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Developing the library of the Institute of World Concerns to meet the information needs of its users

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Developing the Library of
the Institute of World Concerns
to Meet the Information Needs of its Users

by

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A Master's Dissertation, submitted in partial
fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the
Master of Arts degree of the
Loughborough University of Technology

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c K. Boden, 1992

ABSTRACT

This dissertation documents the planning process that was identified as being vital to the successful establishment of a new library facility for the Institute of World Concerns. The primary aim is to establish a service that meets the specific information needs of the parent organization and potential users; advice based on the author's experiences is also offered.

A literature search on the type of library involved provided background information on special and one-person libraries, and informal interviews with directors of the Institute led to an assessment of their requirements and expectations. Three broad areas of concern were identified: the development of a relevant and credible collection; the provision of access to information held in that collection; and the development of additional services for users. These gave direction to the next planning stage, the formulation of a policy statement which sets out the proposed mission and goals. This was sent to the directors for their comments. A discussion on the automation issue and its influence on many of the proposals is followed by an explanation of the goals and the recommendations for implementing them. The author's experiences are highlighted, together with certain underlying themes which proved to be major influences on the final plans.

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CONTENTS

| | | |
|-------|--|----|
| 1. | INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND | 1 |
| 1.1 | The Institute of World Concerns | 1 |
| 1.2 | The author's involvement with the Institute | 3 |
| 1.3 | The library | 4 |
| 2. | THE DISSERTATION: AIMS AND METHODOLOGY | 6 |
| 2.1 | Aims | 6 |
| 2.2 | Methodology | 9 |
| 2.2.1 | Literature search | 9 |
| 2.2.2 | Preliminary information needs assessment | 10 |
| 2.2.3 | Further investigations | 10 |
| 3. | PRELIMINARY INVESTIGATIONS | 12 |
| 3.1 | Special libraries | 12 |
| 3.2 | One-person libraries | 14 |
| 3.3 | Published information on the Institute | 16 |
| 3.4 | The information needs of the Institute | 17 |
| 3.4.1 | The current use of the library | 19 |
| 3.4.2 | The history of the collection and its subject scope | 19 |
| 3.4.3 | Problems associated with the library | 20 |
| 3.4.4 | The further development of the Institute | 21 |
| 3.4.5 | The role of the librarian | 22 |
| 3.4.6 | Priorities for the library and the services it offers | 24 |
| 3.5 | Observations on the results of the interviews | 25 |

| | | |
|-----------|--|-----------|
| 4. | THE FORMULATION OF A POLICY STATEMENT | 30 |
| 4.1 | The need for a policy statement | 30 |
| 4.1.2 | Mission | 30 |
| 4.1.2 | Goals | 31 |
| 4.1.3 | Objectives | 31 |
| 4.2 | Evaluation | 32 |
| 4.3 | A policy statement for the Institute's library | 33 |
| 4.4 | The form of the policy statement | 33 |
| 4.4.1 | The covering letter | 34 |
| 4.4.2 | The mission statement | 34 |
| 4.4.3 | Goals | 35 |
| 4.4.4 | Priorities for action: a checklist | 37 |
| 4.4.5 | Response sheet | 38 |
| 4.5 | Reactions to the policy statement | 38 |
| | | |
| 5. | THE AUTOMATION ISSUE AND ITS EFFECT ON POLICY DECISIONS | 41 |
| 5.1 | Introduction | 41 |
| 5.2 | Automation: an appropriate choice? | 42 |
| 5.3 | Different types of system considered | 43 |
| 5.4 | Final recommendations | 46 |
| 5.5 | Personal Librarian | 48 |
| | | |
| 6. | THE DEVELOPMENT OF A CREDIBLE COLLECTION | 53 |
| 6.1 | Introduction | 53 |
| 6.2 | Building comprehensive background collections | 55 |
| 6.3 | The improvement of the general reference section | 57 |

| | | |
|------|--|--------|
| 6.4 | The creation of an audio/visual section | 57 |
| 6.5 | The newspaper cuttings service | 59 |
| 6.6 | The centralising of the journals collection | 60 |
| 6.7 | Comments | 62 |
| | | |
| 7. | PROVIDING ACCESS TO THE INFORMATION IN THE COLLECTION | 65 |
| 7.1 | Introduction | 65 |
| 7.2 | The creation of a book catalogue | 66 |
| 7.3 | A loans system for the library | 70 |
| 7.4 | Classification | 72 |
| 7.5 | Organising the non-book material | 75 |
| 7.6 | Organising the journals collection | 76 |
| 7.7 | Comments | 78 |
| | | |
| 8. | DEVELOPING SERVICES TO USERS | 80 |
| 8.1 | Introduction | 80 |
| 8.2 | A current awareness service for users | 81 |
| 8.3 | The addition of abstracts to the computer records | 83 |
| 8.4 | Performing searches for users | 85 |
| 8.5 | Alternative sources of information | 87 |
| 8.6 | Comments | 89 |
| | | |
| 9. | CONCLUSION | 91 |
| 9.1 | Introduction | 91 |
| 9.2 | Plans for the library | 91 |

| | | |
|--|---|-----|
| 9.3 | Underlying themes which influenced the planning | 93 |
| 9.3.1 | The one-person library | 93 |
| 9.3.2 | The role of the librarian | 95 |
| 9.3.3 | Budgetary constraints | 96 |
| 9.4 | Things that the author found helpful | 97 |
| 9.5 | The future of the library | 99 |
| BIBLIOGRAPHY | | 101 |
| APPENDIX 1: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS | | 104 |
| APPENDIX 2: SUBJECTS OF INTEREST TO THE INSTITUTE | | 106 |
| APPENDIX 3: THE POLICY STATEMENT THAT WAS SENT TO THE DIRECTORS | | 107 |

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

Whenever an organization takes the decision that an internal library is necessary, it should anticipate a period of planning and preparation before the setting up of that facility. This dissertation documents the planning process involved in the establishment of a library that was required by a small research institute to help it meet its growing information needs. Since the primary intention was to develop a service that met as far as possible the specific information requirements of the organization and its researchers, the following background details are provided so that the discussion in the dissertation itself may be put in context.

1.1 The Institute of World Concerns

The Institute of World Concerns (subsequently referred to as the Institute) was established in 1990 as a vehicle for inter-disciplinary research into pressing world issues, its aim being to formulate policies that reflect ethical standards. The issues which the Institute addresses are defined as those that "threaten to damage or alter humanity, whether physically, psychologically, socially or spiritually." (1) They include the environment, AIDS, racial discrimination, refugees and world debt. A wide cross-section of disciplines and professions, including

peace studies, political science, theology and law, are brought to bear on these issues, to encourage the application of genuine moral convictions to the problems that affect contemporary society in a greater measure than ever before.

At present, those individuals most involved with the Institute on an ongoing basis are members of its Board of Directors. These are men with long-standing connections with a Christian organization called Covenant Ministries, but it is made clear in the Institute's literature that it "does not represent the views of one political party, lobby interest or group" (2) and that "the mission of the Institute does not include religious proselytizing." (3) Rather, it looks to apply a generally accepted public ethical consensus when seeking to influence world issues.

Although the Institute will not be officially launched until 1993, it has already begun to make a name for itself through the undertaking of research commissions, conferences and publications. In March, 1992, for example, it hosted a conference entitled "Middle East in the Melting Pot", attended by 57 delegates. A workshop in June, 1992, designed by a team from the Peace Studies Department of Bradford University, used group and individual exercises to explore the skills necessary for conflict resolution and mediation. Recent papers published by the Institute include "An Ethical Perspective on Third World Debt" by Dr. David

Coles, one of the Directors, and "Romania's Search for Democracy" by Mrs. Smeranda Enache, spokesperson for the Civic Alliance Party of Romania. Funding for this non-profit research organization is sought from individual patrons, private foundations and grant-making bodies. A recent initiative is the offer of yearly subscriptions to anyone interested in the work of the Institute. Subscribers will receive a newsletter and copies of Institute publications, and in this way the findings of the Institute will be available to, and discussed by, a far wider group of people than would otherwise be the case.

1.2 The author's involvement with the Institute

The author has been personally involved with Covenant Ministries for a number of years, and has worked part-time as a newspaper researcher since 1985. Much of that work involved building files on a variety of world issues that are now of interest to the Institute, for men who are now members of the Board of Directors. The organization itself began in the 1970s as a means of providing support for a team working with new and established churches, both in this country and worldwide. Other projects that have been initiated over the years include Covenant College, offering bible and church leadership courses; a publishing company, producing a bi-monthly magazine; Help International, an aid charity; and Dales Television, a television facilities and production company.

