,500 to serve as a field test site for the program. A proposal by PARS to establish a Preservation Awareness Week to raise public and professional awareness of the importance of preservation to libraries and their users received \$15,000 in start-up funding from ALA for fiscal year 2010. Look for more information on this project prior to a limited launch in March 2010.

Fiscal Strategy

Close review and analysis of ALCTS revenue and expenses were vital to the division’s successful management of fiscal operations during the year. Division expenses were carefully monitored and cost savings were implemented wherever possible. The three main revenue sources for the division are membership dues; registration fees for education offerings, including midwinter symposia, Annual Conference preconferences, Web courses, and webinars; and publications. Through the third quarter of the fiscal year, membership numbers showed a decrease of 7.5 percent.

Education offerings have been well attended. Two one-day symposia presented during the Midwinter Meeting in Denver, “Implementing an Institutional Repository: Benefits and Challenges” and “Breaking Down the Silos: Planning for Discovery Tools for Library 2.0,” had the two highest registration numbers of all the divisions. However, two spring regional workshops were cancelled because of low registration numbers, and three programs scheduled for the Annual Conference in Chicago were cancelled because the speakers could not attend.

Much energy was devoted to increasing revenue from all education offerings, particularly Web courses and webinars. The Web-based “Fundamentals Series” offered courses focused on acquisitions, electronic resources acquisitions, and collection development and management. ALCTS ventured into webinars for the first time this year. Three webinars on institutional repositories were developed to follow up on the success of the Denver symposium and meet an expressed need for more detailed coverage on this topic. Additional sessions are planned through the end of 2009. A series of free webinars for ALCTS members was offered in March to train potential Web instructors. The development of an expanded continuing education curriculum with increased revenue will enable ALCTS to support the many services and activities that do not generate revenue.

The ALCTS Fundraising Committee, led skillfully by Susan Davis, was successful in securing repeat support from

many of our continuing sponsors. However, because of the troubled economy, ALCTS saw lower levels of support. Several new sponsors were identified.

Creating the Future of ALCTS

A significant new initiative to review the ALCTS organizational structure began with a facilitated discussion by the board of directors at the Midwinter Meeting in Denver. Follow-up meetings with section and Council of Regional Groups executive committees and division committees were also held. E-forums and a forum at the Annual Conference solicited additional member input. More discussion on a new structure for ALCTS is anticipated during 2009–10, with possible implementation in 2010–11.

Summary

The year proved to be a challenge, with the overall economic condition of the country affecting ALCTS at many levels. During the process of offering committee appointments for 2008–9, several individuals declined reappointments or new appointments because their libraries had significantly reduced support for travel funding or had abolished

it completely. Efforts were made to offer alternate appointments, such as virtual member. Unfortunately, some of our members experienced layoffs, furloughs, and frozen salaries or salary reductions. A furlough week also was mandated for all ALA staff.

ALCTS members and the ALCTS staff made possible the successes of the past year with creativity, flexibility, and perseverance. In the coming year, ALCTS will continue to serve as an advocate and expert for the areas of specialization that it represents, offer opportunities for service in appointed and elected positions, and develop and present education offerings to meet the ever-changing needs of members and nonmembers. The prospect of a new organizational structure will bring new energy to the members and the division.

Reference

1. Center for Association Leadership, *The 7 Measures of Success: What Remarkable Associations Do That Others Don't* (Washington, D.C.: American Society of Association Executives and the Center for Association Leadership, 2006).
2. Karen Schmidt, Wendy Allen Shelburne, and David Steven Vess, "Approaches to Selection, Access, and Collection Development in the Web World: A Case Study with Fugitive Literature," *Library Resources & Technical Services* 52, no. 3 (July 2008): 184–91.