

Professional Resources: Middle East Studies

The Middle East has become a focal point for students of world politics and culture particularly since September 11, 2001. Middle East Studies has a long history in the academic discipline of area studies. The Middle East Studies includes the countries once considered the Near East—Iraq, the Arabian Peninsula, the Levant, Egypt—and the countries sometimes considered Central Asia—Iran, Afghanistan, and Turkey. These countries, with the exception of Israel, are primarily Muslim, but Islam is not limited to these countries, as the Islamic world stretches from Morocco in North Africa to Indonesia and Malaysia in South East Asia.

This researcher interviewed a librarian at a large private university who is the curator of the Middle East Studies collection. This curator is well known in the profession as an expert in his field. We met early one morning at his office in the main library on campus. We sat at a round table that was covered with stacks of books, all of which appeared to be in Turkish. He explained that these were the most recent arrivals from his Turkish vendor.

Comment: Delete; not used in a professional report

The Interviewee

In 1991, a **well-known** expert in Middle East Studies became a librarian-curator at a **well-known** private, academic institution in Northern California. In 2001, a vast Middle East collection previously held by a famous Institute on this campus was transferred to the campus libraries. At this time the librarian-curator was assigned the new task of managing this new collection, which became known as the Middle East and Islamic Collections (Thomas, 2005, RLG, 2006).

Comment: For me, the names can be used, just omit in the discussion board forum. Synonyms for well-known—"noted"

Managing the Collection

The collection originally held in the Institute was limited to 20th century politics. When it was transferred to the campus libraries, the need arose to develop the collection to meet the teaching needs of faculty and students.

The library, in conjunction with Middle East Studies program, completed a review that looked at how well the existing collection supported the teaching programs and the courses offered. Part of this review was to prepare a collection development policy statement that establishes the purpose of the collection. The purpose of the collection is to support the teaching programs and to support faculty and student research. The policy is adapted when a new program is added. Recently an endowed department in Iranian Studies has been added, which means that the Iranian-Persian collection will expand.

Comment: Will the review be ongoing or was it because this area has become a hot topic?

The collection review included matching their collection against peer institutions to evaluate the quality of their collection: Princeton, Yale, Harvard, and the Universities of Michigan, Pennsylvania, and Chicago. The school maintains consortia arrangements with libraries in such institutions with Middle Eastern Studies departments.

Comment: Good idea

Another way they evaluated their collection was in terms of quantity by comparing the gross number of titles with collections in National Data Bases, such as Research Libraries Information Network (RLIN). They did spot checking for random sampling to determine the quality of the collection. They also check bibliographies and citations from important articles and books to see whether his collection is adequate for in depth research. Bibliographic and citation analysis also serve as selection tools. Interlibrary loan records also serve as informal evaluations of the adequacy of the collection.

Comment: Who are "they". Are you referencing the peer institutions or the Middle Eastern Studies librarians?

Comment: Awkward from they to his

Currently, the curator collects in all languages of the Middle East and in Western European languages about the Middle East. Topics collect include women in Islam in terms of cultural, religious, legal influences; ethnic and religious minorities; classical and contemporary music; cinema as a cultural phenomenon; commercially available audiotapes of music, classical and contemporary such as Berber music and music of nomadic peoples; evidence of Islamic influences in countries beyond the Middle East written in the languages of the countries such as books about Islamic influences in Spain written by Spanish historians. This latter area is a relatively new phenomenon, as these histories had heretofore been written by outsiders.

Comment: Good discussion; maybe bullets for emphasis

The scope of the collection includes the politics and history of Middle Eastern countries, the history of Islam, the spread of Islam and regions under its influence. Language coverage includes the languages taught on campus—Arabic, Persian, Turkish, Coptic, and Berber—but not Kurdish, for which the school relies on consortia arrangements with a well-known, large public institution also in Northern California for use of their extensive collection. The curator is well aware of the wisdom of sharing resources and made the point that wisdom dictates not doubling

To summarize, the curator collects in Library of Congress classification areas of: BP Religion of Islam; DR DS DT History of Islam and the Middle East; PJ PD PL Middle Eastern languages and literature; and many areas of the H Social Sciences: HQ Women, HV Terrorism, HJ Politics, political parties. However, collection is not limited to these areas.