In 1990, Covenant Ministries moved from West Yorkshire to a new base in the Midlands, developing an old farmhouse complex near to Coventry. All of the associated projects were involved in the move, and the author's family was among a number who planned to relocate in order to remain with the organization. It was at that time that the Institute was proposed, to be situated on the Covenant Ministries' site, and the author was asked to become involved with the library that would be a necessary part of the Institute. In preparation for the task of developing the library, the author began a Master's degree in Information and Library Studies at Loughborough University, as a part-time student, with the intention of starting full or part-time work in the library in September, 1992.

1.3 The library

The space allocated to the Institute at Covenant Ministries' new headquarters included both an office and two larger rooms, located in the roof space of a converted barn. Following a delayed move to the Midlands, the author found that certain work had been done to the room intended to become the library, although Institute personnel had no time available to spend organizing the existing collection. Wooden shelving had been erected around the walls, and a number of books which had already been used for Institute purposes had been placed on the shelves in an arbitrary order. Some of the many pamphlets and reports had been

filed, however much of what had been recently added was stacked around the room in no particular order, because no one had been available to process the material. Similarly, journals, several of which had runs going back for a number of years, had not been properly filed.

As the Master's course continued it was not possible for the future librarian to achieve much in the library other than to bring some order to the shelves and perform basic filing of the journals and pamphlets. As preparation for this dissertation began, the library therefore looked tidy but there were no bibliographic records for any of the items in the collection, no formal means of searching for specific information and there was no control of material belonging to the Institute.

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CHAPTER 2

THE DISSERTATION: AIMS AND METHODOLOGY

2.1 Aims

The initial aim of this dissertation was to document the process of planning the development of the library of the Institute of World Concerns, from an uncoordinated collection of books and papers into an information resource that would best serve the information needs of the Institute. It was not intended to be a manual of library practices, but rather to concentrate on the particular circumstances of the library and the influences on the decisions that had to be taken. The end result would be a set of plans and a timetable which the author could put into action upon starting work in the Institute in September. It is reasonable to ask at this point whether that planning process was necessary, and if it is possible to justify the time spent on planning. After all, the author has spent two years learning both the theory and practical techniques of librarianship and could reasonably be expected to have at least some of the skills demanded by the establishment of a new library.

Much of the literature concerning the planning of library services is written in the context of planning and implementing change in existing libraries, but is equally valid when applied to a new service. Manning, for example,

speaks of planning as "the most critical single management activity because it prepares for the future." (1) It is this concept of preparation for the future that lies behind the application of strategic planning to library services. Riggs states that the strategic planning process is future-oriented, giving "the goals and objectives of the library and the means by which the library means to achieve them." (2) In 1991, Ferriero and Wilding wrote of an "envisioning process" which creates "an image of a future organization to which the library can aspire." (3) They also make the useful point that "the goal of the planning process is change, not planning." (4) As far as the Institute's library is concerned, "change" implies the development of the existing collection of books, pamphlets, etc., into a working library that meets the information needs of its users. However important the planning process may be, it is ultimately only successful if the vision that is created is realised.

It was essential to identify where to begin the process. Ferriero and Wilding suggest that it is important first to establish the environment in which the library will be operating, by describing the library itself and also by analyzing the parent organization and wider trends that might affect it. (5) In a work that the author found particularly useful, as it is devoted to the subject of setting up an information service (6), Sylvia Webb also emphasises that the first step is to establish what the

organization has in mind for the library, by getting to know the organization itself and the information needs of potential users. Webb focuses attention on an information needs analysis which is intended "to establish the main areas in which information will be sought, and to set up an appropriate collection of resources to satisfy those needs." (7) The motivation of this dissertation is summed up in these words; planning is fundamental if a library is to be effective in serving its users - in this particular case, there is also the additional personal motivation of benefiting one's sponsors, and providing value for the money invested in librarianship training.

Having accepted that planning is justified, indeed vital, as work on the dissertation began it became clear that the experiences of the author in taking decisions that would affect the future of the library could be useful to other librarians. It was obvious almost immediately that two relevant factors, the type of library that was being developed, and the experience of working alone, would affect the decisions that were made, and advice from the author could benefit those in a similar situation. For this reason, a secondary aim of the dissertation is to offer advice that might prove useful to anyone in a similar situation, based on the experience gained during the decision making process.

2.2 Methodology

The discussion on planning made it clear that the preliminary investigations should concentrate on the library itself, and on the information needs of the parent organization, together with any expectations about the library. The chosen methodology reflects these factors.

2.2.1 Literature search

There were two factors concerning the type of library demanded by the Institute that were worthy of investigation. Does the library qualify as a special library, and if so, what characteristics could be expected to influence its development? Secondly, the library would obviously be operating as a one-person unit in the foreseeable future, and any information on such operations would be helpful. For these reasons, a literature search on special libraries and one-person libraries was undertaken. Other peoples' experiences and ideas could then be measured against actual experience. The author consulted the relevant abstracting and indexing services in the field, together with bibliographic information sources.

Published information that related specifically to the Institute was also sought, although at that time very little was found to exist.

2.2.2 Preliminary information needs assessment

The author had identified three directors of the Institute as being most closely involved with its organisation and projects. Bryn Jones, Chairman of the Board of Directors, and Alan Scotland, have to allocate much of their time to Covenant Ministries' business, and it is David Coles who takes on much of the administration of the Institute, helped by an extensive background in computers. It was decided to conduct informal interviews with these people in order to find out about the activities of the Institute, and also about the users and potential users of the library, and what they expected from it.

2.2.3 Further investigations

The information gained from the interviews was taken and used to give direction to the next stage of the planning process, the drawing up of a set of goals and objectives for the library. Additional literature searches, as well as personal investigations, were done as necessary, and feedback to the interviewees was provided in the form of a policy statement for the library. This offered a means of consultation with the Directors on the proposals put forward for the development of the library, as they were invited to make any comments they felt appropriate on the policy document. It was also a way of setting out the basic plan for the library, as it identified the goals

towards which the author believed it should be working.

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CHAPTER 3

PRELIMINARY INVESTIGATIONS

3.1 Special libraries

A standard definition of a special library is given by Ashworth, who defines it as being "established to obtain and exploit specialised information for the private advantage of the organisation which provides its financial support." (1) Such organizations "take a conscious decision to have a library." (2) This definition is reinforced by Ferguson and Mobley, who state that "special" "really means library service specialized or geared to the interests of the organization and to the information needs of its personnel." (3) It is only possible to provide a broad set of generalisations when trying to define special libraries, as the libraries themselves, and the situations in which they operate, are so diverse. However, Ferguson and Mobley have described three distinguishing characteristics (4), that are supported by other writers and can be applied to the Institute's library:

1. The initiative for establishing the library comes from within an organization. This ties in with Ashworth's description of a "conscious decision", and his contention that such a library is then "expected to make a worthwhile contribution commensurate with the cost of outlay." (5) Writing about the management of special libraries, White

points out that they will often be found in non-traditional settings, competing for space within the parent organization and needing to establish their usefulness by showing a valid contribution to that organization.(6) One further interesting point that he makes is that special libraries often have a management that is not library-oriented, even reporting to individuals who have "no interest in or understanding of them." (7) Whilst accepting that the second part of this statement might apply to the directors of the Institute, the author hoped that lack of understanding would not automatically lead to disinterest, and wanted to discover how it would affect their attitudes and expectations.

2. The librarian is first an employee and secondly a librarian. This reemphasises the aspect of loyalty to the organization and a motivation to support its aims by providing a good service. Ferguson and Mobley also point out that the librarian is on equal terms with his clients, as employees together, and a relationship develops with them that other librarians will perhaps not experience. The role of the librarian is an aspect that the author wished to explore further.

It also follows that client numbers will be limited according to the particular organization that the library is serving. There will be a "well-defined group of users" (8) and identifying them and their information needs will

obviously be a priority.

