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Identifying Subject-specific Conferences as Professional Development Opportunities for the Academic Librarian

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Abstract

A major challenge facing academic libraries is the need for reference librarians to become knowledge experts in their assigned subject areas. The subject-specialist approach increases the effectiveness of collection development, classroom instruction, and faculty liaison interactions. Simultaneously, this approach creates the need for continuous learning opportunities. Conferences organized around academic disciplines provide a direct connection to subject-specific information as well as opportunities for meeting people who share common interests. With the increase in interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary approaches to teaching and research, the authors argue that attending subject-specific conferences is the best way to keep up with information needs in various fields. This article reviews the benefits of attending academic conferences and discusses five strategies for selecting an appropriate subject conference in any discipline. First-person accounts of conference experiences illustrate these benefits.

Librarians attend library conferences for professional development and continuing education, to learn about new trends, new technologies, and to build a professional network. The American Library Association (**ALA**), Special Libraries Association (**SLA**) and the Association of College and Research Libraries (**ACRL**) conferences provide essential tools for growth in the librarianship profession.

Alternatively, subject conference programs are developed within a particular profession or academic discipline to promote discussion within the constituent group. These conferences offer opportunities for interaction with experts in the field, training and professional growth and for peer contact that leads to collegial interaction and research. They also offer venues for publication and research presentation. For librarians with liaison duties to academic departments, conference participation also enhances the ability to discuss, with authority and credibility, developments within the discipline. For librarians with collection development responsibilities, the conference program presents an excellent tool for identifying research trends, new information resources, and notable authors within the field.

Literature Review

A literature review on the topic of subject librarians at subject-specific conferences identified few articles. Conference articles have a tendency to be published in library-related journals such as *American Libraries*, *College & Research Libraries*, *College & Undergraduate Libraries*, *Library Journal*, and *The Journal of Academic Librarianship*. Of course, conference reports, proceedings, abstracts and meetings minutes are available in print and more frequently on conference web sites.

Most literature focuses on the general theme of a conference with emphasis on the advantages and disadvantages of attendance. The importance of attending conferences is

discussed in Rija Natarajan's 2008 article "On Attending Conferences,"[1] Rosina Alaimo's 2008 article "Top Six Reasons to Attend a Conference,"[2] Stephen Abram's 2008 article "Getting the Most Out of Your Conference Experience,"[3] Janice M. Morse's 2008 editorial "The Side Effects of Conferences,"[4] and Gregory A. Pesko's 2006 article on the "High and Lows of Science Conferences."[5] In general, these articles conclude that conference attendance is used for professional development such as knowledge exchange, peer-to-peer communication, and technology updates. Conferences also provide opportunities to identify trends in collection development, attend workshops, connect with vendors and network. A 2007 article by Robert D. Vega & Ruth S. Connell, "Librarians' Attitudes Toward Conferences: A Study" concluded through a survey of 794 people that the major reason librarians attend conferences is "professional rejuvenation and networking" and that financial support was an integral factor in determining whether or not to go to a conference.[6]

With the advent of the Internet, virtual conferences are also being explored. Examples of discussions relevant to this trend include Steven Bell & John D. Shank's 2006 article, "Conferencing @ Your Computer: The Ins and Outs of Virtual Conferences,"[7] Meredith G. Farkas' 2006 report, "A Glimpse at the Future of Online Conferences,"[8] and Ahmet E. Çakir's 2002 article, "Virtual Communities - A Virtual Session on Virtual Conferences."[9]

Several articles analyze and evaluate specific conferences. Some examples this are Helge Clausen & Irene Wormell's 2001 article, "A Bibliometric Analysis of IOLIM Conferences 1977-1999,"[10] Diane K. Kovacs' 1995 study, "Scholarly E-Conferences on the Academic Networks: How Library and Information Science Professionals Use Them,"[11]and B. Martens & T. Saretzki's 1993 study, "Conferences and Courses on Biotechnology: Describing Scientific Communication by Exploratory Methods."[12] Some literature discusses the value of specific

conferences or the value of specific aspects of conferences, such as the 2008 articles "Exhibits are Valuable, After All," by Anne M. Turner[13] and "Are International Medical Conferences an Outdated Luxury the Planet Can't Afford," by Malcolm Green & James O. Drife.[14] However, in the article "Attending Conferences Outside of Librarianship" Cynthia Tysick (2002) discusses the benefits of subject conference attendance for librarians, their libraries, the profession, and library users.[15]

Benefits to librarians include the chance to interact with major authors from a specific discipline and opportunities to build skills that subject area. Tysick states, "Collaboration opportunities, come primarily through networking and secondarily through attending specific events. Conferences are a fertile ground for socializing, which in turn leads to building friendships based on common interests. One thing leads to another and you find yourself discussing a collaboration project with a scholar or fellow librarian."[16] The benefit of motivation is also mentioned. "Immersing yourself in a discipline that you have a connection to, either through academic or work-related experience, is energizing….Without renewed motivation you may become stagnant and even alienated from the discipline you support."[17]

