

Association for Library Collections and Technical Services Annual Report 2012–13

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Through education, discussion, publishing, and collaboration, the Association for Library Collections and Technical Services (ALCTS) leads in developing standards and best practices for selecting, identifying, acquiring, organizing, managing, retrieving, and preserving recorded knowledge. In the dynamic library environment, ALCTS's mission is ambitious. Maintaining effectiveness in its pursuit requires flexibility, creativity, persistence, and an organizational culture of continuing revitalization. ALCTS members' activities this year demonstrate that brave inventiveness. Below is a summary, arranged under the four Critical Issues Areas identified in ALCTS's innovative strategic plan.

Explaining What We're About and What We Do

At the 2012 American Library Association Annual Conference, adopting recommendations of the Advocacy Task Force chaired by Mary Beth Weber, the ALCTS board of directors agreed in principle to establish two groups to address advocacy issues within the context of ALCTS. This year, we implemented the groups, which made considerable progress on their charges.

First, to assist members in demonstrating and articulating the value of library functions in ALCTS's areas of interest, we formed a temporary group, the Technical Services Advocacy Resources Task Force. This task force, chaired by Louise Ratliff, compiled a collection of facts, websites, "elevator speeches," and other resources for members' use in their libraries, which are available on the ALCTS website.

Second, the board established a division-level standing committee, the Advocacy Coordinating Group, to enable ALCTS to play a proactive, effective role in policy development and legislative influence. The new committee, chaired by Olivia M. A. Madison, will scan the environment for policy discussions and decisions falling within ALCTS's areas of interest, recommend positions and prompt action, and provide coordination with other groups. Through the activities of the Advocacy Coordinating Group, we hope to bring ALCTS expertise to a variety of pertinent policy discussions.

Preservation Week, now an ALCTS signature event, provided opportunities for libraries to connect with members of their communities by helping them preserve their personal, family, or community heritage. Held April 21–27,

Preservation Week 2013 featured noted author Steve Berry as a spokesperson; Berry's enthusiasm for the event has helped raise its profile. Registration at free webinars on family photographs, archives, and personal digital archiving totaled 2,500 individuals. An event tracker listed sixty-four events held by sixty-one organizations. Online flyers provided new content targeted to military families. "Dear Donia," featuring an ALCTS member giving preservation advice, launched with a live Facebook chat session. In these activities and more, Preservation Week explained what we are about by demonstrating it.

Improving How We Operate

ALCTS continually reviews its structure and operations, and it seeks members' input regarding ways to improve. This year, in response to member concerns about travel while enhancing committee effectiveness, we implemented a new appointment cycle requiring members of most division committees to attend face-to-face meetings only at the ALA Annual Conference. We hope the new cycle enables more individuals to serve on committees, and frees members who attend the ALA Midwinter Meeting to participate in interest group discussions and other educational and networking events. With committee membership overlapping at the ALA Annual Conference, the new cycle should also provide greater continuity for effective virtual functioning throughout the year. We will continue to explore organizational changes and new types of committee structures—such as the Continuing Education Committee's Technical Support Group for webinars and virtual meetings—that enhance members' ability to participate in delivering ALCTS programs and services.

In response to member suggestions, we adopted a dues category for retired members, sent additional reminders to solicit volunteers, and worked toward automatic follow-up of non-renewing members. We implemented a review process for sections (our major organizational unit), and "tweaked" a new position, the Interest Group Coordinator, to take further advantage of this successful innovation. ALCTS Executive Director Charles Wilt conducted a survey of current award jury chairs to gather their thoughts about our awards process. Along with information from other parts of ALA, we used jury chairs' observations to clarify our awards procedures and make them more consistent. ALCTS members, the board is listening to you!

ALCTS led the way within ALA in proposing a digital repository for preserving and providing access to association documents. This year ALCTS participated with other divisions in contracting with the University of Illinois for a digital

archive. During the coming year, ALCTS members will provide their expertise as we undertake its implementation.

Sustaining ALCTS as a Vibrant, Relevant Organization

In July 2012, the ALCTS Publishing Review Task Group, chaired by Mary Case, submitted its final report, which includes a scan of our publishing environment, a proposed mission and vision for the ALCTS publishing program, and fifteen specific recommendations to revitalize it, on topics ranging from organizational changes to open access policy development. The board, the Publications Committee, ALCTS staff, and others reviewed this comprehensive report. All recommendations of the task group have now been implemented or are at some point in the implementation process. To add further data to the discussion, an Emerging Leaders project identified three possible financial models for *Library Resources & Technical Services (LRTS)*; and in summer 2013, the division surveyed division leaders about their attitudes toward open access policy for ALCTS publications. Though full implementation of the Publishing Review Group's recommendations will take time, we are already seeing positive results in our publishing program and are moving toward adopting a division policy regarding open access and ALCTS publications.