Curatorial Responsibilities

The university's libraries are staffed by Curators, who are responsible for large subject areas, and Bibliographers, who are responsible for narrow subject areas. The latter would include Women's Studies, Middle Eastern Music and Cinema, Africana, and Religious Studies. The responsibility of the Middle Eastern Studies Curator includes making wise decisions about how to allocate resources and when to coordinate what he orders with other curators in subject areas that overlap with his, such as the Religious Studies Bibliographer. Domains have been carefully worked out. Items with Islam as their focus come under Middle East Studies, while items that compare Christianity or another religion with Islam come under Religious Studies. His purchasing authority is limited by a \$100 ceiling for a single item, beyond which he must present the case to his superiors.

Comment: punctuation

Comment: collaboration is important for interdisciplinary CM

Middle East Studies collects English language materials through approval plans with university's vendor. When the new books arrive, staff is called to a central location where they examine the new books in their subjects and determine whether or not the institution's profile is accurate. Items are sent shelf ready so none are actually rejected, but the examination helps fine-tune the profile for future material.

The Middle East collection maintains a separate cataloging unit for books in Middle Eastern languages. This unit is staffed by experts in Middle Eastern languages who are taught the rules of cataloging. Books in English arrive either shelf ready or are cataloged with all the other books coming into the university's libraries. The Curator says that the most important skills for his staff are not library skills, but foreign languages and subject area knowledge, because library skills can be taught on the job.

Selecting Materials

Many factors enter into account to determine selection. Quarterly reports of interlibrary loan requests, comments solicited from faculty, students, and researchers, requests for specific titles, periodic meetings with faculty to discuss courses and library materials, periodic meetings with incoming graduate students entering the university with a research topics in hand, changes in the existing programs such as the addition of the endowed program in Iranian-Persian studies, and the Curator's own research and knowledge base determine selection.

Comment: This comprehensive approach appears to work well

Tools for selection include an array of intricate arrangements with vendors and publishers from all over the world, generally one per country or per region. The Curator deals with vendors from France, Italy, Germany, Spain, Mexico, Israel and the Middle Eastern countries of Turkey, North Africa, Arab Peninsula, countries of the Levant, Iran, Iraq, and Afghanistan. The university recently changed their North American vendor from YBP to Coutts Information Services, a Canadian company. Coutts' press release states that the three-year contract includes "fully integrated print and electronic approval plans for both North American and UK originated content" (Coutts Press Release, 2006). Based on detailed approval requirements, Coutts will select and supply annually over 50,000 titles that seamlessly integrate into the university's library systems (Coutts).

Comment: Such as? What tools does he use? How does his list compare to the tools you researched? This is the place for the comparative analysis

Like Coutts, most Western vendors have catalogs and online lists of citations that provide full bibliographic information, but not all are standardized or of the quality expected in North America. Foreign bibliographies and publishers lists may be of varying quality some with more standardized information than others, but the Curator says he is used to this. For example publishers' names may be in place of authors'. Long ago, says the Curator, American library associations trained the publishing industry to present bibliographic information according to standards set by libraries. Information from other countries being more random, the Curator's favorite foreign vendors are those that provide the most accurate book lists.

Comment: Is it working better with Coutts?

Professional Development

The Curator attended the University of Michigan where he completed an MLS and graduate degrees in Near East languages including Turkish and Arabic. At U of Michigan, he was the head of the Near East Division of the University of Michigan Libraries (RLG, 2006).

He is a founding member of Middle East Librarians Association (MELA) and has been extremely active in MELA serving twice as president, vice president and program chair in 2003-04 and editor of MELA Notes (Thomas, 2005). Currently he is the Webmaster and list manager of MELA's listservs (MELA, 2006). MELA holds annual meetings in conjunction with the Middle East Studies Association (MESA). MELA runs two listservs MELANET, a general topics list serve and MELACAT a cataloging listserv.

