

The Newsletter for Employees of the University of Louisville Libraries
Vol. 11, No. 1 x February, 1986

The Owl

The Owl of Minerva takes flight only as the dusk begins to fall. —Hegel

Flip Charts at the OPAC

Using Transaction Log Analysis to Judge their Effectiveness

by Michel C. Atlas and Karen R. Little

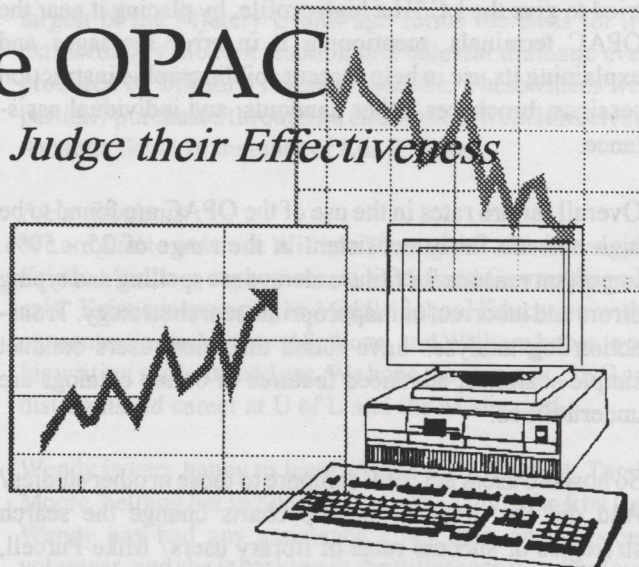
In September, 1993, the Minerva Documentation Subcommittee (Karen Little, Michel Atlas, Barbara Prior, and Carmen Embry) of the Minerva Users' Group applied for and received a Professional Development Grant from the Academic Section of the Kentucky Library Association for materials development. We also received an Instructional Development Minigrant from the U of L Provost's Office. We used this money to buy flip charts to be used as point-of-use teaching tools at the online public access catalog terminals.

The flip charts are based on our brochure, *Minerva: A Guide to the University of Louisville's Online Public Catalog*, which won the first Kentucky Library Instruction Clearinghouse Award in 1993. Pages from the brochure were customized for each of the University's libraries.

We decided to develop these flip charts because many users never receive any formal instruction on the use of the system. We felt that it would be useful to have clear, attractive instructional materials at the Minerva workstation where and when questions and problems arise, and that they would be an effective, efficient method of providing assistance to those who will not ask for it and for those occasions when assistance is not immediately available. The flip charts were first put out early in the spring semester of 1994. While we have only anecdotal evidence for their actual use, we do see them being used quite a lot.

Well, did the flip charts work? Did having readily available, handy, clearly written assistance at the point of use help our patrons use MINERVA? We used transaction log analysis to determine our success.

Transaction log analysis is the study of electronically



recorded transactions between online information retrieval systems and the persons who search for the information found on those systems. It shows how the system is being used by actual users. The logs record the characters input by the users when the return/enter or function key is pressed, plus other information such as the date and time of input, terminal used, and the system's response, such as type of screen displayed and number of hits retrieved.

Transaction log analyses studies at other universities found that title searching accounted for about 20 - 35% of all searches; up to 40% of these were unsuccessful. Use of the initial article in a title search was the major source of error. Thirteen percent of all searches were author searches; 30% of these were unsuccessful. Most of these unsuccessful searches were plausible author searches whose works were not in the database. Author searches often fail because users type the author's first name before the last name. Users also try to use two author names at once or enter names exactly as they see them on reading lists or other database printouts. Some author searches clearly are title or subject searches.

Most studies have confirmed that subject searches are the most used, accounting for 50% to 59% of total searches, 32% to 62%

of which failed. Researchers agree that the reason subject searches often fail is because the library catalog uses the Library of Congress Subject headings, which "often are not intuitive to the users." Users in over half of all failed subject searches use terms which reasonably describe subjects, but are not valid LCSH terms.

