

ALA Annual Meeting 2010, Washington, DC

I attended the American Library Association's (ALA) Annual Conference in Washington, DC in mid-June of this year. Thanks to the largesse of NLA's C&U Section, I was able to attend for several days. Specifically, I could attend a pre-conference workshop that is essential to a new role I will assume at the Criss Library.

The pre-conference seminar, entitled "Taming the License Tiger" was sponsored by ALA's Association for Library Collections and Technical Services (ALCTS). The session was a comprehensive overview of electronic resource license agreements. A good portion of the seminar was devoted to explaining the language of license agreements. To achieve this aim, there was a very effective hands-on exercise involved deconstructing a license agreement. Attendees formed discussion groups and we came up with amendments for the license so it would include more realistic terms of agreement. As someone fairly new to license agreement interpretation and negotiation, I really enjoyed this portion of the course because I was able to interact with librarians who had several years of experience with this work. The exchange with these more seasoned librarians was invaluable.

In fact, the quality of the program was a direct reflection of the diverse perspectives attendees were able to garner from each of the presenters. Practitioners did an excellent job with explaining the various elements germane to license agreements in a way that was even beneficial to a novice. A vendor gave a presentation offering the corporate perspective regarding these agreements and he also offered several pointers for librarians to ensure they would reach a more favorable agreement.

The workshop was approximately 8 hours and was well-worth attending. I feel very fortunate that this pre-conference session dovetailed quite nicely with some related professional duties that will be imminent within the upcoming months. I was also pleased to make some professional contacts during the group discussion session.

The Annual Conference began the next day. I attended several presentations focusing on current developments and the future of electronic resource management. Electronic resource management seemed to be the major theme for me throughout the conference.

While I was at the Conference, I did have some committee work to attend to as well. As the Co-Convener of ACRL-ULS's Current Topics Discussion Group, I met with our committee and had an excellent discussion about the future of librarianship for two hours. We were able to draft a concrete list of possible topics for discussion at next year's Midwinter Meeting. I also rotate in as a member of ULS's executive board as Member-At-Large and was pleased to note some of the current members of this discussion group are also members of the board.

Lastly, I did manage to have an impromptu, yet thorough informational session on OCLC's Web Scale Management Services with a representative from OCLC. I was impressed with the circulation module and think it shows a lot of promise. I was also able to find out a little about the electronic resource license management module of this product and if it comes into fruition, it is going to prove to be an excellent way to manage licenses.

I am very grateful for the opportunity to receive funding from C&U to attend ALA's Annual Conference this year. What is really rewarding about attending conferences is when the sessions lend themselves for attendees to take back something to the workplace and apply to their professional work. I am thrilled that many of the sessions I attended, and especially the pre-conference, were of that caliber.

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