Comment: Good discussion

One of MELA's objectives is to fund a mentoring program for helping new librarians adjust to the subject area. As a new librarian at the University of Michigan, the Curator was mentored by David H. Partington, well known for his expertise in Middle East collections at Princeton, the University of Michigan, and Harvard University. In 2005, the Curator was recognized by MELA as the recipient of the first David H. Partington Award, created to recognize individuals who have made exceptional contributions to the field of Middle East librarianship (Thomas, 2005). He had the award framed and it is hanging on the wall of his office.

The Curator has also been active in ALA and is a founding member of Africa/Asian/Middle East Studies section of ACRL, but is no longer a member and no longer attends their conferences. ALA, he says, is highly structured and dictatorial in how they organize their committees. He feels he does not get anything in return for his efforts with these organizations, and that neither he nor Stanford benefits from the conferences.

The Curator discussed the university libraries' professional associations. The library is not a member of the Association of Research Libraries (ARL), a group of the top 100 research libraries in America. Unlike Research Libraries Group (RLG), ARL has no operations end but did have a training component, particularly for women library directors. Founded to address the needs of research libraries, RLG runs cooperative programs for developing digital standards. The university libraries pulled out of RLG but continue to upload Arabic script catalog records into the RLG union catalog and also into OCLC, of which they are subscribers. The Curator is an "RLG staff alum" and as reported in the RLG Newsletter has been "a helpful advisor and communicator to ... RLG members and users about the uses of RLIN21 and the RLIN21 cataloging client for Hebrew and Arabic cataloging" (RLG, 2006).

Comment: Interesting. What organizations do you recommend for the comparative analysis?

What impressed this researcher most about collection development in Middle East Studies is that the most important skills are knowledge of foreign languages and knowledge of the subject area, not librarian skills. The latter can be learned on the job, while the former take years to acquire. That this is the determining factor in hiring decisions at this university's library made a significant impression on this current LIS student.

Comment: Language skills are important, but unless there is a written policy or strong mentorship program, I would think the MLS would be vital to a person being able to do a good job in this position.

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Appendix A: Professional Resources

Comment: This list should include 5 professional development tools and 5 collection development tools.

1. Middle East and Jewish Studies Division of Columbia University Libraries. Retrieved October 31, 2006, from <http://www.columbia.edu/cu/lweb/indiv/mideast/index.html> .

The Middle East and Jewish Studies Division has compiled a massive amount of information on Middle East including multiple pages of Internet resources that link users to sites worldwide (<http://www.columbia.edu/cu/lweb/indiv/mideast/cuvlm/index.html>). One example is al-Bab (<http://www.al-bab.com/>) a site that introduces non-Arabs to the Arabs and their cultures and provides economic summaries of all Arabic countries.

Columbia University's collection of Middle East Studies is "an ongoing compilation of electronic bibliographic resources and research materials on the Middle East and North Africa... Electronic resources from the Middle East are organized by region, country and subject" <http://www.columbia.edu/cu/lweb/indiv/mideast/cuvlm/about.html> . This site provides the most comprehensive collection of resources with the broadest base from all levels of national and international governing bodies, agencies, nonprofit think tanks, publishers of books and journals, and bookstores on topics about the Middle East that vary from economics to food to music to graphics and images.

Among the resources the site includes are links to online catalogs of the world's top libraries with large Middle East collections (<http://www.columbia.edu/cu/lweb/indiv/mideast/cuvlm/LIBS.html>), bibliographies from Columbia University libraries and other research institutions, reports on the region from U.S., Middle Eastern, and international organizations.

Also among the resources is a list of publishers and bookstores on Middle East Studies collected by Frank Unlandherm, Middle East Studies Librarian, Columbia University.

<http://www.columbia.edu/cu/lweb/indiv/mideast/cuvm/Pubs.html>. This is a very comprehensive list of about 400 publishers and bookstores for books about the Middle East in English and 13 foreign languages in five alphabets, such as Farsi (Persian), Turkish, Arabic, Kurdish, Hebrew, and Maltese compiled by Frank Unlandherm, the Middle East Studies bibliographer for Columbia University since 1969

(<http://www.lib.umich.edu/area/Near.East/MELANotes6970/unlandh.html>).

Comment: Good descriptive analysis, what are the strengths and weaknesses? Where is the illustrative example?