Users often have no concept of subject headings, and that even when informed about the undeniable advantages, usefulness, or even necessity of their use and their convenient location, will not bother looking at those big heavy red books or even the paperback black MeSH book. We have tried to give the LCSH a high profile, by placing it near the OPAC terminals, mentioning it in error messages and explaining its use in help screens, bibliographic instruction sessions, brochures, other handouts, and individual assistance.

Overall failure rates in the use of the OPAC are found to be high and are fairly consistent in the range of 25 - 50%. Important reasons for failure always are spelling and typing errors and incorrect or inappropriate search strategy. Transaction log analyses have found that most users conduct simple searches; advanced features of online catalogs are underutilized.

So how did users at U of L compare to those in other studies? And did the presence of flip charts change the search strategies or success rates of library users? Mike Purcell, cataloging manager at the Kornhauser Health Sciences Library, wrote our transaction log analysis program to summarize various points in the transaction log generated by NOTIS. The program calculated the total number of searches and subtotals for each search type for valid searches, valid searches that resulted in zero hits, and for redirected searches. It calculated the total number of searches that produced zero hits that had these errors: initial article in a title search, stopword in a keyword search; and use of truncation and positional or boolean operators in a non-keyword search. It also calculated the total number of valid keyword searches that used advanced features and provided subtotals for searches that used truncation, positional operators, boolean operators, and nesting. We took data from one terminal at each of the smaller libraries and two from Ekstrom during the week after Thanksgiving each year from 1991 to 1994.

Study of our transaction logs revealed results that closely

paralleled those from other universities. Title searches were used in an average of 20% of all searches. An average of 16% of our searches were author searches, while 43% of searches were by subject. Interestingly, the availability of flip charts at public Minerva stations seemed to have little positive effect on the search strategy or success rate of library users.

Author searches accounted for 18% of searches in the 1993 sample and 14% in 1994. Subject searching was chosen for 43% of all searches in both 1993, the year before the charts were put in use, and in 1994. Keyword searching was used in 22% and 19% of the searches in 1993 and 1994 respectively. Clearly, no major change in search strategy is evident.

Searching success was hampered by typographical errors. They were the cause for 19% of all zero-hits in 1993 and 21% of errors in 1994. Striking perhaps, is the fact that an increased use of incorrect truncation and/or boolean operators is apparent from the study. In 1993, 31% of zero-hit searches were the result of such errors; 1994 saw that number increase to 46%.

So, if the flip charts did not prove to produce significant improvement in user performance, were they worth the effort? Should they continue to be used? Or, perhaps more importantly, does this study help demonstrate yet once again that there is simply no substitute, no better teaching method, no more effective tool than a professional librarian working one-on-one with the person using the OPAC? Perhaps so. *(Based on a paper presented at the 1995 Joint Conference of the Kentucky Library Association and the Kentucky School Media Association. October 26, 1995. Paducah, Kentucky)*

General News

Now that the CLC has had its very successful Grand Opening on February 1, a major task of the CLC Instructors Round Table will be to assemble and train a large pool of instructors for the classroom. David Horvath will be sending a note to everyone with details about how everyone can get involved. So, be thinking about all those skills you have already or those you might like to develop that could be shared with our patrons through the great classroom facility in the CLC!



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Co-Editors: Robin Harris (852-6392) and David Horvath (852-8756); Editorial Board: Alice Abbott, Bill Garner,

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The Owl's purpose is to promote communication among the various libraries in the U of L system. Ideas and articles are welcome!

Deadline for publication is the 21st of each month.

Library/Dept. News

Ekstrom Library Government Publications

The Government Publications Department would like to welcome a new student assistant. Her name is Kathleen Wurth. Kathleen is from Paducah and is an Art Therapy major. We're really glad to have Kathleen, because she will allow us to have the department open Sunday evenings again.

