The Friends of Business

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program viewing, radio listening, magazine and newspaper reading); and the demographic characteristics of the individual and his/her household. This CD-ROM allows the user to create personalized reports.

Much more information relating to businesses, their records, and the way that they are referenced can also be found in the many print and online references available through the Libraries' Web pages and collections. Business librarians regularly search company and industry data using ticker/trading symbols, SIC/NAIC code number, Dun's numbers, the CRISIP number, as well as find company information on brand names, company officials, financial data, current business surveys, stock markets averages, ratios, and any word or concept used in the business world.

This too brief assessment of WMU's comprehensive business and law collection will close with a special note on three major periodical databases. The first, ABI/Inform Global is an excellent source for citations, abstracts, and images to 1,000 English-language and selected foreign journals on administration, banking, human resources, information science, law, management, marketing, and other business-related areas. The coverage begins in 1971 and includes articles published up to the past month. Extremely important is the fact that a large majority of the recent articles have selected full-text and full-image of articles, which means that WMU users located at any computer terminal can access the information remotely. Similarly, Lexis-Nexis offers a wealth of business information and legal information on companies and industries. Business NewsBank (1993-date) completes the coverage by offering full-text articles from more than 500 regional and national newspapers, journals and newswires (U.S. only). In addition to these three major databases are dozens of other sources that also provide business references and data.

Such a quick review of the University Libraries' collections relating to business and related areas of research barely scratches the surface of the old and new "Business Library" collection that was first developed in the middle of the 20th century. Both the print and online resources offer a breadth and depth of information that is available to several thousand students, several hundred faculty and staff, and hundreds of community users who have found Western Michigan University Libraries to be their business/University/community resource.

A Secure Resource

By Beatrice Sichel, Professor Emerita & Former Head, Circulation/Reserves

[In recent issues of Gatherings, departments of the University Libraries have been spotlighted to show the complex and often unrecognized operations that make a multi-million dollar enterprise provide, as pioneer librarian Melvil Dewey once said, "The right book to the right person at the right time." The Circulation/Reserves department is an operation that everyone takes for granted, and no one understands—except the faculty and staff who keep it running.]

When a visitor enters the atrium of Waldo Library, he or she may notice the handsome, curved wood and granite counter on the left. This area, not always seen until leaving the building, is, because of proximity to the doors, the "Keeper of the Gate." Such a simple phrase hardly encompasses the myriad services and a massive record-managing function assigned to the Circulation/Reserves Department. The following commentary does not, by any means, touch on all of the roles of this department, but here are five key responsibilities.

Census of Users

As almost everyone expects from a unit identified first as Circulation, the department maintains a computer file of 40,000 patron records dating back to 1991 when the new Waldo was reopened. University employees and students are issued ID cards upon their arrival; this card is their "library card." The retirees of the University remain on the system for life and students retain privileges for one semester after graduation. But, in addition to the primary patrons, the Libraries serves a large number of guest borrowers. Among them are:

- students and staff of Kalamazoo College through a reciprocal borrowing agreement;
- anyone attending special seminars or programs at WMU;
- middle school students from the Academically Talented Youth Program (ATYP) of southwest Michigan;
- members of the Southwest Michigan Library Cooperative, which is made up of public, elementary and secondary school, and community college libraries, receive "courtesy passes" to use the Libraries; and, finally,
- any community resident who has permanent residence status within a radius of 50 miles of Kalamazoo and is over 18 years of age can be a guest borrower. Even the 50-mile radius is waived when the patron registers at a library that belongs to the State-sponsored Michicard program that provides access to over 250 Michigan libraries.

Patron Accountability

The thousands of users who borrow books and other materials from the Libraries provide an historical and current information record that has multiple uses. In addition to the patron's name and address, each in-house circulation record displays the patron category (e.g., student, staff, type of guest borrower); the patron ID number; a list of the books or items currently checked out; and any assessed library fines or fees. This information is protected under the State of Michigan's Confidentiality Act, and the department does not reveal the titles of items checked out to anyone other than the user. However, the current WestCat catalog provides a user record for one's own personal account. On the main screen, "Your Library Account" will give each user a record of what he or she has checked out.

As a result of their key responsibility to be "keepers" of the collections, the Circulation/Reserves staff has the least pleasant, and time-consuming, duty to assess fines and fees. The Patron Services Area, found on the north side of the library, left and just past the atrium area, manages this large enterprise. As books become overdue, a statement of charges is sent to the user as a reminder to return the material. When 45 days have passed from the due date, it is the Libraries' policy to declare the book as lost, and a lost book charge is assessed to the user. Thousands of such notices are generated each academic semester as the different due dates (undergraduates, graduates, faculty and staff, guest users) are identified through the computerized circulation system. The sheer amount of paperwork relating to library fines that is required in a university of this size means that a significant portion of the staff's time is allocated to "keeping" the inventory under control, that is, knowing where the resources are and getting them back into use. Finally, a year after a book has been declared lost, the Acquisitions Department is notified that the title needs to be reviewed for replacement.