2. Military Education Research Library Network (MERLN). Retrieved October 31, 2006, from <http://merln.ndu.edu/>.

MERLN is “a consortium which facilitates resource sharing among its 35 member libraries, most of which are associated with military education and research facilities”

(<http://www.usip.org/library/merln.html>). MERLN is managed by the National Defense University Library at Ft. McNair in Washington, D.C. (<http://www.ndu.edu/library/>). One of the MERLN member libraries is United States Institute of Peace Library (<http://www.usip.org/library/>).

MERLN is home to the Military Policy Awareness Links (MiPALs)

(<http://merln.ndu.edu/index.cfm?lang=EN&pageID=3&type=page>), which provide direct access to defense-related U.S. policy statements on selected key topics.

This site provides links to all kinds of government security public relations documents organized by country, such as *Afghanistan*, and by topic, such as *Homeland Security*. Under “U.S. Policy White House,” users can read *Presidential Fact Sheet*, and listen to, or read, President Bush Radio Addresses in audio, or print, versions. Under “The Taliban” users can read the Senlis council’s *Afghanistan: Five years later*

(http://www.senliscouncil.net/modules/publications/014_publication) or read International Relations Center, Foreign Policy in Focus (FPIF) Reports (<http://www.fpif.org/>), one of which is *Beware Empires in Decline*: (<http://www.fpif.org/fpifxt/3596>) .

This is an excellent resource. These links, some of which go to Whitehouse.gov—News Releases (<http://www.whitehouse.gov/infocus/mideast/>) and to other excellent sites, seem to be nonpartisan. Librarians will find a huge amount of government published information and reports paid for by tax dollars on topics that are politically and culturally “sensitive” and the nightly news only brushes over. These documents are available at no cost and can greatly enhance a library’s Middle East Studies collection.

Comment: Good discussion but what are the strengths and weaknesses?

3. Middle East Network Information Center (MEMIC) at The Center for Middle Eastern Studies at the University of Texas at Austin. Retrieved October 31, 2006, from

<http://link.lanac.utexas.edu/menic/> and [http://www.utexas.edu/cola/centers/cmec/?path\[0\]=cmec](http://www.utexas.edu/cola/centers/cmec/?path[0]=cmec) .

MERLN Regions—Middle East (<http://www.usip.org/library/regions.html>)—links users to the MEMIC, another big site of Middle East collections. MEMIC’s subject categories include

resources for K-12 education in Middle East Studies, Area studies by country and region, and society and culture in addition to many others.

Center for Middle Eastern Studies in cooperation with the University of Texas Press “publishes three series on scholarly and literary works on subjects concerning the Middle East:”

- The Modern Middle East Series
- The Middle East Monograph Series
- The Modern Middle East Literatures in Translation Series

The Center also publishes a quarterly newsletter, which reviews books published by the Center and elsewhere, and presents conferences relating to Middle East Studies. While the center refers to its information network (MEMIC) as a “public service,” this researcher wonders if MEMIC is in any way linked financially to MERLN, as it was the only academic center hyperlinked to the MERLN Web site. Other large academic centers on Middle Eastern Studies, such as the Middle East and Jewish Studies Center at Columbia University, had no hyperlink.

Comment: Good observation

4. U.S. Department of State, Bureau of International Information Programs. Info.State.gov Web site. Retrieved October 31, 2006, from <http://usinfo.state.gov/usinfo/products.html> .

Within this Web site from Bureau of International Information Programs from the Dept. of State, users can select regions of the world about which information in various formats will be encountered: electronic journals, print publications, photo galleries, news files and links of external Web resources.

The Middle East & North Africa regional section explores American policy and issues focusing on North Africa, the Levant, Iraq and the Persian Gulf. South and Central Asia section focuses on policy and issues related to Afghanistan, Pakistan, and the Central Asian republics that are ex-Soviet, Muslim nations.

Within each section, the site lists electronic journals published by the Dept. of State and provides articles that relate U.S. policy in the Muslim countries of the Middle East, Africa, and Asia. E-journals listed are:

- *U.S. Foreign Policy Agenda*
- *Issues of Democracy*
- *Global Issues*
- *Economic Perspectives*

The Middle East & North Africa regional section also holds electronic publications such as electronic pamphlets and e-books under the Issues in Focus series pertaining to issues in this region. The articles can be read in eight languages other than English: Spanish, French, Russian, Chinese, Arabic and Persian script languages, Turkish, and Vietnamese.