3. Special library service is geared to the interests and needs of the organization and its personnel. One reason for the library's existence is to save time and effort for its users. Bolef writes that the emphasis in a special library is on making "all information available to all patrons in formats that can be retrieved quickly and efficiently", and that while most library functions are performed, a special library will rely on "innovation and expediency" rather than on strict observance of procedures taught in library school. (9) This emphasis on "the information function" (10) is reinforced by Silva, who suggests that "the fundamental unit is the particular information contained in a publication" (11) - in a special library the collection is important for the information that it holds, and its organization must reflect the need to disseminate that information, which to Ashworth is a "characteristic feature" of special libraries. (12)

3.2 One-person libraries

The most straightforward definition of a one-person library is that offered by Guy St. Clair and Joan Williamson - it is a library "in which all of the work is done by the librarian." (13) St. Clair has been closely involved with the growth in interest in one-person libraries in recent years and his paper in Special

Libraries in 1976 "appears to have been the first attempt to recognise that special managerial skills are required for librarians and information professionals who work alone." (14) As well as the book devoted to the one-person library, a newsletter is now published in the United States, courses are held, and papers published; in this country, ASLIB now has a special interest group to support those who work alone - "One-Man Bands" as they are known in the U.K..

Much of what was outlined in Section 3.1 applies to one-person libraries - St. Clair points out that "many single-staff librarians work in what we would call 'special libraries'." (15) There are, however, specific factors that affect a librarian who works alone. Having to perform all the work in the library means that there is "no distinction between clerical and professional duties" (16), as might reasonably be expected by a professionally trained worker. They will face "problems of professional isolation", but this will be counterbalanced by the "unique independence" possible for a librarian in this situation. (17) Since there is no one else to do the work, "time management and self-management become of particular importance." (18)

The characteristics required of anyone who intends working in a one-person library were identified by Janet Shuter in 1984, following a research project into One-Man

Bands (O.M.B.s) working in the Social Sciences field. (19) Shuter found that the "average" O.M.B. cited "self-confidence and assertion, an outgoing personality, method, tenacity, commitment and independence" as necessary qualities for the job they were doing. (20) Of these, self-confidence and an outgoing nature were most important to those who claimed to be satisfied in their work, while dissatisfied respondents relied on assertion, tenacity and emotional strength, perhaps as a result of the poor management and lack of support they felt that they received from their employer. The implication is that the success of a one-person library will depend very much on the qualities of the librarian and the attitude of the parent organization.

3.3 Published information on the Institute

The author found little formally printed information on the Institute at this early stage of its development. One promotional booklet was available, and this did prove useful because it set out the purpose and philosophy of the Institute. An internal document was also made available to the author, which dealt with the relationship of the Institute to Christianity and other religious systems, and emphasised the need for universally recognised ethical standards. Finally, during the course of this dissertation, there was published the first of what is intended to be a regular series of newsletters, which will give information

on the work of the Institute to interested parties.

3.4 The information needs of the Institute

The interviews with Institute personnel were set up in May, 1992. The author was very aware at this point that a working knowledge of Covenant Ministries did not provide sufficient information about the Institute. The preparation for the interviews and the formulation of questions that needed to be asked was a useful exercise in itself because it focused attention on the end rather than the means - that "image of a future organization" that Ferriero and Wilding spoke of. (21) It had become clear that the justification for this initial planning process did indeed lie in the creation of a vision for the library, and that St. Clair was right in saying that it is necessary to be "something of a visionary, an idealist, one who can look at the library or information service and think about what ... that service can be." (22) This influenced the questions and the themes which they addressed.

Webb suggests that an interviewer "make a brief note of the points to be covered in the interview ... if the interview is to be kept short and the overall series to be comparable." (23) The author felt that the promise of an interview limited to between 40-45 minutes was essential in seeking the cooperation of the men involved, given their

extremely full schedules. To make the best use of the time available, and to ensure consistency, Webb's advice was followed, and a list of questions was drawn up. The interviewees were also asked to provide written answers to a number of questions that involved listing subjects and journals, for example, as it was felt that such lists would be drawn up more fully in the respondents' own time, and that interview time would also be saved.

Full details of the questions asked in the interviews with Institute personnel can be found in Appendix 1. Broadly, the questions were intended to discover:

- Current use of the library.
- The history of the collection, and its subject scope.
- Any problems associated with the library in its present state.
- Future developments for the Institute that will affect the library.
- The intended role of the librarian in the Institute.
- Priorities for the development of the library and expectations about the services it might offer.

The following sections present a summary of the information gained from the interviews, followed by a number of observations made by the author about the interviews.

3.4.1 The current use of the library

The present state of the library meant that although it was being consulted, use was only "random". (24) It was regarded as a starting place when seeking specific information, with an awareness that the user would have to turn to other sources as well. (25) In Dr. Coles' case, this meant the use of computer databases, followed by visits to Warwick University library. The general reference works were consulted first, and then relevant books and articles were sought.

Use of the library was confirmed as being restricted to people with close links with the Institute. As well as the interviewees, other directors of the Institute had access to the collection, together with any research assistants appointed for particular pieces of work. The library had also been made available to students from the Bible College that is on the same site, when they were researching a 'world awareness' project.

3.4.2 The history of the collection and its subject scope

The subjects that concern the Institute have in many cases been of interest to the directors for a number of years, in their wider roles of church leaders and teachers. A full list of subjects will be found in Appendix 2, but examples of current interests are as follows:

Bryn Jones - U.S. foreign policy relating to South Africa.

Alan Scotland - Environmental conflict mediation.

David Coles - Third World relations.

The Institute's library was formed around the personal collections of the directors, with the addition of general reference works, the intention being to build a "comprehensive background" on relevant subjects to cover basic needs, together with the most up-to-date material. (26) Additions to the collection are made as necessary, and as an example, a new collection on mediation had just been authorised. The importance of journals was recognised - they provide the "most helpful material" because of their currency. (27)

3.4.3 Problems associated with the library

A major problem associated with the use of the library stemmed from the fact that it is "a limited resource at present." (28) Users could not rely on getting the majority of the information they needed from the collection. They were aware that the lack of any bibliographic records meant that it was even difficult to be certain that all the relevant information was retrieved, and of course there had been no one to help with searches in the past. Inexperience also led to time-wasting when searching computer databases for information, with the

exception of Dr. Coles, whose computer literacy assisted the search processes.

It was recognised that it was difficult to keep track of all the books because of the lack of records, and the ease with which items could be borrowed from the library, with no means of accountability. Certain items were known to have disappeared completely.

Finally, the cost of building a collection was acknowledged. Funding for the Institute was raised as necessary, and it was obviously essential to keep costs as low as possible. The Institute has links with two booksellers in Wales, who provide current material at low cost, through overstocks for example; and books are also obtained from the United States, at much lower costs. However, the choice of material was of necessity influenced by budgetary constraints.

3.4.4 The future development of the Institute

Certain facts which emerged from the interviews were to prove very helpful to the author in determining the future role of the library. Foremost among these was the fact that there is intended to be an official launch of the Institute, in March, 1993. This immediately gave a timescale against which the progress of the library can be set. It is also expected that at least one research

assistant will be employed full-time by 1993.

The library is expected to be increasingly in demand in the future, as a resource library for external users. The directors are working towards the creation of links with Bradford University, through the provision of resources for people taking relevant Master's degrees. They are also expecting the Institute to be involved with the networking of Peace Movement Groups. Such moves require the development of a certain standard of library that will demonstrate the "seriousness" of the Institute's intentions. (29)

3.4.5 The role of the librarian

An immediate result of the interviews was the establishing of a line of authority for the librarian to relate to. On a day to day basis the first point of contact would always be Dr. Coles, who is based permanently at the Institute; however it was made clear that the others would always be available to discuss library matters, wherever practical, and that any proposals requiring wider action should go to Mr. Scotland first, so that he could ensure that they were responded to.

The author had to ask for an immediate decision to be made on the question of a day-to-day operating budget for the library, bearing in mind that "the authority to spend

should be clearly defined." (30) As a result, a limit of thirty pounds was set for regular purchases of stationery, etc., from Covenant Ministries' approved supplier; any purchases above that amount would require authorization from the resident accountant, or a Director. Although it will be necessary to recommend that an account be set up with a library supplier for specific items such as book cards, the author foresees no difficulty in obtaining the immediate requirements for the library under this system. In the longer term, however, the issue of a budget will have to be considered again, as the librarian will frequently be making potentially costly recommendations across the whole range of library activities. White acknowledges that some libraries do operate without a budget, with the librarian not being informed of financial targets (31), and the nature of the funding of the Institute may make it impossible to set a proper budget for the library at present. This cannot be an ideal situation, however, nor does it help in the making of informed decisions and recommendations if spending limits are unclear. The author intends to hold further discussions about a budget with the Directors, once she is working in the library, and in the meantime will promote the role that the librarian could have in influencing budgetary decisions by ensuring that all recommendations are as cost-effective as possible.