Not yet mentioned but what outsiders would see as the most obvious aspect of Patron Accountability is the fact that the staff of the Circulation/Reserves department physically handles every item that is checked out from and back in to Waldo Library. Basic accountability for the Libraries' resources demands that the inventory be tracked, and that the location (on the shelf, in circulation, in a spe-

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cial collection, being repaired, etc.) of a
title purchased, cataloged, and shelved in
t he collections is known. When an item is
circulated, its unique machine-readable
code and the patron's ID are linked in
the system. A due date is established and
noted. Each physical item is also then
desensitized so that the electronic alarms
are not set off when leaving the building.
When a book is returned, the process is
reversed at each step. In between the
check out and the return, the database
record of circulated items can be used for
a number of management and inventory
reports.

First and Last Contact
The professional staff of the Circula-
tion/Reserves department found in
Waldo Library has the very special
responsibility to open and close the entire
building. A member of the Circulation
staff must arrive at least 15 minutes
before the scheduled time of opening, and
take responsibility for turning on all of
the lights, unlocking department doors,
and, finally, opening the three main
doors. Closin g is a reverse of the process,
but due to the size of the building, a full
"shut down" requires at least 30 minutes
including a floor by floor walk-through to
check for anyone who has not exited as
requested. During the same period, at
least three library-wide announcements
are made, any last minute check outs of
books and other materials have to be pro-
cessed, reluctant patrons are shooed
through the doors, lights turned off, and
the doors locked. Waldo Library may
then sleep in peace disturbed only, on
occasion, by a diligent member of the
Physical Plant staff.

Security Check Required
Our current society and law
demand that the resources of a
public institution not be stolen
or damaged. Already noted is the
major responsibility of the
Circulation/Reserves department to
notify users of overdue and lost
books. Probably even more demand-
ing is monitoring the surveillance
system. Everyone who enters or
leaves Waldo Library, as well as the
branch collections, must pass
through a set of electronic detection
gates or checkpoint. All resources
found in the Libraries' collections
are electronically tagged to set off an
alarm if the item has not been
checked out at the Circulation Desk.
When the alarm is set off, the patron
exiting (or entering) is called back to
the Circulation Desk and his or her
backpack or briefcase checked—and the
material then circulated properly. On
occasion, as with airport detectors,
strange items can set off the alarms. The
staff has found videotapes, spoons, and
other innocent objects that have set off the
piercing "beep beep," and, once in a
while, an embarrassed patron who is
called back to turn in returning books that were never
properly checked out!

Stealing or mutilating books is a seri-
ous offense. Signs indicating this fact are
posted widely throughout the Libraries.
Damaged or mutilated library material is
considered to be evidence of intent to
steal. Each such situation requires that the
incident be reported to the Department of
Public Safety, and the Libraries may fol-
low up with legal action.

Reserve Resources
A common function of most academic
libraries is that of providing a "closed"
reserve that has special protection for
valuable items—valuable for quite dif-
ferent reasons. There are three such
"reserve" collections in Waldo Library;
each is located behind the Circulation/
Reserves desk, and is serviced only by the
Circulation/Reserves staff.

The largest and most demanding com-
ponent of the reserve collections is found
in Course Reserves. This set of materials
consists of thousands of items, either
books or photocopied material in file
folders, that are placed on reserve by
instructors for the use of their students.
The instructors consider these materials
to be supplementary to the class textbook
or in need of special monitoring. Since
both courses and instructors vary each
semester, there is constant change in the
composition and record of the course
reserves collection. If the course is offered
again, the bibliographies must be
reviewed by the instructors to determine
whether titles are still needed, new titles
should be added, or if selected material
should be returned to the堆s or to the
instructor. If the course is not to be taught
in the next session, then all titles need to
be returned to the instructor or the stacks.

The second part of the reserve collections
is the Best Seller collection. About 100
titles, consisting of books from the New
York Times Best Seller List, plus the latest
works by popular authors, are kept on
reserve. The books have a two week loan
period and are transferred to the general
stacks after six months.

The third set of titles on reserve is
titles designated as necessary for perma-
nent reserve. Two characteristics,
enhanced security and a need for a lim-
ited loan period, determine what is
placed in this grouping. Among the items
found there are art books, books on
controversial subjects, technology
and computer science (especially
software), and study guides for
admissions tests, e.g., the GRE. In
recent years, books published with
accompanying disks or CD-ROMs
have also been shelved in this
group of resources. These titles gen-
erally circulate for seven days only.

The Circulation/Reserves depart-
ment in Waldo Library is surely the
"Keeper of the Gate," the "Keeper of
the Collection," and "Keeper of the
Reserves." From literally opening
and closing of the doors of the build-
ing through maintenance of security
to monitoring the four million items
found in the University Libraries,
the staff and students of this depart-
ment are committed to making the
University Libraries' collections
accessible and accountable to all of
its users.