Some articles from earlier dates (2002, 2003) are no longer available and the “404-Document Not Found” message appears.

Though this information adheres to the official government line and does not represent an unbiased and critical view of America and U.S. international policy, this Web site is a valuable

resource of information for any person studying current issues in Middle East Studies and would be a worthwhile, and free, addition to a Middle East Studies collection.

Comment: Good information—a weakness of the site?

5. Middle East Librarians Association (MELA). Retrieved October 31, 2006, from <http://www.mela.us/index.html>.

Middle East Studies Association of North America (MESA)

The Curator of Middle East Studies this researcher interviewed is a founding member of Middle East Librarians Association (MELA). MELA is the professional association for Middle East Librarians and is devoted to providing professional support. MELA holds annual meetings just before the annual meeting of the Middle East Studies Association of North America (MESA) and at the same location, which enables faculty and librarians to attend both meetings. This year the meetings will be in Boston at the end of November. MELA and MESA support a scholarship for current students of library and information science to attend the annual meetings, called the George Atiyeh Prize that honors its founding member of MELA. MELA also publishes an official journal called *MELA Notes* <http://www.lib.umich.edu/area/Near.East/MELANotesIntro.html>

Comment: I assume this is a professional development tool?

MELA runs two listservs MELANET, a general topics list serve and MELACAT a cataloging listserv. MELANET is a listserv devoted to Middle East librarianship and has about 70 people. Any interested party may subscribe. The talk is about Middle East book vendor information, catalog info in Middle East languages. Other scholarly listservs exist associated with Turkish studies, Islamic art, and general Middle East Studies. An Internet search turned up Turkish International Studies Association (TISA) and International Society for Iranian Studies (ISIS) as both having listservs.

MELA also sponsored MIDEASTCAT, an electronic list for the exchange of information on cataloging matters. This listserv is open to anyone interested in issues of cataloging library materials in the languages of the Middle East. General discussion includes cataloging rules, classification issues, subject analysis, and authorities (MIDEASTCAT, 2006).

6. Films Media Group (FMG): Films for the Humanities and Sciences. Retrieved October 31, 2006, from <http://www.films.com>.

This site supplies good general subject categories and all subject areas and has good search capability. It has a large collection of films pertaining to the Middle East. Users can drill down into the subject directories Religion and philosophy—Religion—Islam where this researcher located 70 items. Drilling down through Middle East History and Culture located 93 items, which did not appear to duplicate the 70 in the earlier category.

The films are documentaries. Prices are from \$59 to \$799, the average being \$129 and include public performance rights. Each film is summarized in one paragraph of about 150 words but bibliographic information is incomplete, no producer or other authority is given unless included in the summary. Reviews are provided such as from Booklist.

The earliest film this researcher located was dated 1991, a Bill Moyer special. Another older film, dated 1993 was a multipart series *Palestine 1890-1990*. The average dates of most films are around 1999 with many dated from 2000.

The site promotes a state-of-the-art feature to Administrators, Educators, Media Librarians called “FMG On Demand: Digital film media delivery system.” It is a collection of 3,000 digital titles for FMG On Demand, which users can download for a price that is cheaper than purchasing the VHS or DVD. Other film database is easily searchable using the search window or the subject directory.

The site has other features worth noting. Going back to films published in 1999, the site attempts to correlate films with educational standards per State for determining where the film fits into school curricula. But the interface didn’t work very well. When this researcher entered New York as the state, a page opened with the list of standards, but in less than three seconds the screen returned back to the search window. I was unable to even copy and paste to another doc in order to read the results. California seems to have no standards in place at all or at least according to this database. Perhaps the software is able to figure out that this researcher is located in California, because no matter what state I attempted to search, the window jumped back to California.

Another feature is textbook alignment, which provides chapters in texts with which a film aligns. This feature worked well.