The directors expected certain things from the

librarian, primarily relating to keeping control of the incoming information by keeping records and materials up-to-date, since the librarian needs to know where things are. (32) She would be expected to save users' time by knowing how to conduct searches, and where else to go for information. Recommendations from the librarian regarding suitable material for the library would be welcomed . It was acknowledged, however, that the directors had no real idea of what to expect from a librarian (33). The author felt that, far from implying a lack of interest in the role on the part of the directors, this signalled an acceptance that the development of the role would depend on the librarian herself, and could reflect her increasing desire to take an active part in the work of the Institute.

3.4.6 Priorities for the library and the services it offers

The interviews revealed a number of ways in which the directors felt that the library and the services it offered could be improved. The need for better access to the information held in the library collection and a means of keeping track of the material have already been mentioned, together with ideas for the role of the librarian: other points that were raised by the directors will be specified in later chapters. However, three broad areas of concern should be mentioned here since they gave direction to the more detailed investigations that followed the interviews.

They were:

- a. The need to develop a credible collection that reflects the interests of the Institute.
- b. The need to provide access to relevant information both in that collection and elsewhere.
- c. The development of additional services to users.

The translation of these ideas and concerns into a plan for development would create a library that would reflect the directors' needs and serve them better.

3.5 Observations on the results of the interviews

The author was encouraged by the interviews and was able to draw several positive conclusions about their importance to this aspect of the planning process.

- a. The interviews performed their basic role of providing background information about the Institute, as the parent organisation, and the perceived needs of library users. In fact the author was surprised by some of the information, such as the proposed launch date, and learnt that knowledge about an organisation cannot be assumed merely through long-term association with it - there is no substitute for asking questions.

b. The act of setting up the interviews and their execution helped to establish links with the directors of the Institute, who are to be both employers and clients in future. Lines of communication were drawn up and the process of working with others in the organization was begun - St. Clair sees this as the starting point for "making a case for the library". (34) The author felt that this was a necessary process in spite of a previous relationship with the directors - it was important for that relationship to now become one of librarian and client.

c. At the same time, the directors were reassured that their sponsorship was at last visibly bearing fruit, and that the training undertaken by the author would have positive results in the library.

d. The process of preparing for the interviews helped the author to clarify her own expectations of what the job of librarian would involve. Although this stage focused on planning and then on the work involved in setting up the library, it was not too soon to begin thinking about the role of the librarian once a working unit was in operation. The opportunity existed to begin to interest the directors in the idea of a librarian taking a proactive rather than a reactive role, anticipating information needs as well as responding to requests. Their uncertainty about the role of librarian did not lead to a lack of interest in the development of that role, rather a willingness to accept

the possibility of a librarian who would take an active part in the work of the Institute.

e. Finally, the information drawn from the interviews, together with the author's observations and professional knowledge, gave direction to the next stage in the planning process. The needs, problems and expectations of the library's users formed the basis of a vision for the development of the service that then needed to be translated into a definite set of plans. The directors also required some tangible feedback from the interviews, and had to be given the opportunity to comment on what were in effect the author's proposals for the future development of the library. The following chapter discusses why this was done in the form of a policy statement, and then explains the general format of the statement that was sent out to the directors. Subsequent chapters take the proposals in turn, and show how the planning process helped the author to reach decisions on the best ways of achieving the desired results.

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CHAPTER 4

THE FORMULATION OF A POLICY STATEMENT

4.1 The need for a policy statement

The conclusion that a written statement should be produced as a guideline for the development of the library led to a further literature search being undertaken into policy documents for libraries. Riggs writes that policies are "guidelines to action" (1), since they control the strategies which have been determined for the library. Written policies are a way of communicating the mission, goals and objectives of an organization to interested parties, and it was necessary to define these constituents before a statement could be formulated for the Institute.

4.1.1 Mission

Ritchie states that a mission is "a broad statement of purpose for an organization, which defines and limits its sphere of operations." (2) The emphasis is again on the importance of the relationship between the library and its parent organization, since, as White says, the special library "exists to support and enhance the mission of the organization in which it is housed." (3) This is supported by Ahrensfield, who writes that "the needs of the organization are the primary determinant of the functions to be performed." (4) The act of creating a mission

statement "concentrates the mind on the fundamentals of an organization's purpose and reason for existence" (5), and helps to establish the vision of what the library should become in future.

4.1.2 Goals

St. Clair and Williamson quote Dorothy Sinclair , who says that "without long-range goals, current decisions may be short sighted." (6) Goals, or aims, are statements of what is wanted for the library, based on the mission statement. They provide "a set of directions" ... outlining "what the people should receive from the library, or what the library should have, or be able to do, to accomplish its mission." (7) Riggs warns, however, that goals "should never be beyond the realm of reality." (8)

4.1.3 Objectives

Objectives convert each goal into a series of actions, and are described as "the landmarks and milestones which mark the path towards the library's goals." (9) They must be specific and state a particular result that is to be accomplished by a set date, thus giving targets for the library to meet. It is also possible to begin to determine priorities for action by ranking the objectives in order of priority.

4.2 Evaluation

Since objectives are intended to be measurable and achievable within a given timescale, they have an additional function of contributing to "the process of 'control' - of monitoring and evaluating an organization's performance." (10) This was an important consideration for the Institute's library, as with so much to do in a relatively short space of time, it would be easy to concentrate on one aspect of the work at the expense of another. The identification of objectives for each of the goals and the setting of a date by which they are expected to be accomplished is an exercise which in itself provides the means of monitoring the progress towards their achievement, by providing a plan against which that progress can be checked. This will be the major means of evaluating the performance of the library in its early stages, since it has as yet set no operating standards against which results might be measured. The responsibility is on the librarian to carry out continuous assessment of the work being done, so that any adjustments that are needed in the light of experience can be made before problems arise because objectives are not being realised on time. A weekly planner will be an essential aid to the librarian - it must be realistic, but should ensure that priorities are recognised and achieved.

4.3 A policy statement for the Institute's library

It was now clear that any policies for the Institute's library would relate to the mission of the library (which in turn would evolve from the mission of the Institute), and were dependent upon the formulation of goals. The information from the interviews could be taken and used as indicators of the ways in which the directors wished the library to be developed, and thus form the basis of the goals for the library. All the actions, or objectives, necessary to achieve these results should then be determinable. Goals are usually long-term in nature, but the setting up of a service meant that attention was focused on what needed to be accomplished in the near future, although the policies were also intended to lead to the establishment of ongoing practices for the library. It is recognised that in time the goals will have to be refined in order to meet the ongoing needs of an established service. A timeframe for the short-term goals was established by taking the official opening of the Institute as the date by which a professional library service needed to be in operation.

4.4 The form of the policy statement

The actual policy statement that was sent out to the directors can be seen in its entirety in Appendix 3, as much of the text repeats information given elsewhere in

this dissertation, and it was felt that it was better here to discuss the thinking behind the statement rather than set it out in detail. Some points have been taken from the statement, however, as they are necessary to an understanding of the following chapters, which expand on the goals and take their basic structure from the statement.

4.4.1 The covering letter

The author felt that it was necessary to provide a covering letter with the statement, in order to explain to the directors what the author's intention was and what they could expect to find in the policy statement itself.

4.4.2 The mission statement

The mission statement was based on the aim for the Institute that was set out in its promotional booklet. This states that the Institute's intention is to serve as "a vehicle for collecting, evaluating and disseminating information on issues of world concern." (11) The priorities for the development of the library that were identified from the interviews with the directors (see section 3.4.6), then provided the broad headings which indicated how the library was going to support this aim. There was no need for the mission statement to expand on these points, as that is the province of the goals and

objectives.

4.4.3 Goals

The goals for the library were based on an understanding of what service should be provided as well as what was expected from it by the directors. The broad headings were briefly explained in the statement, for the benefit of the directors, and the goals that related to them were then identified. These goals are listed here, as they influence the structure of subsequent chapters.

a. The development of a relevant and credible collection.

