

SPEC Addresses Today's Challenges

The OMS Systems and Procedures Exchange Center (SPEC) has released three new Kits addressing contemporary challenges facing libraries as well as educational institutions as a whole. These timely reports address digitizing technologies, library reorganization and restructuring, and distance education.

Digitizing Technologies



As a result of the recent developments in information technology, the conversion of multiple-format materials into digital images is becoming increasingly widespread. SPEC Kit 214, *Digitizing Technologies for Preservation*, documents the tremendous variety of digital preservation projects underway and describes them in terms of size, scope, and types of materials being digitized, as well as hardware and software chosen for each project. Detailed information is included on current project status; materials selection; indexing and bibliographic control; and staffing and production. More than half of the reporting libraries began by implementing pilot projects as a means of gaining familiarity with the opportunities and advantages that digital technologies offer. The cumulative experience gained from these projects will inform future endeavors.

The *Kit* was compiled by L. Suzanne Kellerman of Pennsylvania State University and Rebecca Wilson of Susquehanna University.

Library Reorganization and Restructuring

SPEC Kit 215, *Library Reorganization and Restructuring*, compliments SPEC Kit 210, *Strategic Planning in ARL Libraries*. The following quote from one of the responding libraries captures the current environment of a research library: "how to maximize, and encourage flexibility ... while maintaining a structure that will channel energies into filling the libraries' objective of providing services to clients. Achieving this balance was seen as a seismic engineering problem: stability for ongoing functionality with the capacity to absorb stress."

Current services must be maintained while an infrastructure is being built to support the information needs of the 21st century. With a variety of forces currently at work, most notably declining resources and the ability of communications technology to deliver information to the desktop, many libraries are forced to restructure on an ad hoc basis without an opportunity to plan. This *Kit* contains numerous samples of mission and vision statements, organization charts, and updated strategic plans.

The *Kit* was compiled by Joanne Eustis and Donald Kenney of Virginia Tech.

Distance Education

SPEC Kit 216, *Role of Libraries in Distance Education*, examines the policies and procedures surrounding the provision of services to remote students and faculty. While research libraries have a

long history of collaborative activities with the faculty and students, as well as with the telecommunications and computing units, distance learning (interactive video) course programs have provided opportunities for expanded library services. Approximately two-thirds of the responding libraries indicated participation in distance education programs; information technology and continuing education units are most often responsible for program administration. Although libraries are offering increased services to support distance education efforts, most heavily through cooperation with the academic departments and the computing center, most libraries do not receive any additional funding or have a distinct budget for such services.

The *Kit* was compiled by Carolyn Snyder, Susan Logue, and Barbara Preece of Southern Illinois University at Carbondale.

Please consult [ARL's online Publications Catalog](http://spec/index.html) at </spec/index.html> for ordering and additional information.

-Laura Rounds, OMS Program Officer for Information Services

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