7. Routledge Publishing. Retrieved October 31, 2006, from <http://www.routledge.com/> .

Routledge is a publisher of academic journals and books primarily in the social sciences and humanities and has extensive collections in Middle Eastern Studies. Users can browse by discipline—Interdisciplinary Studies—Middle Eastern Studies brings users to seven subcategories in this section: Economics, History, Language, Literature, Politics, Society, and Religion. Many of the Routledge books could be used as texts for advanced studies classes or to develop a collection in depth in certain specific subject areas, such as *The Status of Women in Islamic Law and Society*. Free hard copies of the catalogs will be sent you by request. Featuring new titles and key backlists, the 60-page Middle East and Islamic Studies 2006 catalog and the 20-page Middle East Politics 2006/7 catalog can be downloaded in PDF format.

8. Saqi Books. Retrieved October 31, 2006, from <http://www.saqibooks.com/>.

Saqi Books publishes academic and general interest books on the Middle Eastern world, including history, politics, arts, architecture, gender issues, women’s studies, and translations of Arabic literature and poetry. Founded in 1984, Saqi reflects progressive trends. Based in Beirut, London, and San Francisco., Saqi refers to itself as “a fiercely independent publisher for writers of all places and peoples... a magnet for daring new voices from across the globe.”

Saqi published feminist works on women and Islam when Islamic feminism was just starting. For example Fatima Mernissis’ *Beyond the Veil: Male-female Dynamics in a Modern Muslim Society* was first published by Saqi before being translated into English and published in the West. Saqi Books have “led to a rigorous reassessment of Arab cultural heritage.”

To give voice to writers beyond the Middle East, Saqi has expanded its network to include writers from the Balkans, Afghanistan, Pakistan, France and the UK.

Books are primarily written by people from the Middle East but also by Middle East experts primarily from Europe.

A 48-page catalog of new titles 2007 is available in PDF format and includes a backlist of titles. The titles featured on the Web site are organized into the following categories and are accompanied by images of covers:

- Art & Photography
- Biography
- Culture & Society
- Fiction
- Food & Drink
- History
- Philosophy & Religion
- Politics

9. Mage Publishers. Retrieved October 31, 2006, from <http://www.mage.com/>.

Publishers of Persian/Iranian books, "Mage Publishers is an independent press founded in 1985 with a goal of publishing books that bring to readers outside Iran and around the globe the best aspects of Persian/Iranian culture in English."

The site supplies full bibliographic information about all books. For newly published books prospective buyers are supplied with summaries, reviews, tables of contents, excerpts, information about the author(s), photos galleries of authors, and prices. One book this researcher recognizes is Jane Howard's *Inside Iran: Women's Lives*, which she reviewed for an earlier assignment. Reviews are reprints of previously published reviews in journals such as the New York Review of Books and may run over 2,000 words.

Mage will send prospective buyers a printed catalog. But resources are available at the Web site that may not be available in print. For example users can open written transliterations of poetry from Persian to English finding the Persian in script as well as in Roman-style letters. Users can open up MP3 files to hear read in English or Persian the *Dance of Life*, a book of 12 poems by Hafez, a poet of Shiraz, Persia, 1320-1390. The entire Web site is a work of art in itself and an artistic production that involved translators, readers, artists, and designers. The wonderful illuminations, plus the artwork on the book covers, feature classic Persian styles and could stand alone as paintings. The Web site is a work of art in itself. The books it features look like additional works of art. Definitely a useful site with high quality books in the following subject areas:

- Art & Music
- Cooking
- Fiction
- Non-fiction
- History
- Poetry & *Shahnameh*

Shahnameh or the *Persian Book of Kings*, by Abolqasem Ferdowsi and translated by Dick Davis, is a major publishing project involving a three-volume illustrated series. "Besides being the most

complete translation of Iran's national epic in English prose and verse, these books incorporate the best of Persian art with over 600 Persian miniatures."

10. IBEX Publishers and Iranbooks, Inc. Retrieved October 31, 2006, from <http://www.ibexpub.com/> and <http://www.iranbooks.net/> .

IBEX Publishers "has been publishing, selling and distributing English and Persian books about Iran since 1979." IBEX has a bookstore, Iranbooks, in Washington DC area. IBEX publishes books about Persian culture, poetry, history and politics, in English and in Persian. Iranbooks is a specialized bookstore and has a collection of rare and used books.