ALCTS's continuing education program was busy and successful. Web courses on topics such as acquiring electronic resources and collection assessment were offered throughout the year. The Continuing Education Committee presented more than twenty webinars on topics ranging across ALCTS's areas of interest, with total registration of 3,000 individuals and 465 groups. Webinars offered at reasonable cost generated an important stream of revenue for ALCTS; nonetheless, after just a few months, ALCTS webinars continued to become available at no charge on the ALCTS YouTube site. The popular E-Forum series, always available at no charge to participants, provided opportunities for diverse library staff to discuss e-book acquisition, RDA training, the role of the professional in library technical services, and other current topics of interest to technical services professionals.

ALCTS presented both face-to-face and virtual preconference and conference programs. A conference highlight at the Annual Conference was the ALCTS President's Program, "Confessions of a Digital Packrat," presented by Erin McKean, founder of Wordnik.com, former editor-in-chief of American Dictionaries for Oxford University Press, and blogger on sewing and dresses.

The Transforming Collections Task Force continued

to offer microgrants to support innovative projects involving emerging technologies and collections in libraries. The microgrant project will continue through 2015.

Supporting Standards Development, Implementation and Dissemination

In May 2013, the Standards Task Force—charged to identify gaps in current ALCTS standards coverage and suggest ways to create a more comprehensive, division-level approach to standards development—submitted its final report. Among the accomplishments of this task force, chaired by Cindy Hepfer, is a remarkable set of appendixes, including a glossary, recommended reading, and lists of pertinent organizations and ALCTS-related standards by topic. These resources should immediately prove useful to ALCTS members. Adopting the task force's recommendations, which include formation of a division-level committee and various mechanisms for building awareness of standards, will position ALCTS to lead and more effectively participate in developing standards in ALCTS functional areas.

This year also saw full implementation of the Metadata Standards Committee, established in principle in June 2012, as a new joint ALCTS-LITA entity, with a liaison from RUSA. The committee will play a leadership role in creating and developing metadata standards for bibliographic information.

Using a broader definition of “standards,” the Advocacy Coordinating Group, in bringing ALCTS voices and expertise to many policy discussions, will also contribute to ALCTS' role in the area of standards development. Through the interactions of the Standards Committee, the Metadata Standards Committee, and the Advocacy Coordinating Group with others, we also hope to improve structures for working with other divisions on common interests and issues, including standards.

Using a still broader definition, ALCTS awards help establish professional standards through identifying excellence in personal performance. Barbara Tillett, retired

from the Library of Congress, received the Ross Atkinson Lifetime Achievement Award for her distinguished contributions to the literature and for her service to ALCTS and the international cataloging community. Philip Evan Schreur received the Edward Swanson Memorial Best of LRTS Award for “The Academy Unbound: Linked Data as Revolution.” Among ALCTS awards for new professionals, the Esther J. Piercy Award was given to Xan Arch of Reed College. Information about the outstanding recipients of these and other ALCTS awards for 2013 is available on the ALCTS website (www.ala.org/alcts/awards).

The Coming Year and the Past Year

During the coming year, to continue our revitalization project, we will examine the topic of programming, broadly conceived, particularly in the light of changes in ALA conference scheduling and expectations, virtual opportunities, and the contributions of interest groups to this area. We will continue to seek connections with new members of the profession, particularly in emerging digital specialties and in underrepresented functions or types of libraries. We are concerned about the effects of ALA's budget situation across the association, and we will work to develop a culture of responsibility for revenue generation in ALCTS to enable our division to continue to contribute to the profession and to members' professional lives.

Success in ALCTS's varied array of activities requires vision, planning, many dedicated member volunteers, and outstanding staff. Thank you to Executive Director Charles Wilt and to staff members Christine McConnell and Julie Reese for direction, support, and patience. Thank you to the many members who provided leadership (both formal and informal), insight, ideas, and hard work. During the past year, we have continued previous initiatives and, I hope, made progress in establishing new means of bringing ALCTS voices and perspectives to the development of the profession and the services ALCTS members provide. I am honored to have had a part in this process.