Benefits to libraries revolve around collection development and developing relationships with faculty as a way of marketing the university or college library. According to Tysick, "When they [*referring to faculty and students*] learn that the library has thought it important to send a librarian to "their" conference, they begin to realize that the library is genuinely interested in their needs."[18]

Benefits to the profession revolve around knowledge of new and emerging technologies, particularly related to the subject-specific disciplines, which may in turn be implemented in other library areas. Tysick points out, "For example, the librarian working on XML tagging for

archaeology…while his topic is specific to archaeology, his findings and those of other librarians working on similar projects can impact the direction of cataloging and indexing."[19] Similarly, knowledge of new additions to subject-specific resources, such as longitude-latitude coordinates in a business database, can also be useful with geography disciplines.

Library users are often dependent on subject librarians to help them with their classes and research. Benefits to the users come from improved collection development, instruction and awareness of current issues. It is through collaboration with peers in subject-related disciplines that we learn about different resources and new ideas in librarianship. Tysick points out, "We can enrich our profession with new "best practices" by sharing what we have learned and how we have improved our own discipline-specific instruction."[20]

In the article "The Dilemma for Academic Librarians with Collection Development Responsibilities: A Comparison of the Value of Attending Library Conferences versus Academic Conferences," Lucy E. Lyons (2007) compared the attendance of publishers at a subject-specific conference (i.e., American Political Science Association (**APSA**)) to that of a librarianship conference (i.e., **ALA**).[21] Her research found that "…university and society publishers of political science materials were found to be six times more likely to attend the APSA than the ALA."[22] The reasoning for this was in part due to "…Presses that appear at subject-specific academic conferences, on the other hand, are more specialist-they produce for the academic market and are often known for strengths in particular subject fields."[23] She further stated "…publishers attending the ALA are generalist--that is, the resources they produce relate to a wide range of audiences and subject."[24] Lyons observes that exclusive attendance in either conference type does have its limitations. According to Lyons, "…exclusive attendance [*at subject-specific conferences*]…diminishes opportunities for the peer interaction - the fellowship,

networking, and skills development received in the company of other librarians…On the other hand, selectors who only attend library conferences risk being exposed to a very small proportion of the literature and publishers relevant to academic subjects, miss the benefits of interacting with scholars in the discipline, and miss an opportunity to become educated on the latest intellectual, methodological, and cultural developments in the subject fields."[25]

A Need for Interdisciplinary and Multidisciplinary Training

As areas of research become more diverse, interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary models are being used to integrate knowledge among different subject areas.[26-30] In their 2006 discussion of this trend, Choi and Pak offer the following definitions: the interdisciplinary approach "analyzes, synthesizes, and harmonizes links between disciplines into a coordinated and coherent whole." In contrast, a multidisciplinary approach "draws on knowledge from different disciplines, but stays within the boundaries of those fields."[28]

The Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences often overlap in subject areas and have well-recognized multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary programs (e.g., Art History, African-American Studies, Ancient & Medieval Studies, Women's Studies). However, new academic programs are appearing on campuses everywhere. Arts programs now might include courses in Ethnomusicology, Music Therapy, Digital Arts, Media Arts or Media Ecology. The physical and applied sciences seem to provide especially fertile ground for interdisciplinary programs. For example, Geography or Geology departments might offer a diverse selection of programs including Geobiology, Geochemistry, Geophysics, Geo-archeology, Geological Oceanography, Cultural Geography, Geographic Information Systems or Environmental Management. The areas of law and engineering seem like a natural combination. Likewise, there is an increase in programs with a business-related component in conjunction with almost any other academic

discipline. Interestingly, programs that combine business with agriculture, biology, chemistry, and medicine have grown with the increased importance of the alternative fuel, biotechnology, pharmaceutical, and healthcare industries. Some schools even combine business training with fine arts to offer programs in Art or Music Entrepreneurship. As interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary programs become "areas of focus" or "centers of distinction" on university campuses, subject specialist librarians must develop the skills to support them. Subject conferences can help the librarian to understand the breadth and scope of a topic and identify trends in current research. The only real challenge is finding the right conference to attend.

Insert Appendix 1
Personal Experience: 231st National Meeting of the American Chemical Society

Insert Appendix 2
Personal Experience: US Association for Small Business and Entrepreneurship

Strategies for Identifying Subject-specific Conferences

Subject-specific conferences may not be familiar venues to research librarians and consequently may not be identified as opportunities for professional development. Marydee Ojala's 1999 article, "We've Got to Stop Meeting Like This: Conferences Online" discusses a variety of resources for identifying conferences and trade shows.[31] Her article recommends databases (e.g., Dialog, Datastar, Lexis-Nexis), association web sites, and trade show directories such as the Trade Show News Network (www.tsnn.com). Although this information is quite useful, new updates and options have emerged over the last ten years.

