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Horizon Award Winner Essay: Gateway to Collaboration

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Whether we realize it or not, we collaborate everyday with numerous people. For some it is choosing what the family will eat for dinner, for others, which link resolver will be best for their library. This year's theme for the annual North American Serials Interest Group (NASIG) conference, Gateway to Collaboration, perfectly portrays the events that will take place during these few days: library professionals congregating in one place, working towards a common goal—to engage in a conversation about serials and electronic resources.

Collaboration between libraries is an insurmountable asset. While a large number of resources are available to our field, and continue to increase and improve, the perfect system does not exist. Sharing information and experiences between peers allows library professionals the opportunity to investigate new technologies, without diminishing their fiscal budget. During these conversations we learn not only what particular resources have to offer, but also how well they work within the library scope. Not all products can be tailored to fit the needs of each individual workplace, but through collaboration, libraries around the world can ensure the best possible outcome will be found.

Along these same lines, working with vendors also helps achieve these goals. Exchanging ideas and conversing with vendors allows them to better assess the current and upcoming needs of a library. The e-book revolution is a perfect example of this. Due to the growing trends, many corporations now offer these resources at an

attainable cost. The result of this collaboration means that more users are able to take advantage of using library materials in the comfort of their own home. Like the serials movement a decade ago, e-books have become another area of the multi-faceted library.

The ever-changing landscape of the library can sometimes create obstacles for staff. Creating an environment comfortable with shifts in technology and systems can be challenging, but results in a more productive, efficient, and relevant library. With many departments working to make a library operational, joint efforts are necessary. The Collections department works with the Systems department to ensure that all resources are easily accessible by the public. The Public Services department gives insight into user needs and suggestions, and offers these inquiries in order to better the usability of library services. By collaborating with others in the same building, a network is formed and utilized on a daily basis. The interaction and collaborative efforts between employees results in a more efficient library, with more understanding between staff and end users.

The NASIG conference would be my “gateway to collaboration.” As a new member of the serials professional community, I am just beginning to develop my peer network. By meeting others in the field and joining the conversation, I can work to develop long-lasting professional relationships. Due to the nature of serials and the major shift to online resources in the

past decade, the ability to establish connections with other members of the community will not only aid me in choosing the best resources for our library, but also provide a continuous learning environment throughout my career.