GOALS:

- * To support the Institute's directors in the building up of a comprehensive background collection on topics relevant to the Institute's remit.
- * The improvement of the general reference section.
- * The creation and development of an audio/visual section, to include video recordings of televised material.
- * To perform a comprehensive newspaper cuttings service within the library.
- * To centralise the receipt and display of journals within the library.

b. The provision of access to information held in that collection.

GOALS:

- * To create a catalogue of all the books in the collection.
- * The adoption of a loans system.
- * The classification of the book collection using a generally accepted classification scheme.
- * The organization and indexing of the collection of pamphlets, reports, and other non-book material.
- * The indexing of relevant articles found in the journals collection.
- * The adoption and setting up of a computerised information retrieval system, with databases that are able to deal with the variety of materials found in the library.

c. The further development of services to users.

GOALS:

- * To provide a current awareness service for users.
- * The addition of abstracts to the computer records.
- * To perform comprehensive information searches for users.
- * To establish links and promote cooperation with alternative sources of information.

Two comments should be made on these goals. The first concerns the placing of the final goal concerning cooperation in section 3, rather than in the previous section, to which it was linked in the mission statement.

The reason for this is purely practical, as it was felt that cooperation should be treated as an additional service rather than being added to the section dealing with the collection itself. Secondly, the issue of automation has been taken out of the context of the statement and discussed in the following chapter, as its effects are so wide-ranging.

4.4.4 Priorities for action: a checklist

Although it was felt that another list giving the objectives associated with the goals would not be appreciated by the directors, they were in fact presented with them in another way, in the form of long and short-term aims, which became the basis of a checklist. This set out:

- Short-term aims requiring immediate action;
- Longer-term aims which involve preparation for the official launch;
- Ongoing activities.

In reality, of course, work will begin on all these objectives as soon as possible, and longer-term implies a period of outworking rather than the quick resolution possible with the short-term aims. It was also interesting to note that the very act of creating such a checklist was helpful to the author in that it clarified her thinking on

the objectives. Once they were drawn together in the list, it was possible to see, for example, that the input of data to the computer system should be prioritised according to type of material. This had not been obvious when the goals and objectives were considered in isolation from each other.

4.4.5 Response sheet

Given the heavy workload of the directors, the provision of a response sheet was felt to be a good idea, as it offered them the means of making an immediate note of their opinions on the policy statement.

4.5 Reactions to the policy statement.

The extent of the workload taken on by the directors became clear as soon as they received the policy statement, as the author found that Mr. Jones and Mr. Scotland were about to fly out to South Africa for a number of weeks. This immediately presented problems in getting back their response to the policy statement in time to be included in this dissertation. In fact the author was unable to contact Mr. Scotland before he left the country, and his comments are therefore unavailable at present; the author is therefore all the more grateful to Mr. Jones for making time to study the statement and pass on his responses.

Mr. Jones did point out that in section 1 of the goals the text should read "financial constraints" rather than "restraints", and this is an error that should have been picked up by the author. That aside, his main concern was that the word "research" should be included in the mission statement, and that it should be emphasised that the library is more than just books. The first point could certainly easily be accommodated by a minor change in the wording of the statement; the second is covered in the goals, but again the final wording of the mission statement could be looked at with a view to making this clear. Mr. Jones indicated, however, that he was quite happy with the rest of the document.

Dr. Coles indicated that he was pleased with the statement as a whole, and felt that all the relevant points had been covered. The mission statement was a "clear, comprehensive statement", and the goals were "relevant and important." (12) He also indicated that he would be very happy if all the plans outlined in the statement were achieved, and that he could not think of any additional requirements at this time. The fact that it was the intentions and expectations of the directors themselves which directed the formulation of the plans must have been an important contributory factor to the general satisfaction with the policy statement.

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CHAPTER 5

THE AUTOMATION ISSUE AND ITS EFFECT ON POLICY DECISIONS

5.1 Introduction

With hindsight, the question of automation and the affect that computerisation could have on the work of the library should perhaps have figured more prominently in the final Policy Statement, since the adoption of a computerised information retrieval system was not just a goal in itself, taken in isolation, but an issue that affected all of the goals and objectives. It will be helpful to discuss the issues and decisions involved in choosing a computer system before going on to describe the thinking behind the goals in detail.

White writes that "special libraries and information centres ... have always been in the forefront of technological evaluation and application", particularly as they are often found in parent organizations that have computer facilities. (1) This is certainly the case for the Institute, which is already exploiting new technology as much as possible. For example, the Institute offers its members on-line access to both commercial and public news and specialised information databases, including those of the European Commission, and an electronic bulletin board and data exchange. Although the use of those databases as information sources is expected to form part of the

librarian's work in future, at present such resources are the concern of Dr. Coles, and their development does not form part of the librarian's remit. The study of automation has therefore been limited in this case to those areas which specifically affect the organization and work of the library.

5.2 Automation - an appropriate choice?

It should always be remembered that the importance of technology for a library lies in the help it can provide in making information available. In fact, as McKee says, information technology is a "crucial consideration" for libraries, because "its central concern - information, or knowledge - is the raw material of library work." (2) But having said this, the application of all the various forms of technology available will depend very much on the particular circumstances of each library, and it should not be assumed that every area is automatically and immediately ripe for automation. McKee goes on to say that "the key concept when considering I.T. is appropriateness" (3), and gives the relevant example of whether or not a small one-person library can justify an automated circulation control system, given the relatively few transactions. (4) Although it was vital that plans for the Institute's library incorporated the use of computer-based systems, the process did not stop once that decision had been taken. The needs of the library and particular constraints such as

financial considerations and having a single librarian, then had to be taken into account.

5.3 Different types of system considered

One of the main reasons for installing computer systems given by Jennifer Rowley is that "more efficient information retrieval can be expected" (5), which ties in with the prime motivation behind the mission of the library of providing access to the information held in the collection. This had to be taken into account when considering the type of information technology that might be appropriate for the library. A review of some of the literature available on the subject indicated that the choice had first to be made between three types of system:

1. Text retrieval software packages.
2. Library housekeeping software packages.
3. Database management systems. (DBMSs)

Rowley points out that there is now less distinction between these three types than was originally the case, and that all must be considered before the most suitable for individual requirements is found. (6) Turning to library housekeeping packages first, the author was able to draw on the experience of assessing the Bookshelf system as part of the Master's coursework. Bookshelf was assessed specifically for the requirements of the Institute's

library; even at that early stage the example used by McKee was echoed in that the circulation module was not reviewed, since the prospective numbers of loans would not at first justify its purchase. The ability to pick appropriate modules and expand later where necessary is of course a possible advantage of library housekeeping packages, but only if they offer what is wanted by a library in return for their sometimes heavy cost. In the case of Bookshelf, the author's conclusion was that although it could certainly be used by the library, it would be worthwhile looking at other information retrieval systems before a final decision was made, because a more flexible approach might suit the Institute's needs better.

That decision was made in what was at that time a hypothetical case, some while before the author began work on the actual process of planning the Institute's library, but its conclusion seemed equally valid upon reexamination. The most important factor for the Institute, was the ability to create records for a wide variety of materials such as news cuttings and video tapes as well as books and journal articles, in the most appropriate format for each type; this had to be followed by the subsequent ease of retrieval for relevant items. Text retrieval systems are intended precisely for the purpose of storage and retrieval of records; the records can be bibliographic, full text or referral, and can relate to different types of materials. Search features can include multiple access points and

systems can handle complex queries. Although DBMSS can support text retrieval in a limited way, and systems can handle related databases, they are restricted because they deal with records by structure rather than by content or relevance.

The question of in-house production of a suitable programme had to be looked at, as on the surface the idea of a computer expert being on hand to create an individualised programme to suit the Institute's requirements could look very attractive. Such a process would, however, necessitate a commitment of time from Dr. Coles that it would be unreasonable to ask and almost certainly impossible to achieve, given his other responsibilities; it would also presuppose a degree of expertise in the librarian that she does not feel confident could be assumed at this stage. The experiences of Spurgeon's College library in introducing a computerised system also led to the choice of an available package, although in their case it was Bookshelf that was actually adopted. (7) The librarian consulted a local computer programmer, who quickly found that "library operations were much more complicated than he had thought"; the conclusion was also that "an untried system of this kind was likely to be the cause of many headaches." (8) The author therefore went on to look into a number of text retrieval packages in order to be able to recommend a course of action to the directors that could be adopted once work began in the

library.