Commercial Databases. One of the most efficient ways to find conferences is to use a database designed specifically for this purpose. For a reasonable subscription Cambridge

Scientific Abstracts offers two excellent products that would make a very good addition to any library collection. *PapersInvited* contains an exhaustive listing of "Calls for Papers" in all disciplines. It is a place where conference organizers, publishers and editors, and other professional bodies come together to place their conference information. *Conference Papers Index* contains citations to papers and poster sessions presented at conferences worldwide with emphasis on the sciences.

Other commercial databases include *PapersFirst*, produced by Online Computer Library Center, Inc. This database provides access to individual papers presented at conferences worldwide. It covers every congress, symposium, exposition, workshop, and meeting that is added to the British library document supply centre's vast proceedings collection. *Web of Science* from Thomson Reuters has an integrated Conference Proceedings Citation Index for all disciplines. It also provides subject-specific information regarding conferences, symposia, colloquia, workshops, and conventions worldwide.[32] The *Institute of Electrical and Electronic, Inc.* (IEEE) Conference Database allows searching IEEE conferences in the USA and Canada.

With a little time and effort, any subject database becomes a good resource for identifying subject-specific conferences. Just search for publishers in journal directories who are Associations, Societies or Institutes. Virtually all publishers who are Associations, Societies or Institutes host conferences or meetings. Thomson Reuters allows free online access to the ISI Journal Master List (http://scientific.thomsonreuters.com/mjl/), which provides links to publisher's web pages. By browsing the Science Citation Expanded database in the ISI Master Journal List, the authors identified publishers in 172 subject categories. **Table 1** lists a selection of subjects in the Sciences, each with a selection of conferences hosted by publishers in that field.

Internet Resources. The World Wide Web offers a wide variety of resources related to subject-specific conferences. Using search engines such as Google or Yahoo! to search for subject-specific conferences can be a viable option (e.g., Computer Science AND Conferences AND Atlanta). Google Scholar (http://scholar.google.com/) retrieves information from educational and scholarly sites. Using the "Advanced Scholar Search" mode in Google Scholar allows the user to select a subject area and perform keyword searches (e.g., conference, meeting, symposium). The information can be refined by using subject headings (e.g., a search for "Conference" [under "with all the words"] and "History" [under "with at least one of the words"] retrieved 45 hits).

All Conferences.com (http://www.allconferences.com/) is a directory of conferences, conventions, trade shows, exhibits, workshops, events and business meetings arranged under headings for Arts & Humanities, Business, Computer & Internet, Health, Society, Reference, Science & Technology, Education, Social Science, Recreation, News, and Government. The headings are further hyperlinked to sub-headings, where conferences for a subject-specific area can be found. Users can perform advanced searching for a conference under title, city, country, date, category, keyword, and venue.

The American Council of Learned Societies (http://www.acls.org/) focuses on humanistic studies in all fields of learning in the Humanities and Social Sciences. In addition to their annual meetings, the web site has links to societies and conferences under the "Learned Societies" menu.

Conference-Service.com (http://www.conference-service.com/) is a directory of upcoming scientific and technical meetings that allows the user to browse by subject category

(i.e., Mathematics, Physics, Chemistry, Engineering, Earth Sciences, Life Sciences, and Informatics) and country.

Lund University publishes a Directory of Open Access Journals (http://www.doaj.org/) and allows users to search publishers by subject heading using an "Expand Subject Tree" option. Alternatively, users can key Association, Society or Institute in the search field and select a publisher link to view conference information in a subject area.

The Directory of Published Proceedings (http://www.interdok.com/) contains a "Meeting Index" which provides an access point for locating many conferences under the subject headings Science/Technology, Medical/Life, Pollution/Ecology, Social Sciences/Humanities. Conference data is sorted by date, city, and includes a link to the event for more information.

The European Science Foundation (http://www.esf.org/) publishes lists of current conferences in eight major research areas: the Humanities, Life, Earth & Environmental Sciences, Medical Sciences, Physical & Engineering Sciences, Social Sciences, Marine, Polar, and Space. Conference archives are found under "Past Events."

Intute (http://www.intute.ac.uk/sciences/) is an educational database covering Arts and Humanities, Health and Life Sciences, Science, Engineering and Technology, and Social Sciences. Browsing under subject selection (i.e., African to Women's Studies) and selecting "Conference & Events" provides a current list of subject-related conferences.

The Department of Energy, Office of Scientific and Technical Information (OSTI) (http://www.osti.gov/scienceconferences/) publishes a list of Scientific Conference Proceedings that can be used to locate science-specific conferences (e.g., particle physics, nuclear physics, chemistry, petroleum, aeronautics and astronautics, meteorology, engineering, computer science, electric power, fossil fuels).

Conference Alerts (http://www.conferencealerts.com/) provides a hyperlinked list of conferences by topic and country as well as a service for customized conference alerts. Conference topic headings include Social Sciences and Humanities, Interdisciplinary, Regional Studies, Mathematics and Statistics, Physical and Life Sciences, Engineering and Technology, Education, Law, Health and Medicine. The Advanced Search option allows for date, city, country and keyword searching. Browsing through Arts & Humanities subjects in Conference Alerts led to the identification of a number of related subject-specific conferences. See **Table 2**.

