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From Preservation to Access: Paradigm for the Nineties

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Abstract: As the uses of digital technology to preserve the deteriorating printed documents of the past have been explored, the paradigm of the virtual library has been discovered: in the digital world, preservation is access, and access is preservation. The potential of digital technology for preservation has been explored for several reasons: 1) the need to preserve retrospective scholarly resources printed on deteriorating paper; 2) the serious disadvantages of microform for dissemination and scholarly use; and 3) the need to insure continuing access to prospective information stored on and transmitted via rapidly changing electronic media. The cost-effective and productive use of digital technology for scholarly access makes institutional collaboration an absolute imperative. Responding to that imperative, the Commission on Preservation and Access, USA assembled a group of library and information technology managers to consider possible alternatives for action. Their goals, activities and future plans are described.

Document Delivery: A World Solution to a World Problem?

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Abstract: The expanding international electronic networks allow for greater ease of communication between libraries. At present this facility cannot be exploited by all libraries in the world, but access will become more essential as the range of uses for such a network grow. One use potentially of great value is the electronic delivery of the text of journal articles and other printed information. The paper acknowledges the problems of electronic document delivery under present arrangements and foresees the possibility of transmission of documents between libraries throughout the world. In addition, it examines the practical problems (organizational, political and economic) which ensue from such an undertaking, stresses the importance of cooperation between libraries within regions and countries, and offers some potential solutions.

From National Libraries to the Global Village Library: Networks Offer New Opportunities for Traditional Libraries

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Abstract: National libraries have always attempted to be universal in their collections. Universal libraries such as the Library of Congress in the USA or the Bibliotheque nationale in France expanded their collections especially during the 19th century. With the "information explosion" in the 20th century, however, they could no longer maintain comprehensiveness. Now it is no longer the exhaustiveness and size of the physical collections, but the national libraries' ability to provide access to information through networks that will give them a new identity. Nevertheless, many national libraries suffer from an identity crisis because in their attempt to find a new role, they often overlook two factors. First, an asset of a national library is its comprehensive national collection, which is still mainly in print and is usually not lent. Second, so far libraries provide access to their collections through networks by means of the bibliographic record only. If national libraries do not develop new concepts of access they are in danger of being bypassed in the network. In order to survive in the future, global information network access to national collections has to be multi-dimensional.

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Abstract: The paper explores the potential participation of large metropolitan libraries in the university library now possible through developments in information and communication technologies. In spite of unique research collections held by some of our large metropolitan libraries, international cooperation has been limited. Fuller participation depends on remote access to holdings and the ability to deliver the document upon request. These abilities are now limited by inadequate funding and, sometimes an over developed sense of nationalism. The source of funding is also significant. Libraries that receive some portion of their revenue from state or national sources appear to have more flexibility in cooperating with other libraries at every level. The development of strong national library networks also appears to be the key ingredient to global information sharing.

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