5.4 Final recommendations

The logical place to start the process of choosing between the many packages available on the market was to contact the producers directly and ask for information on their product. The intention at this stage was to identify suitable systems and arrange demonstrations in order to help a final choice to be made. The choice of package was intended to be limited for practical reasons to about ten products, as it was felt that too much information initially could be confusing. Details of the companies which were contacted came in fact from a list provided by the Library Information Technology Centre in London. Staff on its stand at an exhibition attended by the author had been very helpful, and had subsequently sent the author a list of potentially suitable information retrieval packages and suppliers, based on the conversation at the exhibition. Packages that the author had already had in mind were then noted on this list and contacted, a process that was made much easier since all the suppliers addresses and telephone numbers were available together. The systems that were followed up in this way included Headfast, Inmagic, Personal Librarian, Pro-Cite and Reference Manager, and all the companies involved were very prompt in sending out their information packages, and also, it has to be said, in following up the contact. The author is still in fact

receiving calls from certain representatives!

Before examining the decision in detail, it is relevant to mention that the author found the quality and helpfulness of the product information she received to be extremely variable. Some suppliers did not give any indication of cost, for example, which was obviously going to be an important factor for the Institute, if not for any organization. This may be because companies want the product to sell itself before cost is considered, but it is surely unreasonable to expect the customer to have to follow up the information only to find that the product is out of their price range. As far as selling the product is concerned, the author found that much of the literature did not really answer all the questions about the system, or at least at a comprehensible level, and would have benefitted from simpler information. It was quickly apparent that Dr. Coles' advice on the products to investigate further would be essential, and many librarians must appreciate having a source of expert advice to turn to.

It was when talking to Dr. Coles about the author's progress and decisions up to that date, with the intention of reaching the stage at which demonstrations of perhaps three or four systems could be set up, that the whole focus of the investigations changed. This was the result of a remark by Dr. Coles that he was already using Personal Librarian for certain operations such as the handling of

news reports on CD-ROM. It was obviously a failure on the author's part that this fact had not been uncovered before, probably arising from inexperience and a concentration on the needs of the library in isolation from the existing facilities in the Institute. However, the work that had gone into the planning process so far would not be wasted, as the author was now much more aware of what to expect and require from a system, and in a better position to assess Personal Librarian for the library, which seemed to be the logical next step.

5.5 Personal Librarian

Although it was obviously essential to concentrate immediately on the suitability of Personal Librarian for the Institute's library, it was important not to assume that it would automatically be the right choice. The fact that using a system which had already been purchased would be by far the cheapest option could not be allowed to influence the investigations into the system, which had to be as thorough as would have been anticipated before. The author therefore carried out a literature search on Personal Librarian, and found a number of articles and book references, dating from the early days of its production, in the mid-1980s, when it was marketed under the name SIRE. The information sent out by the U.K. distributors, Systematic Upgrade was not very helpful to the author, who was considering the need to contact them for further

information when the opportunity arose to attend a demonstration of the system in the Department of Information and Library Studies at Loughborough. The demonstration was given by a senior representative of Systematic Upgrade, and was aimed at enlisting the cooperation of the Department in having the use of Personal Librarian adopted more widely in such library schools.

The author found this presentation extremely useful as a demonstration of the capabilities of Personal Librarian, although an approach that was tailored more to library requirements rather than what was obviously a standard presentation format would perhaps have been more helpful and appropriate. The ability to create bibliographic record formats was shown briefly as the result of questioning by a member of staff, but the demonstration was really geared to show off the strong search features of the system. The emphasis on searching and retrieval rather than on ease of input had already been made clear to the author, both by Dr. Coles, and by the general literature. Tenopir and Lundeen noted that "system maintenance, input and report writing features ... are not as well developed as are the searching features." (9) On the other hand, Personal Librarian does offer "unique and powerful search capabilities", and is "ideally suited to situations where ease in searching is required." (10) That aspect would certainly be beneficial to the Institute, and weighs heavily in favour of the system, as long-term usefulness is

set against any initial difficulty in adding information to the program.

The question of user satisfaction at the inputting stage has obviously been addressed by Systematic Upgrade as the system has been refined and developed. A positive review of version 3.0 of Personal Librarian was provided at the demonstration, in the form of a copy of a recent article in PC Magazine. (11) The reviewer found "unchallenged ease of use", and in fact that building databases for different types of material "is a straightforward and logical process." Once a database has been created, records can be added or removed at any time. Among the features offered by the system are 'relevance' or smart searching, and an expand function which looks for conceptually related information - the author saw these demonstrated and was impressed by the possibilities they offered. Although the Institute has an earlier version of Personal Librarian, Dr. Coles has already responded positively to the idea of upgrading to the newer version.

As a result of this additional period of investigation, the author feels confident in recommending that use of Personal Librarian be expanded to meet the library's needs. This would provide benefits both in cost, even allowing for future upgrading, which would probably have been necessary anyway, and through the familiarity of Dr. Coles with the system. The author believes that it

would be essential to work closely with Dr. Coles whichever system was chosen, in setting up the programmes for the various types of material in the library. It may also be necessary to take advice from Systematic Upgrade on specific problems that arise, and the author intends to contact them as soon as possible after starting work in the library, to get details of their fees for consultancy and training programmes, should these prove advisable. Ideally, the basic programmes should be operational before the end of 1992, so that information can be input and the system operational by March, 1993.

The author is aware that the work involved in adding data to the system may well be too much for one person to take on, considering the number of records and formats involved in building up the databases from scratch and the ongoing requirements of the librarian in other areas of work. For this reason, it will be necessary to investigate the possibility of enlisting volunteer or temporary help, so that recommendations can be made to the directors when the time comes. Covenant College students could be one possible source of help, for example. It should be noted that the author had this possibility in mind when mentioning in following chapters the need to create computer records.

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CHAPTER 6

THE DEVELOPMENT OF A CREDIBLE COLLECTION

6.1 Introduction

Ferguson and Mobley wrote that "the building of the subject collection and tailoring of it to the specific needs of the organization is a primary duty of the special librarian." (1) There can be no standard models for collection development in specific subject areas because the collection in any given library will reflect the information needs of the parent organization. Writing about libraries in Social Services Departments, Seonaid Elliott also found the importance of ensuring that "anything that is collected is related to the organization and its interests." (2) This is particularly relevant in the light of the current general economic climate, where all expenditure must be justified, and as White points out, the development of a library collection will be "constrained ... by both space and budgetary limitations", and should be based on "a best estimate of what will be needed." (3)

The type of collection that will be found in a special library will again depend greatly on its subject interests, and also on its history. Ferguson and Mobley note the "emphasis on nontraditional, nonbook materials" (4) that is a characteristic of such collections, because of the importance of currency in the information required by

special libraries. It is the information that is important, not the medium by which it is conveyed; and this will become obvious if the existing collection is examined. Any materials in the collection are there "presumably ... because they have been or will be used" (5), and in fact this is often the way in which special library collections originate, as they undertake "the assembling, or at least recording, of existing scattered materials which are under the control of individuals and departments." (6)

Relating this to the Institute's library, it is clear that any discussion concerning the development of the existing collection should be founded on an understanding of the subject interests of the Institute, and these were in fact outlined during the interviews and are listed in Appendix 2. Moreover, the desired end result was not only a collection relevant to the Institute's information needs, but also one which reflected well on the Institute itself. The Peace Movement groups, for example, would expect to see a depth of collection in their field that would illustrate the Institute's serious intentions regarding collaboration and give credibility to its work. The influence of budgetary constraints had to be taken into account when making recommendations, as well as the importance of exploiting all sources of information. The following discussion takes the various elements of the collection in turn and explains the proposals that were made.

6.2 Building comprehensive background collections

Much of the present collection originated from the private books and papers of the Directors of the Institute, reflecting their long standing interests. What had proved useful to them in the past was brought into the library, with additions being made seemingly on a somewhat random basis, as Directors passed on further papers or added books to the collection. The interviews revealed that although there had been a book fund of £6,000 for the previous year, there was no allocation of money on an individual or subject basis, and no formal means of determining the exact expenditure. (7) The anticipated growth of both the work of the Institute and the use of the library would need to be matched by a tighter control of collection development. Although it was expected that the control of acquisitions would remain in the hands of the Directors (8), it was obviously important for the library to implement policies that would not only help to organize the existing collection but would also provide support for the Directors in their future acquisitions.