Listservs, Blogs & Wikis. Listservs are electronic mailing lists; in contrast, blogs and wikis are websites, usually focused on particular subjects and updated regularly by one or more people. A recent article by Skye Hardesty and Tammy Sugarman (2007), "Academic Librarians, Professional Literature, and New Technologies: A Survey" discovered that "The majority of respondents, 95 percent, chose listservs as their primary method of keeping up with professional literature."[33] These tools are used to keep informed about specific topics and expert opinion or to seek information, advice, help from colleagues. Most electronic mailing lists are free and finding one for a specific topic is as easy as reading a shopping list.

CataList (http://www.lsoft.com/catalist.html) is a catalog over 50,000 public listserv mailing lists. The site allows users to search lists by country, list name, host name, list title, and lists with web archive interface.

H-Net Humanities & Social Sciences Online (http://www.h-net.org/) is maintained by a consortium of scholars and educators. It contains a selection of e-mail lists that serve as forums for discussion in subject-specific areas related in the Humanities and Social Sciences. There's a link to upcoming conferences under the "Announcements" menu tab.

The Internet Lotus Exchanger or TILE.NET (http://www.tile.net/) is a reference guide to email newsletters and discussion lists. The site allows users to search for electronic mailing lists by name, description, and domain indexes.

Literary Listservs (http://www.usd.edu/engl/literarylistservs.html) is a directory of literary electronic mailing lists maintained by the Dakota Writing Project at the University of South Dakota. Forums on the list range from ANSAXNET (for scholars of the culture and history of England) to WWP-L (Brown University Women Writers Project).

Once you join a mailing list, just keep up with the postings. They are frequently used to promote upcoming conferences. Alternatively, a search of the listserv archives will identify conferences that have been of interest to the group. For example, the Joint Information Systems Committee Mailing List Service or JISCmail (http://www.jiscmail.ac.uk/) is a national academic mailing list operated by the UK Science and Technology Facilities Council. This listserv list can be searched by subject discipline and by keyword--such as "Conferences." **Table 3** lists a selection of subjects from the Social Sciences, each with examples of their corresponding subject-specific conferences.

Academic Faculty Profiles. As previously discussed, attending a subject-specific conference provides a great opportunity to build relationships with faculty in a particular field. Thanks to the Internet, faculty *curriculum vitae* can generally be found on university or department web sites, in university digital repositories or even on personal web pages. It becomes a straight forward exercise to develop a list of potential conferences by identifying their society memberships and preferred journals for publication. These societies and journals are often affiliated with conferences. **Table 4** is a selected list of conferences attended by faculty from the J. Mack Robinson School of Business at Georgia State University.

Print Resources. As always, it is worth noting that not all quality information is available online. Frequently, if a journal or newspaper is available electronically, key information such as letters, advertisements, and of course, conference announcements, is omitted. In addition, many university presses, self-publishing societies and other smaller publishers, particularly in the Humanities and Social Sciences, only offer print journals. In fact, it has been estimated that 40% of all peer-reviewed journals are still only available in print format.[34] The *British Library's Index of Conference Proceedings*, *Index to Social Sciences & Humanities Proceedings*, and the *Encyclopedia of Associations* remain excellent resources for conference information.

Conclusion

As the demand for knowledgeable subject specialist librarians increases, the importance of professional development for librarians increases. Library association conferences provide excellent opportunities for professional networking, but subject-specific conferences provide specific continuous learning opportunities, especially in emerging multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary areas of research.

Notes:

1. Raja Natarajan, "On Attending Conferences." *Computer* 41, no. 2, (February 2008): 107-08.

2. Rosina Alaimo, "Top Six Reasons to Attend a Conference." *Knowledge Quest* 33, no. 1 (September/October 2004): 34-35.

3. Stephen Abram, "Getting the Most out of Your Conference Experience." *Information Outlook* 12, no. 6 (June 2008): 68-71.

4. Janice M. Morse, "The Side Effects of Conferences." *Qualitative Health Research* 18, no. 9 (September 2008): 1159-60.

5. Gregory A. Petsko, "The Highs and Lows of Scientific Conferences." *Nature Reviews Molecular Cell Biology* 7, no. 3 (March 2006): 231-34.

6. Robert D. Vega and Ruth S. Connell, "Librarians' Attitudes toward Conferences: A Study." *College & Research Libraries* 68, no. 6 (November 2007): 503-15.

7. Steven Bell and John D. Shank, “Conferencing @ Your Computer: The Ins and Outs of Virtual Conferences,” *Library Journal* 131, no. 4 (March 2006): 50-52.

8. Meredith G. Farkas, "A Glimpse at the Future of Online Conferences." *American Libraries* 37, no. 6 (June/July 2006): 28-28.