New GPD staff member, Sally Gray, has proved to be a real patron-pleaser. We have lost count of the number of thank you notes she has received from patrons she has helped. Recently, she received three notes in one week! One patron even sent her flowers not long ago. Not to be outdone, Barbara Whitener received an E-mail message on Jan. 20 from an attorney in New Jersey telling her how much the pointer to the Department of State publication, *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices*, on the GPD Homepage on the Web had helped her in preparing a political asylum hearing for a client. Way to go, Sally and Barbara! Lee is still waiting for his first flowers!

Collection Management

Melissa Long left for a promotional position with the Law Library at the end of January. Melissa, better known as Missy, began with the University Libraries during the 1987 United Way Campaign. Missy is planning to enjoy her new library experience as an Administrative Associate while continuing to pursue her master's degree in Public Administration.

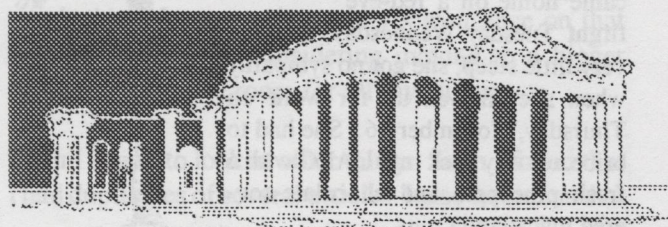
Media & Current Periodicals

Exciting Fung Shui Development

David discovered three square feet of usable floor space in his office after shredding about three square feet of old files. (You would never know he was trained as an archivist!)

New Videocassettes

The Greeks is a series of four videos exploring the concepts, values, and cultural systems of the classical Greeks, filmed



at Athens, Mycenae, Delphi, Epidauros, Sicily, and other major sites. *The Greek Beginning* is an overview of the period from the Mycenaean Age in 1300 B.C. to the death of Alexander the Great in 323 B.C. *The Classical Age* is devoted to the period between approximately 500 B.C. and the death of Alexander. *Heroes and Men* looks at the work of Homer and Aeschylus and visits the sites of Athens, Mycenae, Olympia, Delphi, and the great theatre at Epidauros. *The Minds of Men* is a detailed look at the life and teachings of Socrates, Plato, Herotodus, and Thucydides.

The Mysteries is a three-part series consisting of *The Nativity*, *The Passion*, and *Doomsday*. The York Cycle is the largest of the Mystery Cycles and forms the basis for this extraordinary modern reaction of a colossal dramatic event produced by Britain's National Theatre. These videos were partially purchased through an endowment from Herbert and Amanda Segal in memory of Lili P. Segal.

New Students

We are glad to welcome William Thompson, a freshman, and Kristie Morton, a sophomore, to Media and Current Periodicals. Kristie is majoring in Middle School Education with a concentration in Math and Science, and William hopes to put his writing skills to good use. We hope they have a LONG and distinguished career at U of L and the Media desk!

Wendy is very happy to have a work-study student, Tarsha Moore, helping her in Special Services. This is the first time Wendy has had any assistance other than an occasional volunteer, and she is basking in the difference it makes (even though this Owl news was STILL late!). Tarsha is a junior with a Liberal Studies major and an interest in attending law school. Wendy hopes that Tarsha too will have a long stay here, since she is doing a great job so far.

Reference

Teresa Bowden spent the holidays traveling with her mother all over the state of Florida...primarily Tampa, Ft. Lauderdale and the Florida Keys. The weather could have been a little more cooperative, considering it was only 65 degrees in Key West. But overall it was a great trip, particularly the chance to visit with old friends.

Glenda Neely attended the ALA Midwinter meeting in San Antonio, TX from Jan 19-22nd. She attended 3 discussion group programs sponsored by the Business Reference and Services Section (BRASS) which featured "Favorite Sources for Company Research," a Publisher's Open Forum on "Industry Sources," and a panel discussion on bibliographic instruction for electronic business sources sponsored by the Business Reference in Academic Libraries Committee. Most business publishers who have been selling databases on CD-ROM for several years announced plans to migrate to the Internet for access to their databases, according to the publishers and exhibitors.