The development of the book collections relating to each of the subjects of interest to the Institute is an area in which the librarian could quickly begin to take an active part. By taking the initiative and offering advice and recommendations on possible purchases to the directors, the librarian would be providing a useful service whilst

also establishing a role for herself. The process could begin with an assessment of the file of catalogues that is already present in the library; the author assumes that most of these have been collected, and possibly used, by the directors in the past. Consultations with the directors should quickly establish which publishers have proved most useful, and their catalogues would then be brought up to date, to form the basis of a new file of publishers' information. The trade journals should then be used to find other publishers that might provide relevant material. Once started, the file should take little time to maintain, but will be useful as an up-to-date source of information relating to the subjects of interest to the Institute. The librarian will, of course, need to be aware of those subjects when scanning the catalogues for possible titles to recommend, and will also need to keep abreast of new developments affecting the Institute's work. It has to be recognised that the directors will not always be able to follow up even useful recommendations, since funding will not allow indiscriminate buying; however, the file will be justified by the need to keep up-to-date with the latest developments in relevant subjects, and the knowledge gained may influence purchases from other sources. In time, it should be possible to propose an acquisitions policy, but it would seem to be most practical to concentrate at present upon advising the directors on possible purchases, and increasing their choice of material.

6.3 The improvement of the general reference section

The importance of developing the general reference section of the library was mentioned particularly by Dr. Coles. All the projects undertaken by the Institute require detailed background information, with statistical information being of particular importance. The problem is that such material is very expensive, and requires frequent updating if the information is to remain current. The librarian will be able to help the directors make informed choices on the most useful and cost-effective reference sources, again by use of the publishers' files. Over a period of time, it will be possible to recognise which sources are most profitable for each subject. The author has also already found library exhibitions to be a useful source of information on publishers and specific publications.

6.4 The creation of an audio/visual section

The interview with Dr. Coles revealed that the purchase of a T.V. and video unit for the Institute has been authorised, for the purpose of recording relevant televised items. The author has in fact been asked by the directors in the past to record various programmes at home. The somewhat haphazard nature of this arrangement has meant that many useful programmes have gone unrecorded, and a more formal system is necessary, based in the library. The

author proposes that one of the librarian's regular tasks should be the scanning of one of the more comprehensive television guides, so that programmes can be noted and the video set to record them. It will also be necessary to ensure that the Institute keeps within the provisions and requirements of the Copyright Act.

It is anticipated that one of the author's immediate tasks upon starting work in the library will be the organization of an audio/visual section within the library, including the positioning of the T.V. and video where they will be least obtrusive. Video storage units will have to be investigated, a supply of blank videos ensured, and an area set aside for the collection. The author also feels that within a short period of time it will be necessary to draw up policies to control the inclusion of items in the collection, since it could quickly become unmanageable, and there will need to be a process of weeding and updating. Meticulous records will have to be kept on the recordings made for the collection, and these will then be able to be used as the basic information for the computer records, when the system is up and running.

Mr. Jones indicated in his interview that the library would also be used to house a collection of audio tapes, to include recordings of lectures and meetings. The author has no additional information on the proposals for this collection as yet, and will have to ask for further details

after starting work in the library. Similar issues to the development of the video collection will be faced, however, and recording and storage proposals formulated.

6.5 The newspaper cuttings service

Newspaper cuttings have always been an important source of information, both for the Institute and, before it, for Covenant Ministries' personnel; the author was, of course, previously involved with this work. Newspaper articles offer current information in various formats (reports, comments, eye-witness accounts, etc.), and with a particular bias, according to the newspaper's pedigree; a cross-section of the press will provide different angles on the same story that will be invaluable for an organization like the Institute.

Since the move to the Midlands the cuttings service has fallen into abeyance, and few recent cuttings have been filed in the library. The availability of copies of papers such as The Times and The Independent on CD-ROM has filled the gap in coverage temporarily, but it is the author's intention to offer a full service as soon as possible, allowing for the amount of work that will need to be done in the library as a whole in the next few months. Within the wider organisation of Covenant Ministries, newspapers are presently scanned by a member of staff working on the production of "Restoration" magazine and it is proposed

that he is asked to look out for information of interest to the Institute, on a temporary basis at least. This would allow time for the existing cuttings files in the library to be weeded and properly organized, and is a necessary compromise given the anticipated pressure of work. The intention will be to perform the service in-house as soon as is practicable, at which time decisions will need to be made as to the practicality of sharing newspaper copies with "Restoration" personnel and the need to purchase additional copies of newspapers for the Institute. The establishment of appropriate databases through Personal Librarian will make it possible to start putting records of cuttings onto the computer, although retrospective records of the extensive cuttings' files will be a long-term and ongoing process.

6.6 The centralising of the journals collection

Journal articles were acknowledged during the interviews to be the most useful source of information for at least one of the directors of the Institute (9), because of their currency and depth of coverage, and a large number of journals eventually appear in the library to be filed. At present, however, there is no formal means of journal receipt and their presence in the library is dependant on their being passed on by individuals. In fact, as the author found on first visiting the library, journals often arrived with a bundle of other material, some of which was

unwanted by the library, and back copies could be hard to trace. Duplicate copies appeared, and it was frequently the case that prewrapped copies had not even been opened.

The directors agreed that it would be more efficient to arrange receipt of journals directly into the library, as that way duplicates could be avoided and more control kept on individual copies. The journals would also be available to a wider audience if properly displayed. The author recognises, however, that it would not be practical or even diplomatic to take control of the journals immediately into the library without further consultations. Although the aim would be to encourage visits to the library for the purpose of reading the journals kept there, it is clear that this is not a habit that could be imposed overnight, and indeed individuals may still wish to receive certain titles personally because of their importance to their work.

It is therefore proposed that a survey of the main users of the library should be undertaken during September, 1992, with the aim of identifying those journals which could come directly into the library. This would also allow users to specify those titles that they would still wish to receive personally, but hopefully these would be kept to a minimum. It should then be possible to keep a greater measure of control on all journal titles, including those that are received elsewhere, as better arrangements

are made for them to be passed on to the library. Duplicate copies will be cancelled and receipt of all journals organised by the Institute before routing occurs as necessary.

A proper display stand for current copies of the journals will have to be ordered, and the author has already obtained information on different types of stand following a request by Dr. Coles. This will have to be followed up as soon as possible, as use of the library will be encouraged by better display facilities. It is relevant to mention here that although the author has no experience of ordering library equipment and indeed was unsure at first where to start, two sources of information quickly became apparent. The first source was the personal recommendation of a suitable company to contact by a colleague in Covenant Ministries who had also needed display stands for his work in publishing. The second source of information came from a visit to a library resources exhibition, which provided a number of catalogues for future use.

6.7 Comments

Planning the development of a collection suitable and beneficial for the library gave rise to a number of observations. Firstly, although much of the work could not be started until the librarian was in place, the planning

process itself enabled the author to begin the vital task of getting to know the existing collection, and the subject areas of interest to the Institute. This would be important in the future, not the least because the librarian will have to establish her own credibility to the directors before they can be expected to accept any recommendations on the development of the collection, and an understanding of the work of the Institute will help in this.

The collection itself includes a wide variety of materials, all of which require different approaches and policies, and it would be easy to get caught up in the development of one area to the exclusion of another. It will have to be accepted that in the early stages of the development of the library, although care will have to be taken to ensure that all areas are covered to some extent, it will also be necessary to look at the priorities for action. Some compromises may be necessary at first, such as continuing to take news cuttings from another source, but it should be remembered that the ultimate goal is the establishment of ongoing practices that will ensure the continuing growth and development of the collection.