9. Ahmet E. Çakir, "Virtual Communities - A Virtual Session on Virtual Conferences" *Behaviour & Information Technology*, 21, no. 5 (September/October 2002): 365-71.

10. Helge Clausen and Irene Wormell, "A Bibliometric Analysis of IOLIM Conferences 1977-1999." *Journal of Information Science* 27, no. 3 (2001): 157-69.

11. Diane K. Kovacs, "Scholarly E-Conferences on the Academic Networks: How Library and Information Science Professionals Use Them." *Journal of the American Society for Information Science* 46, no. 4 (May 1995): 244-53.

12. B. Martens and T. Saretzki, "Conferences and Course on Biotechnology: Describing Scientific Communication by Exploratory Methods." *Scientometrics* 27, no. 3 (July/August 1993): 237-60.

13. Anne M. Turner, "Exhibits Are Valuable, after All." *Library Journal* 129, no. 9 (May 2004): 60-61.

14. Malcolm Green and James O. Drife, "Are International Medical Conferences an Outdated Luxury the Planet Can't Afford?" *British Medical Journal* 336, no. 7659 (June 2008): 1466-67.

15. Cynthia Tysick, "Attending Conferences Outside of Librarianship."*College & Undergraduate Libraries* 9, no. 2 (2002): 75-81.

16. Ibid., 77.

17. Ibid., 78.

18. Ibid., 78.

19. Ibid., 79.

20. Ibid., 80.

21. Lucy E. Lyons, "The Dilemma for Academic Librarians with Collection Development Responsibilities: A Comparison of the Value of Attending Library Conferences Versus Academic Conferences." *Journal of Academic Librarianship* 33, no. 2 (March 2007): 180-89.

22. Ibid., 183.

23. Ibid., 182.

24. Ibid., 182.

25. Ibid., 186.

26. Bernard C. K. Choi and Anita W. P. Pak, "Multidisciplinarity, Interdisciplinarity, and Transdisciplinarity in Health Research, Services, Education and Policy: 3. Discipline, Inter-Discipline Distance, and Selection of Discipline." *Clinical and Investigative Medicine* 31, no. 1 (February 2008): E41-E48.

27. Bernard C. K. Choi and Anita W. P. Pak, "Multidisciplinarity, Interdisciplinarity, and Transdisciplinarity in Health Research, Services, Education and Policy: 2. Promotors, Barriers, and Strategies of Enhancement." *Clinical and Investigative Medicine* 30, no. 6 (December 2007): E224-E32.

28. Bernard C. K. Choi and Anita W. P. Pak, "Multidisciplinarity, Interdisciplinarity and Transdisciplinarity in Health Research, Services, Education and Policy: 1. Definitions, Objectives, and Evidence of Effectiveness." *Clinical and Investigative Medicine* 29, no. 6 (December 2006): 351-64.

29. Jessica K. Graybill et al., "A Rough Guide to Interdisciplinarity: Graduate Student Perspectives." *Bioscience* 56, no. 9 (September 2006): 757-63.

30. Morgan Meyer, "Increasing Representativity." *Interdisciplinary Science Reviews* 32, no. 3 (September 2007): 203-12.

31. Marydee Ojala, "We've Got to Stop Meeting Like This: Conferences Online." *Online* 23, no. 1 (January/February 1999): 80-82.

32. Web of Science Conference Proceedings Citation Index also holds lists of conferences from 1998 to present. Available online at http://www.thomsonreuters.com/products_services/scientific/Conf_Proceedings_Citation_Index

33. Skye Hardesty and Tammy Sugarman, "Academic Librarians, Professional Literature, and New Technologies: A Survey." *Journal of Academic Librarianship* 33, no. 2 (March 2007): 196-205.

34. Raym Crow, "Publishing Cooperatives: An Alternative for Society Publishers: A SPARC Discussion Paper" (February 2006). Washington, DC: The Scholarly Publishing & Academic Resources Coalition. Available online at http://www.arl.org/sparc/bm~doc/Cooperatives_v1.pdf

Table 1: Conferences in the Sciences. List derived from the ISI Master Journal List.
Subject category brackets shows number of journals in that category.

