



**Chapter Council Presents  
Sharing Roundtables**  
MLA Annual Meeting  
San Antonio, TX  
Monday, May 16, 2005

## **Table 1B: Archives: Traditional & Electronic**

**Facilitator:** Joan Stoddart

**Recorder:** Elizabeth Anne Comeaux

**Additional Participants:** Laura Dean, Holly Kimborowicz, Mary Langman, Kathe Obrig, Karen Wiederaenders

### **Topics discussed and ideas shared:**

There were three main topics that participants wanted to discuss: 1) journal licensing, 2) institutional repositories, and 3) institutional archives.

Journal licensing – The group discussed the problem libraries are currently facing with licensing of electronic versions of journals. There is a lack of guarantees that if you quit subscribing to an online journal or the journal is no longer in print that you will still have access to those issues you paid for. There are also a lot of staffing issues involved in managing contracts, doing link resolving for online journals, etc. Many libraries' budgets can only accommodate either online or print versions of a journal, and, in that case, which should you choose? Modern technology makes it no longer necessary to have the print issue in hand for viewing illustrations and pictures, but libraries need to decide if they are of the same quality. Question: Is NLM still archiving all print journals and will it make these available to other medical libraries?

Institutional repositories – The group discussed who in their institutions is responsible for setting up and maintaining institutional repositories and the politics involved in doing so.

Institutional archives – The main advantage to the institution of the library managing the archives is the preservation of the material and indexing so that it may be located easily. The group discussed electronic vs. traditional archives and problems with each. Issues for electronic archives include whether to keep paper versions of records once they are scanned, problems with maintaining electronic records, and the need for non-proprietary formats for electronic records so they can be exported to other systems as required (especially for historical documents that will require numerous conversions to new technologies). Traditional (paper) archives must worry about preservation of materials, including using archival boxes with acid free interleaves and envelopes and maintaining the right temperature and humidity. Issues for both types of archives are the types of materials to be collected, staffing used, the need for

volunteers to be supervised, and the protection of materials, especially of confidential materials (HIPAA and FERPA).

All agree that they do not have enough training to manage archives effectively, even to know how to process archives. Most have been assigned this responsibility with no formal training in archival processing. MLA should develop a class on archives that would include the following topics:

- a. Collection development issues
- b. Processing materials, both traditional archives and electronic archives
- c. Copyright/confidentiality issues
- d. Preservation of materials
- e. Developing finding aids