Books featured at the Iranbooks Web site do not always include complete bibliographic information, but do include title, author, publisher, date published, language and sometimes ISBN. Often instead of publisher, the year published is given. Most of the books are Persian language and are published overseas. Most, but not all, are published by IBEX. The bibliographic information varies per book. The importance of providing standard bibliographic information was brought out by the Middle East Studies Librarian at the university this researcher visited. He welcomed correct and standard bibliographic information from his overseas vendors and publishers. In addition, no reviews accompany featured books. This publisher limits itself to publishing books about Persia and Iran. This researcher looked for books about Kurds in Iran and found nothing.

Kristin,

The report was very informative about the curator and his accomplishments, but was quite limited in the discussion of collection management tools and resources that would be useful to a novice librarian. There was no comparative analysis of the tools you found useful to the ones mentioned by the interviewee. Did you research useful CM tools or rely totally on his responses? (minus 3 points)

Page numbers would have been quite useful as well as a breakdown of the annotated bibliography into professional development tools, and collection management resources. Based on the annotation, it appears that 9 of the items are *selection tools with only 1* (MELA) professional development listing, although ALA—Africa/Asia/Middle East Studies is mentioned in the narrative. Was there a particular reason you did not include ALA in the resource list? While he is no longer a member of this organization, the report should indicate organizations, listservs, and newsletters that would be useful to someone wanting to become active in this subject area. What about IFLA? Finally, the annotations were primarily descriptive in nature as opposed to noting the strengths and weaknesses of the tools. (minus 5 points). 42 points
Arglenda

Response message send November 24, 2006 to Arglenda.

Hi Arglenda,

I wanted to respond to your comments on Assign 3 because I am going forward with assign 4.

1. There was no comparative analysis of the tools you found useful to the ones mentioned by the interviewee. Did you research useful CM tools or rely totally on his responses?

I did not get into exact tools with him in the interview, nor did I pinpoint him on exactly which vendors/publishers he used, though he may have said names. I was in way over my head on this subject area and even the institution. Way too classy for me to really feel comfortable prying into his collection tools etc, thus no real comparison. I found tools and sites on the net that looked good to me.

2. Page numbers would have been quite useful as well as a breakdown of the annotated bibliography into professional development tools, and collection management resources. Based on the annotation, it appears that 9 of the items are selection tools with only 1 (MELA) professional development listing, although ALA—Africa/Asia/Middle East Studies is mentioned in the narrative.

I left the interview under the impression that collection development in this field could not be done well by a novice librarian. Nor did ALA have anything to offer collectors at curator level. Stanford and big libraries in that league organize amongst themselves. Stanford even pulled out of RLG. A newcomer in this subject area would have to have domain and language knowledge meaning advanced degrees in subject areas or have foreign educations. He made it clear that these were more important than library science skills. Academic bkgrnd in the subject area would indicate useful orgs and listservs. I just didn't have time to go into each of the area studies orgs and listservs, some of which I included in the References: Turkish International Studies Association (TISA) and International Society for Iranian Studies (ISIS). These both have listservs but are not ALA affiliated or otherwise librarian geared.

3. Annotations were primarily descriptive in nature as opposed to noting the strengths and weaknesses of the tools.

I really didn't have a reference point for determining strength or weakness, in terms of what, strength in the quality of the materials? I did discuss accuracy of bibliographic data (which to this curator was very important), and bias in gov resources. I'm not sure what criteria to use to evaluate the quality of the books in this domain possibly because I couldn't browse the collections and see them for myself, like I could for the Collect Eval assign.

I overextended my experience level in this assignment and yes, it showed. It may have been a better idea to have stuck with interviewing the librarian at the community college I did the collection eval assignment. But then I would never have seen how a really top level librarian-curator does his job. That part about sitting at a round table covered with foreign language books you said should be left out, was an important point. Right from the start I saw that collection dev in this area could not be learned in library school.

I'm kinda antsy about going on to "develop" an opening day collection for the newly endowed Iranian Dept. at Stanford. Totally presumptuous of me really. Perhaps I should back off and do one for local comm coll.

Any advice?
kristin