Subject-Category	Conference
Astronomy & Astrophysics (53)	American Geophysical Union
Biology (90)	American Institute of Biological Sciences Federation of American Societies for Experimental Biology Marine Biological Laboratory National Association of Biology Teachers
Cell Biology (160)	American Association for Cancer Research American Physiological Society American Society for Cell Biology American Society for Microbiology American Thoracic Society
Chemistry, Analytical (72)	American Chemical Society Canadian Society for Analytical Sciences & Spectroscopy Royal Society of Chemistry
Chemistry, Applied (68)	American Association of Cereal Chemists American Association of Textile Chemists & Colorists Society of Chemical Industry
Chemistry, Organic (58)	American Chemical Society Royal Society of Chemistry
Chemistry, Physical (124)	American Chemical Society American Institute of Physics Royal Society of Chemistry
Computer Science, Artificial Intelligence (100)	American Association for Artificial Intelligence *(now Association for the Advancement of Artificial Intelligence)* IEEE-Computer Society IEEE-Institute of Electrical & Electronics Engineers IET-Institution of Engineering & Technology
Computer Science, Information Systems (104)	American Library Association Association for Computing Machinery IEEE-Computer Society IEEE-Institute of Electrical & Electronics Engineers Institute of Electronics, Information & Communication Engineers Optical Society of America
Engineering, Aerospace (26)	American Astronautical Society American Helicopter Society American Institute of Aeronautics & Astronautics American Society of Civil Engineers Royal Aeronautical Society
Engineering, Chemical (123)	American Association of Textile Chemists & Colorists American Chemical Society American Institute of Chemical Engineers Institution of Chemical Engineers Society of Plastics Engineers

Engineering, Civil (108)	American Concrete Institute American Society of Civil Engineers American Society of Naval Engineers American Water Works Association Earthquake Engineering Research Institute Institute of Electrical & Electronics Engineers International Society of Offshore & Polar Engineers Minerals, Metals & Materials Society
Engineering, Electrical & Electronic (233)	American Society of Mechanical Engineers Canada IEEE Computer Society IEEE-Institute of Electrical & Electronics Engineers IET-Institution of Engineering &Technology Society for Imaging Science & Technology
Engineering, Industrial (37)	American Society for Quality Industrial Research Institute Institute of Industrial Engineers Society of Manufacturing Engineers
Environmental Sciences (178)	American Chemical Society American Society of Agronomy Ecological Society of America International Association for Great Lakes Research National Environmental Health Association Society of Environmental Toxicology & Chemistry Soil Science Society of America
Geology (49)	Geological Society of America Geological Society of London Grassland Society of Southern Africa Society for Sedimentary Geology
Geochemistry & Geophysics (77)	American Geophysical Union American Society for Photogrammetry & Remote Sensing Environmental & Engineering Geophysical Society Seismological Society of America Society of Economic Geologists Society of Exploration Geophysicists Society of Petroleum Engineers
Health Care Sciences & Services (66)	Drug Information Association Royal Society of Medicine
Material Science, Ceramics (26)	American Ceramic Society Indian Ceramic Society
Material Science, Multidisciplinary (200)	American Chemical Society American Concrete Institute American Society of Civil Engineers American Society of Mechanical Engineers Electrochemical Society IEEE-Institute of Electrical & Electronics Engineers IET-Institution of Engineering &Technology Materials Research Society National Association of Corrosion Engineers Royal Society of Chemistry

	Society for Information Display Society of Plastics Engineers Society Photoptical Instrumentation Engineers
Material Science, Textiles (18)	American Association of Textile Chemists & Colorists American Leather Chemists Association Society of Leather Technologists & Chemists Society of Wood Science & Technology
Mathematics (239)	American Institute of Mathematical Sciences American Mathematical Society Mathematical Association of America
Medicine, General & Internal (133)	Aerospace Medical Association American College of Physicians American Medical Association Canadian Medical Association Royal Society of Medicine
Meteorology & Atmospheric Science (59)	American Meteorological Society Association of Agrometeorologists Royal Meteorological Society
Physics, Applied (99)	American Institute of Physics Institute of Electrical & Electronics Engineers Materials Research Society Society for Information Display
Plant Sciences (166)	Agricultural Institute of Canada American Phytopathological Society American Society of Plant Biologist American Society of Plant Taxonomists Botanical Society of America Cactus & Succulent Society of America Canadian Phytopathological Society International Association for Plant Taxonomy Weed Science Society of America
Psychology (68)	American Psychological Association British Psychological Society Gerontological Society of America Psychonomic Society
Zoology (131)	American Association for Laboratory Animal Science American Malacological Society

Table 2: Selected conferences in the Arts & Humanities. List derived from Conference Alerts.

