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Serials & E-Resources News

Electronic Resources & Libraries

Austin TX, Feb. 27-March 2, 2011

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Librarians and information specialists from the United States, Canada, and abroad met together in Austin to hear about and discuss the multitude of issues and opportunities facing libraries as electronic resources are increasingly becoming key parts of library collections. Participants were treated to three keynote speakers, who all weighed in on some of the extraordinary opportunities that libraries now have to enrich resources and resource accessibility in their communities.

Amy Sample Ward, blogger, trainer, and facilitator, kicked off the conference with her presentation on library innovations that utilize community driven models in order to achieve success. Amanda French, THATCamp Coordinator at the Center for History and New Media at George Mason University, provided an interesting overview of the Berkman Center's Digital Public Library of America initiative. The conference ended with a presentation by Michael Porter <http://libraryman.com>. Porter led a lively discussion on the library's role as a major provider of electronic content. He also stressed the concept of library as community and as an information provider that mitigates the gap between rich and poor by providing access to all.

In addition to the keynote sessions, joint session presenters led discussions on data gathering as a way to further institutional goals and on how to publicize library resources in effective ways. Electronic resource management tools were an important focus of several programs, as was dealing with work flow challenges in innovative ways.

Margaret Heller and Bella Karr Gerlich of Dominican University discussed how Heller's dissertation research in measuring the effort expended in answering reference questions could be modified to measure the efforts of solving electronic access issues. Athena Hoepfner of the University of Central Florida provided an overview of the web scale discovery marketplace and provided the audience with evaluation criteria that could be used in judging the different products for themselves.

Conference organizers also experimented with new ways of sharing information through one session called the "Fishbowl Conversation" which used an "unconference" concept, where attendees had the opportunity to speak about several issues introduced through this new type of format.

Although a single individual could not attend all of the sessions, the diversity and expertise of the speakers provided a great learning environment.