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Do We Need Dewey?

By Laura Giuliani

On January 25th, 2011, SCLS hosted a program entitled “NO Dewey: Rangeview Library’s Brave New World.” Two librarians from the Rangeview Library District in Adams County, Colorado were there to present the trials and tribulations regarding their daunting task of converting entire collections over from Dewey Decimal Classification to WordThink, a word-based library system. They are the first full library system to make this change, inspired after a visit to the Maricopa County Library District in Arizona, which was the first library to switch to a Book Industry Standards and Communications (BISAC) model. WordThink melds the Maricopa word system with BISAC subject headings, using about 40 top level classification names, and subdividing them from there. For instance: History – Military – WW2; or Nature – Animals – Birds. Up to four “levels”

of words can appear on a spine label, which are then arranged on the shelves alphabetically by title. About 90% of their materials are preprocessed and cataloged by Baker & Taylor, and they have adjusted categories along the way to reflect their collections. Unlike a bookstore, there is a location for each item. Dropping Dewey was just one of the many rogue changes that Rangeview embraced, after a massive marketing transformation put it on the map and

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Technically Speaking’s **Featured Quotation**

“Is there anything more satisfying than making it possible for people – irrespective of class or appearance or age – to learn, to laugh, to reflect, and to relax in their own public space and without being exhorted to do this or buy that?”

—Sanford Berman

From the President

By Danielle Zubiller

As president of the CATS (Computer and Technical Services Division) of SCLA (Suffolk County Library Association), I would like to personally thank each and every member. Without you, we would not be able to achieve what we have accomplished today. I would especially like to thank the Executive Board of the CATS division of SCLA. You all volunteer your time away from your busy schedules at work to accomplish the goals of CATS. You all bring special and unique talents to CATS and it is very much appreciated. We the executive board of CATS strive to make programs and events that are informational yet pleasing to our members. We welcome your support and your suggestions for future programs you would like to see.

Please watch the listserv and flyers for the following events. We will be having our annual library tour which will take a look at two libraries and explore how departments within these libraries work. One library will be an academic library and the other a public library. We are planning to have a program on the

RFID process and what it takes to prepare for RFID. Our technical services forum was a huge success that we are planning to have an unprecedented second one towards the end of the year. Our TIF (Technology Internet Forum) has monthly meetings that focus on various topics and is usually the first Thursday of the month and has been extremely popular and is for everyone; not just “techies”, so come to our next meeting. Our Cataloging Roundtable will be meeting in October to discuss cataloging issues.

Steve Ingram, has been busy at work, developing a new website for the CATS division. Be sure to check it out at <http://scla.net/cats/> to keep up with what is new with CATS. Enjoy the rest of your summer! ●

Editor's Note:

Technically Speaking offers an electronic-only delivery option. If you are interested in this, please contact Editor Tom Cohn at tom_cohn@huntlib.org or 631-427-5165x295.

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made their Anythink brand and logo a recognizable image in the library world.

Rachel E. Fewell, a collection development manager, and Jessica L Ransom, a branch guide, spoke to a full house for about 2 hours on their experiences with the classification conversion at some of the seven Rangeview libraries, which hold from 30,000 to 100,000 items, as well as the issues and benefits it produced. Patron response was mixed, some very supportive of the change, some ambivalent, and still others looking to pick a fight. Overall, it seemed to be well received. The difficulties in coordinating such a large project are numerous, including the question of closing a branch entirely so as to complete the project more quickly, or working around it with progress at a much slower pace and spread over many months. Shelving had to be adjusted, with varying height and size, and numerous end cap displays created, showcasing their wares and offering eye-catching exhibits. The SCLS audience had many questions and seemed genuinely intrigued by this new way of arranging items in libraries.

They stressed that signage

is key and must be clear and appealing, something many libraries are lacking. Subject areas are easy to see and arranged logically. It's really great for kids because it's easier for them to find stuff and is less intimidating than a long row of numbers with a decimal and a cutter. It offers more freedom for them and less dependence on a librarian. Of course, before we jump on the bandwagon and kick Dewey to the curb, there are some drawbacks to this numberless system. It works best if there aren't too many books on the same subject. They

“Signage is key, and must be clear and appealing.”

found that between 100 and 200 items is a good number to keep the collection browsable. More than that and you could have some frustrated patrons searching for a specific title longer than they want. Another drawback is that books on the same subject are not necessarily right next to each other. If books about monkeys are broken down as Animals – Mammals for example, they would be spread out over that section since they are sequenced alphabetically by title. A narrower heading, e.g., Animals – Apes, Monkeys, etc., might be more suitable.

It was a really interesting presentation, and after the blasphemous ringing in my

ears subsided (I ♥ Dewey) and I started listening to what they had to say, I realized that both systems have their pros and cons, and each library has to decide what works best for their patrons.

Streaming video or Power-Point for this program is available on the SCLS gateway website: www.suffolklibrarysystem.org. Click on *Workshop Materials* and the title of the program. ●



Above, L to R: Dominic Iadicicco, Bob Johnson, James Clemens, Steve Ingram at the CATS booth at the Long Island Library Conference in May. Below, L to R: Eileen Keller, Angela Richards, and Joyce Bogin at the Technical Services Forum in March at Elwood Public Library talked about best practices in technical services.

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Announcing ...

A new monograph by three CATS/SCLA members:

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By Marjorie Fusco, Michael J. Aloï and Susan E. Ketcham

ISBN: 9781555707019

Published by Neal-Schuman Publishers in 2011, \$250.00

This reference book provides an opportunity for readers to access historical documents, ancient manuscripts, photographs, video, audiorecordings, web cams, and much more on the web. The collections described reflect the national heritage of each country. As described in the forward by Cheryl LaGuardia this cutting-edge book, "is an invaluable resource for anyone wishing to take full advantage of what the web has to offer, the extensively annotated and thoroughly indexed guide organizes and describes the contents of thousands of important digital collections around the globe." A companion website gives librarians and researchers all of the links found in the book so researchers can avoid transcribing the often-lengthy URLs."