Glenda and Fran Davis (Owensboro Community College) participated in Association of College & Research Libraries (ACRL) Chapter Council meetings for the Kentucky ACRL Chapter. In 1997 ACRL will hold its National Conference in Nashville, Tennessee! Let Glenda know if you are interested in joining ALA and the ACRL division. By the way, the food and weather in San Antonio were marvelous!

Kersey Library

Comings and Goings

We wish a fond farewell to Jerry Tidwell, one of our student assistants. Jerry has taken a job as an engineering instructor at JCC. We'll miss him, but we know he's doing what he loves to do. Jerry will live on at Kersey for being the inventor of the "red dot" and for being Mr. Range Markers!

We also bid farewell to Sarah Osborn, another student assistant. Although Sarah hasn't been with us very long, she was ready to take over running the Circ Desk! We'll miss her, but she won't be very far--she's going to be working at the Chemical Engineering Department. In any case, we know we'll see her--Kersey is her home away from home!

Finally, we welcome Rhonda Embry in her new position as Temporary Staff. Rhonda was a temporary staff member before, and she proved exemplary--we discovered that we can't live without her! She has been a student assistant in the interim, and we are thrilled that she has another appointment. She is assisting Susan Scheiberg with public services and circulation, and is assisting Victoria Moon in acquisitions.

Look for a report on new faces next month--we're hiring new student assistants!

Law Library

Our own David Minton directed the University Libraries Chorale for two concerts in December. The Chorale, made up of thirteen singers from the staff and student work force of several U of L libraries, included our own Amy Candela and Michael ben-Avraham. The first concert, at Treyton Oak Towers, was given in honor of former University Librarian Evelyn Schneider. The second concert was part of the University Libraries' Holiday party. The Chorale performed 12 multicultural holiday songs before an enthusiastic audience of more than sixty people. David thanks everyone involved for their hard work which made the concerts so successful.

Miriam Schusler-Williams, our Circulation Manager, wants to remind everyone that they can still sign up for aerobics classes at the SAC. There are two sessions of mixed aerobics: one from 12:00 noon - 1:00 p.m. and another from 5:15 - 6:15 p.m. Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays. There are two sessions of low impact aerobics: one from 12:00 noon - 1:00

p.m. and another from 5:15 - 6:15 p.m. on Tuesdays and Thursdays. There is also a weight training class from 12:30 - 1:30 p.m. on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Everyone is welcome to try out one class for free. For prices and more information, contact the Intramural Sports office at 852-6707.

Music Library

Music Library staff welcome the opportunity to work directly with Karen R. Little, who is acting Head Librarian during Richard Griscom's sabbatical. A pleasant experience is anticipated by all.

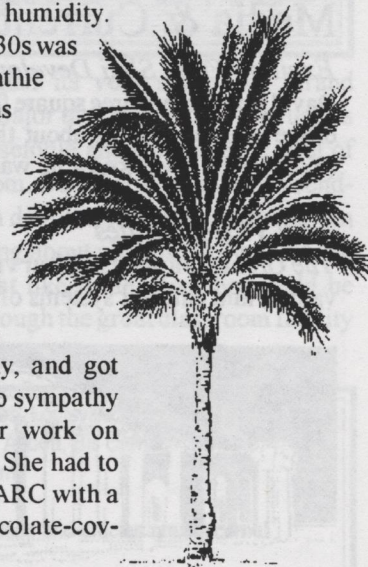
University Archives and Record Center

The ARCHIVES catalog became accessible to public use from the MINERVA PLUS navigator screen January 15. The catalog contains approximately 2600 bibliographic records describing University Archives' holdings of University records and private collections relating to Louisville history.

The results of a national survey of current oral history projects concerning the civil rights movement is now available through the Archives' WWW page.