Subject Category	Conference
Art	Annual Porter Colloquium - Trajectories: Discourse and Critique in African American Art & Art of the African Diaspora Crossings: Art, Medicine, Visual Culture In-sight: Visualising Theory, Theorising the Visual
Art History	Interdisciplinary Young Researchers' Conference On Seventeenth & Eighteenth Century Studies The American Artist as Collector, from the Enlightenment to the Post-War Era Visual Conflicts: Art History & the Formation of Political Memory
African Studies	Black Knowledge - Black Struggles - Civil Rights: Transnational Perspectives Canadian Association of African Studies International Conference on African Culture and Development
English	Annual Digital Stream Emerging Technologies in Teaching Languages & Cultures Conference Rocky Mountain Modern Language Association Shakespeare: Page, Stage, Engage
Film Studies	Emergent Encounters in Film Theory HMF International Film/Media Festival & Conference International Conference on Communication, Film & Media Sciences
History	History of European Integration Research Society Role & Rule Conference World History & Historical Materialism
Islamic Studies	Change and Stability: State, Religion and Politics in the Modern Middle East & North Africa Crisis States: The Uncertain Future of Israel/Palestine International Conference on Research in Islamic Laws
Language/ Linguistics	Interdisciplinary Perspectives on Ambiguity: Linguistics, Literary Studies & Rhetoric Linguistic Prescriptivism & Patriotism: From Nationalism to Globalization UT Arlington Student Conference in Linguistics & TESOL
Literature	AEC Conference on Southern Literature Cosmopolitanism and the Postnational: Literature & the New Europe Re-thinking the Idea of Africa in the Twentieth Century
Music	Crossing Boundaries - Folk music in minority languages & cultures in Europe Instruction, Amusement & Spectacle: Popular Shows & Exhibitions 1800-1914 Principles of Music Composing: Orchestra as a Phenomenon
Philosophy	Brackenridge Philosophy Symposium Meeting of the Southern Society for Philosophy & Psychology Society for Philosophy in the Contemporary World
Religious Studies	Christian Love: Theory and Practice International Conference on Religion, Conflict & Peace: Walking The Talk Through Fear of the Unknown To Understanding & Harmony Religion & Human Rights in China
Theatre	Boom or Bust: Economies of Production & Exchange in Theatre, Performance & Culture International Conference on Consciousness, Theatre, Literature and the Arts Theatre Pedagogy: Teaching the Art Form

Table 3: Selected conferences in the Social Sciences. List derived from JISCmail.

Subject Category	Conference
Anthropology	Canadian Anthropology Society International Congress of Anthropological & Ethological Sciences Society for Applied Anthropology
Business	Annual International Conference: Promoting Business Ethics British Accounting Association Accounting Education Special Interest Group Annual Conference UUK Conference: Engaging with Business in an Economic Downturn
Communication Studies	European Communication Research & Education Association International Language, Communication, Culture Conference Media, Communications & Cultural Studies Association
Demographic Studies	Census Microdata: Findings & Futures - International Census Conference Market Research Society Census & Geodemographic Group Statistics User Forum Annual Conference
Economics	Association for Heterodox Economics ECOFI Conference in Economics & Finance Economics Teacher Conference
Education	International Art(s) in Early Childhood Conference NCETM: International Research Conference: Transforming Mathematics Teaching & Learning Through CPD National Foundation for Educational Research
Gender Studies	American Comparative Literature Association Interdisciplinary Conference on Cosmetic Cultures Sexy Spaces: Leisure & Geography Intersectionalities
Geography	European Society for Rural Sociology Regional Science Association International: British & Irish Transport Research Institute
Political Science	Annual Conference of Millennium Journal of International Studies Conference on the History of Political Economy Political Studies Association
Psychology	Annual Addiction Psychology Conference British Psychological Society Creativity & Cognition Conference
Sociology	Annual Conference of the British Sociological Association European Sociological Association International Sociological Association Conference

Table 4: Selected conferences in Business disciplines. List derived from faculty CV.

Subject Category	Conference
Accounting	American Accounting Association – Teaching & Curriculum Section Academy of Accounting Historians Conference on Financial Economics and Accounting Institute of Internal Auditors Institute of Management Accountants
Computer & Information Science	American Association for Artificial Intelligences Association for Information Systems International Conference on Information Systems
Finance	American Finance Association American Law and Economics Association Derivatives Securities and Risk Management Conference European Finance Association Financial Management Association Global Association of Risk Professionals International Association of Financial Engineers
International Business	Academy of International Business International Conference on Information Technology, Communications & Development International Institute of Forecasters
Managerial Science	Academy of Management ACM Conference on Organizational Computing Systems American Society for Quality Association for Operations Management Association for University Business & Economic Research International Symposium on Forecasting Production & Operations Management Society
Marketing	Academy of Marketing Science Direct Marketing Association Product Development & Management Association Society of Franchising Warehousing Education & Research Council

Appendix 1
Personal Experience: 231st National Meeting of the American Chemical Society

While working on post-doctoral research in polymer chemistry in 1998, I taught myself to use some new technology: the *SciFinder Scholar* database. I was so impressed with this new research tool that I shared it with my colleagues and immediately became the laboratory librarian. Discovering this talent for working with scientific information led me to earn a degree in library science. Since then, I have worked as a Science Librarian at the University of Toronto and Georgia State University.

I am a member of SLA and I occasionally attend that organization's annual conference. However, I find that attending a scientific academic conference provides a unique opportunity to meet people who share common interests, attend cutting edge presentations, and keep updated with subject-specific information. I learn a great deal by attending workshops and poster sessions and browsing the vendor exhibition booths. I especially look for new ideas and innovative technologies that I can share with students and faculty or apply in the workplace.

In March 2006, I attended the 231st National Meeting of the American Chemical Society (**ACS**) in Atlanta, GA. Seminar topics ranged from retrieval of chemical information, drug design, organic synthesis, to electronic databases, patents, copyright, and publishing. The ACS has 33 Technical Divisions, each focusing on a specific field of chemistry. In particular, the Division of Chemical Information offered several programs of interest to a science librarian. This division promotes professional competency in scientific information resources, information technology, and information policy.

At a symposium entitled "The Nuts and Bolts of Scholarly Publishing" the distinguished scientist, Prof. George M. Whitesides from Harvard University, gave an engaging talk on writing a scientific paper. Writing tips such as the importance of the first few sentences in an introduction were clearly emphasized, while the addition of personal insight at the end of a paper was highly recommended. Other presenters highlighted their own perspectives toward scholarly publication. I have passed on and applied some of these ideas to the classroom knowing that the first few minutes of teaching are always crucial in capturing students attention and together with small dosages of personal thought and humor keeps the focus alive.

A speaker from a symposium on social software, Teri Vogel, discussed the use of RSS feeds in technology. Her presentation inspired me to try using an RSS feed in my research guides. I converted an RSS feed from an author search alert in the Web of Science into JavaScript. By plugging the script into the research guide, I automatically update a list of the latest publications by faculty in the Chemistry department.

Two training sessions by Molecular Design Limited were very useful to me in learning more about Discovery Gate, the web version of the *MDLCrossfire Beilstein* database. For example, I learned that when drawing a molecule on the structure editor, you can add multiple atoms by using the shift key. This is a very handy tip I have since passed on to students in the classroom.

The Chemical Abstract Service (CAS) hosted a breakfast meeting for science librarians to announce their latest improvements to SciFinder Scholar database. News that actual spectra has been added to the database and that the MAC version of the software had been updated, was something I was able to share with the science faculty at Georgia State University. At the meeting, librarians were also able to voice their concerns and ideas for possible improvements to the database. One suggestion was to create a web version of *SciFinder Scholar* for improved

accessibility. This suggestion was taken seriously by CAS and has since been implemented. In the future, I hope to go to more conferences to learn, listen, and look at the latest resources and new ideas that people have to share.

Appendix 2
Personal Experience:
2007 US Association for Small Business and Entrepreneurship Conference

I worked as a Business Liaison Librarian at Texas A&M University from 2003 through the end of 2007. During that time, the Libraries' administration established collection development as a library priority and set up a professional development program to enhance the skills of librarians who served as "selectors" for the collection. One component of this program was a subject conference initiative. The purpose of this initiative was to increase the selectors' knowledge of their subjects so they could make knowledgeable choices and support the needs of academic faculty. Before this program was implemented, limited funds forced selectors to choose between attending a library-related or subject conference. By recognizing professional development as a necessary input to collection development, and by providing the necessary funds, the Libraries' administration provided selector librarians with the opportunity to attend both types of conferences.

I had become aware that the study and teaching of entrepreneurship was growing in importance on the Texas A&M University campus. The Mays Business School offers more than ten individual courses and a graduate certificate program in entrepreneurship. The College of Agriculture & Life Science offers an undergraduate concentration in rural entrepreneurship. Related courses are also being offered in the architecture and engineering curricula. I wanted to learn more about the academic issues related to entrepreneurship so, in January 2007, I took advantage of the subject conference program to attend the *21st Annual Conference of the United States Association for Small Business and Entrepreneurship* (**USASBE**). The mission of USASBE is "to advance knowledge and foster business development through entrepreneurship education and research."

The conference offered eleven different program tracks including Entrepreneurship Education, Technology & Life Science Entrepreneurship, Entrepreneurship and the Arts and Family Business. Seminars covered a wide range of topics ranging from *Critical Success Factors in University Technology Transfer* to *Contributions of African-American Business to Inner City Economic Development* to *Is the Tendency to Engage in Self-Employment Genetic?* The conference highlights centered on the daily feature speaker. William Taylor, the founder and editor of *Fast Company* magazine and co-author of the best-selling book, *Mavericks at Work*, talked about building an entrepreneurial organization and emphasized the need to have a clear set of fundamental reasons for existing beyond just making money. Another speaker, Dr. Cheryl Dorsey, was quite inspirational as she talked about entrepreneurship as a mechanism for social change. She is president of Echoing Green, a venture capital fund that has invested nearly $25 million in seed grants to over 400 social entrepreneurs and their innovative organizations.

There is no doubt that attendance at USASBE has had an impact on my career and professional activities. Of course, my new awareness of the depth and breadth of entrepreneurship research and instruction influenced subsequent collection development choices at Texas A&M University and now, at Georgia State University. I also gave a presentation entitled *Supporting Technology Commercialization Initiatives: A New Role for the Academic Business Library* at the 2007 Annual SLA Conference. That experience led to serving as a guest editor of the *Journal of Business & Finance Librarianship*. The special issue on "Business Librarianship and Entrepreneurship Outreach" should be published in November 2009. I also

provide instruction on information resources for entrepreneurs through the J. Mack Robinson School of Business, the Russell Center for Entrepreneurship and other Atlanta-based economic development programs.