Kathie and Ron Johnson spent a glorious 11 days in early November on the beautiful island of Maui, celebrating their 25th wedding anniversary. They were "hurricaned" out of a planned trip to the Caribbean and scrambled in early October to salvage the event by switching to Hawaii. Maui, made up of two volcanoes, one extinct and the other dormant, contains both a tropical rain forest on the eastern side, and a drier western side. Spectacular beaches abound, lots of sights to see, and the history of the island (both pre- and post-European arrival) is fascinating. Kathie and Ron rode bikes down Mount Haleakala, snorkeled with the graceful sea turtles, and attended a traditional Hawaiian luau. The weather was perfect for the entire trip, temps in the high 70s and low 80s every day, with low humidity.

(Returning to Louisville's 30s was a shock to their systems!) Kathie highly recommends Maui as a vacation spot, especially in the off-season (summer and fall) when the rates are more reasonable (there is no such thing as cheap in Hawaii). Even though she came home on a red-eye flight Tuesday-Wednesday, and got very little sleep, she got no sympathy when she showed up for work on Thursday, November 16. She had to bribe her way back into UARC with a fresh pineapple and chocolate-covered macadamia nuts.



LIFEstyle

*Opening the Doors to Healthier
and Stress-Free Living*
A column by Alice Abbott,
Technical Services, Ekstrom Library

Clutter: If You Don't Use It -- Lose It!

January, typically a very cold and boring month, finds lots of folks low on money. Many are recuperating from the holidays, especially in terms of their financial situation.

Due to holiday bills, we are not able to do much spending on entertainment. Well, there is hope and there are some solutions. If you are a person who has no bills, no money worries, no problems with clutter, and no stress, you may want to bypass this article and save some time. But if you are suffering from any of the previously mentioned conditions, read on!

I read a book about a year and a half ago called *Clutter's Last Stand*, and I must say it changed my life. A girlfriend of mine loaned it to me as a joke. I had started to lose weight and wondered what to do with all of the clothes that I could no longer wear. My friend suggested that I sell or give away the clothes and read the book. Well, not only did that book's theme apply to my excessive clothing supply, I found that it applied to everything I owned or even wanted to own.

Like many people, I had become very attached to things, and not necessarily things that I needed or really wanted. So I began to look at specific things I owned. I applied a checklist to see if I really needed to keep them. For example, clothing that hasn't been worn in two years--do we really need to keep these things (other than formal wear)? Some die-hard anti-clutterists shout one year as the determining factor in deciding whether to keep clothing.

Clutter takes time, energy and money. How many times did I move that piece of clutter on that shelf to get to something I needed? I was wasting valuable energy and time! Also, I was paying renter's insurance on that clutter! I was even considering moving to a bigger apartment to make room for all my clutter.

Then I began to look at other things. Soon I found that I had duplicates of several articles. I also had items that

I hadn't used in a long time and probably wouldn't use again. So, I thought, "Now that I have found things that I don't need and/or want--what do I do with them?" The answer is there are several places where one can unload items: consignment shops, places listed in the print media, yard sales, networks of friends, and charities.

Consignment shops take clothing that is made well, does not look worn, and is made from classic styles. Usually the shop's cut is from 50% to 65% (though the percentages may vary from shop to shop, so please check before leaving your items). These shops also will take household items and furniture that are in good shape.

The print media are wonderful places to sell items. *The Bargain Mart* and *The Thrifty Nickel* are papers specifically printed to advertise items for sale. These papers offer very low advertising rates. The special sales section of *The Courier-Journal's* Classified Section is also a good place to unload items, though it is more expensive than the previously mentioned papers.

Yard sales are not for the faint-hearted. In fact, they are really social events by the time one gets some sellers together, decides on a place to have the event, and sells items to the customers.

One can create a network of friends in which to sell items. Sometimes bartering and/or trading can take place.

Donating items to charity is a wonderful way to "recycle" unwanted items. One person's clutter may be another person's paradise. Plus, one can claim the contribution when itemizing on her/his tax form.

While life may be more dull this time of year, January can be a wonderful time to clean house and unload unwanted items. You may be able to make a few dollars, too. Picture this: when the first beautiful day of spring arrives, you won't be inside stressing over clutter; you'll be frolicking in the green, green grass of fun!

Go Pher It!

by Andy Anderson,
Photographic Archives



All The News

For the true news addict, there is never enough news. We want to keep up with the press-conference-a-minute presidential campaigns, reports on the annual rainfall in Bosnia and the latest Hillary-is-a-crook/manipulator/murderer/uppity woman "revelation." NPR, 24-hour cable news channels and local "news teams" are clearly not enough, so the World Wide Web has once again ridden to the rescue.

Both national and local newspapers are now present on the web. They offer a wide range of services, from fee-based all-news-about-everything sites to local dailies offering roundups of county news. Here are just a few examples.

CNN Interactive (<http://www.cnn.com>) is one of the most wide-ranging. News categories available include: U.S. News, World News, Business, Sports, Show Biz, Weather, Technology, Food & Health. Graphics include the excellent color weather maps featured in the hard copy edition of the paper.

The Electronic Telegraph (London) has a web site (<http://www.telegraph.co.uk>) which sure beats walking in the rain to the nearest tube station to retrieve a copy. Categories are similar to CNN. First-time users must register, but there are no charges. Sports columns cover cricket, tennis, rugby, motor sports and football (soccer).

Reuters News Media (www.yahoo.com/headlines/current/news) offers headline news on a very fast-loading service which is the quickest way to satisfy a sudden craving for a news fix. Short on fancy graphics, but good, if sparse, reporting.

Time Magazine (<http://www.pathfinder.com/time>). Pathfinder is Time-Warner's online service. Its graphics make the first couple of screens load very slowly, but the magazine, a virtual digital edition of the hard cover, is laid out like the magazine itself.

Nando Times (<http://www.nando.net>) is the online edition of *The News and Observer*, Raleigh, NC. It has the usual categories, but is stronger in state and local coverage. This site offers a text-only version and, for those of you with the latest Netscape Beta release, a Java version.

There are many more newspaper and magazine sites on the Web. Be sure to check out Yahoo's list (http://www.excite.com/Subject/News_and_Reference/Daily_Newspapers/s-index.h.html) which contains pointers to 33 U.S. and 11 overseas dailies. The U.S. papers include:

- Atlanta Journal-Constitution*
- Austin Chronicle*
- Chicago Sun-Times*
- Evansville (IN) Courier*—an innovative, technology-savvy paper.
- Houston Chronicle*—(Molly Ivins every week. I'm in heaven.)
- San Francisco Chronicle*
- York (PA) Record Online*

Exhibits

Ekstrom Library Lobby

"Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.:
The Road to the Promised Land"
Through February 16

"*The Life of Louis Pasteur*"
February

Photographic Archives
"*Tarzan Meets the 21st Century*"
Through March

Rare Books

"*Albert Hubbard and the Roycrofters*"
February 8 - May 1

Dwight Anderson Music Library

"*Historical Valentines*"
February

Schneider Hall

"*Allen R. Hite Art Institute Faculty Exhibition*"
Through February 9
Belknap and Covi Galleries

"*American Society of Interior Designers*"
February 16 - March 8
Reception: Thursday, February 15, 4:30-7:00 p.m.
Belknap Gallery

"*Master of Arts Thesis Exhibition*"
February 16-March 8
Reception: Thursday, February 15, 4:30 - 7:00 p.m.
Covi Gallery

Thank You

Alice Abbott	Karen Little
Andy Anderson	Kathy Marsall
Michel Atlas	Erea Marshall
Teresa Bowden	Bill Morison
Wendy Bronson	Susan Scheiberg
Scott Campbell	
Lee Caruthers	
Carolyn Gettler	