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CHAPTER 7

PROVIDING ACCESS TO THE INFORMATION IN THE COLLECTION

7.1 Introduction

The literature search on special libraries showed that their emphasis is on information rather than on the collection itself, so that the relevance of a collection is only really shown by the ways in which access to that information is provided to users. The organization of a particular collection will vary according to the circumstances of that library, but as Ferguson and Mobley expressed it, "the rationale for organising materials in any library is for ease in locating information both speedily and accurately." (1) White also emphasises that in a special library which relies on specialised materials with a high degree of currency, the information must be made available quickly. (2)

The organization of the Institute's library has to take into account the fact that it is a new facility, with no existing procedures or standards to build upon. In fact, one is dealing with a two-stage process, where policies must be developed for first dealing with the existing collection, and then handling the growth and increased demand expected in the future. The most obvious problem to the Directors was the "need to keep track of the books" (3), because there was no record of exactly what was in the

collection, let alone where items were or who had them, and it was acknowledged that many books especially were missing completely. Cataloguing, indexing and classifying procedures had to be considered, and a loans system established. St. Clair and Williamson point out that the precise details of the organisation of a library are usually of little interest to its managers and users, "as long as [materials] are accessible." (4) - it is the information that is important to them, not how they get it. In developing goals and objectives in this area, therefore, the one-person librarian can seek short-cuts, and the key question is "is it necessary?", since "the quickest, most efficient method is not a luxury, it is a necessity." (5)

7.2 The creation of a book catalogue

St. Clair and Williamson believe that the area of cataloguing is the first of several where the one-person librarian should be "encouraged to question whether the accepted practices learned in graduate school are necessary for this collection." (6) The importance of cataloguing lies in the fact that it enables an item to be quickly and easily found within the library, and the one-person librarian has to take into account the probability that clients as well as the librarian will be likely to use the catalogue, in the librarian's absence. This would certainly be the case in the Institute, and therefore any catalogue had to be both carefully tailored to the Institute's

information needs and easily used by Institute personnel. St. Clair and Williamson stress the importance of consistency in the use of the cataloguing policies that are adopted (7), while Karpuk adds to this the fact that "consistency in adapting and simplifying cataloguing ... to maximise the service to library clientele can double for good longer-range planning" (8), if the librarian considers future developments as well as current cataloguing needs.

The author had these factors in mind when working out the best way of creating a catalogue. The question of creating records in-house as opposed to bringing in records from outside sources such as the British Library's BLAISE automated service had to be carefully considered. In the light of the cost of such records and the fact that the relatively small size of the collection did not make the number of hours involved in cataloguing it unworkable, it was decided that the librarian could carry out the work involved in cataloguing the books. The two main decisions that then had to be taken concerned the level of description required and the form of catalogue that would be created.

Turning to the description first, the author felt that the maxim of keeping things as simple as possible was a good starting point. Following the advice in Webb (9), a cataloguing slip was drawn up, with the following headings: author; title; edition; volume; place, publisher and date

of publication; number of pages; illustrations and maps, etc.; series; classification number; ISBN number; accession number. Space was also given for notes where they were considered necessary, particularly regarding subject details. The original slip was made up on computer and printed out, and copies were then made on a photocopier.

The author took an opportunity to have a practice run with the cataloguing slip one afternoon, with a small number of books from the library, and found it easy and quick to use. Using the slip, one would expect that records of the limited number of books already in the library could be completed in a matter of days. Cataloguing in Publication data (CIP) was found in about half of the books catalogued by the author, and provided useful information, including some subject headings that the author felt could be usefully added to the record in the notes section. CIP data cannot be relied upon to provide all the cataloguing information needed by the library, but there is no reason why it should not be taken and adapted where it is provided, as just one short-cut available in a one-person library.

While discussing the cataloguing slip with Dr. Coles on one occasion, the author was asked why the catalogue could not be put directly onto computer. The quick answer to this was that at that point the whole question of a computerised information system was still under review, and

in any case, to wait for a system to be installed before cataloguing the books would have caused an unnecessary delay in the creation of a catalogue. The author also felt that the idea that cataloguing data could be input directly from the books was unworkable: it is simply much easier to sit at a desk with the books and slips than to struggle with the books before a working computer. The librarian at Spurgeon College library found this to be the case when entering data onto a newly adopted system, and says that "inputting data from cards was much easier to manage than direct from the books themselves", which was "time-consuming and cumbersome." (10) It is also anticipated that unless a computer is made available for the librarian's sole use, which is unlikely at present, there will be a degree of competition for computer time, and having the information available on a prepared slip will mean that it will be ready to be input at the most convenient time.

The link between the immediate creation of cataloguing slips and the future development of computer records is the formation of a card catalogue, to provide access to the books through author, title and subject headings. It is therefore proposed to order the necessary stationery and equipment for a card catalogue from Covenant Ministries' stationers as soon as possible, so that the cards can be made up and filed quickly once the slips are completed. This gives the advantage of providing a usable catalogue

within a short period of time, hopefully within a month of the librarian beginning work, and it will be possible to update it on a regular basis as new items are added to the collection.

7.3 A loans system for the library

Webb believes that for a small, specialised library, the aim of a loans system is the keeping of efficient records that show exactly where items are, rather than the imposition of restrictions and limitations on borrowing, and that it should be made "as simple and flexible as possible." (11) Having said that, the author was told by the Chairman of the Board of Directors that it might be necessary to keep firm checks on the use of items from the library by certain individuals, and it was recognised that even for a small library a definite policy of established procedures is necessary. (12) Mr. Jones added that these procedures should be the same for everyone in the organisation, and the author anticipates a period of adjustment when new rules are adopted and enforced in the library - a certain amount of polite but firm persuasion may be necessary as users become acquainted with the rules!

Any procedures adopted by the library must be easily explained to the users. There will be occasions when the librarian will not be present in the library, because of the part-time nature of her work or the unusual hours

likely to be worked by users, and the loans system will have to be self-performed. It would be unreasonable to expect users to limit their use of the library to the hours when a librarian is available to deal with loans, and they must be given every incentive to follow loan procedures so that records are kept up-to-date. A manual system will be much more practical than an automated one for this reason, as one could not expect all users to learn the correct procedures for entering a circulation programme and complete transactions accurately when the librarian is absent. If it becomes necessary in future, the question of an automated circulation programme could be looked at again, but it is felt that at present the best course is to keep procedures as simple as possible.

Since the author had no experience in this area to draw on the advice given by Sheila Webb proved very helpful (13), and of the options discussed by her the use of a single record book card seemed most appropriate for the library in question. With the limited number of users at present, there will be no need for borrower tickets to be used, as names will be identified on the book card, and all likely borrowers will be known to the librarian. Where self-service is necessary, the user will simply have to fill in his name and the date on the card, and leave it in a clearly marked place for later filing, and this procedure should be easily learnt and used by borrowers. Although it is not proposed to enforce time limits on the borrowing of

books at present, because it should be easy to keep track of the comparatively few items involved, the imposition of time limits in future because of increased use of the library would be readily accommodated by the addition of a date label to the books. In the meantime, the book card system requires a pocket to be fixed in each book, and these should be ordered immediately together with the cards; they could be added to the books at the same time as the catalogue records are created, and the system put into operation almost immediately.

7.4 Classification

The expressed intention of the Directors of the Institute to have an open-access library (14), and the need for users to be able to find items of a similar subject for themselves, meant that classification had to be considered at an early stage. Mr. Jones made it clear that in his opinion any classification scheme had to be acceptable to an international audience, and was possibly thinking of the Library of Congress scheme since he had lived in the United States for a number of years. This did not however take into account the fact that classification is primarily intended as an organisational tool for a specific library and its users, and that any future links and exchange of books, for example, with overseas libraries would not rely on a classification number alone.

The Institute's library needed a scheme that would be suitable for its wide ranging subject areas and relatively easy to assign, and familiarity to the majority of users would also be an advantage. The idea of creating a classification schedule specifically for the library was quickly rejected, as the author's lack of experience put this out of the question, and in any case, in the view of St. Clair and Williamson, librarians "are strongly recommended to use a recognised scheme of classification."

(15) This has to be set against the warning by Ferguson and Mobley that "traditional classification schemes may not necessarily solve the problems of organizing special library collections" (16), but if it is accepted that a degree of compromise may be necessary between the ideal and the expedient, an existing and widely recognised scheme could be made to work for the Institute's collection.

The author's familiarity with the Dewey Decimal Classification scheme made it an obvious choice for the library, a choice that was further supported by the fact that regular users could reasonably be expected to have some experience of the scheme through their normal use of public libraries. The use of Dewey also offers the advantage cited by Karpuk of "consistency with national standards." (17) Karpuk again emphasises the usefulness of CIP data in providing classification numbers, as it reduces the need for "determining numbers 'from scratch'" (18), and the author did in fact add the numbers to the

cataloguing slips that were made up as a trial, where CIP data was found. It can therefore be anticipated that some classification will be achieved as a part of the cataloguing process, but there will still be a good number of books that will require original classification before the collection can be properly organised on the shelves.

This additional classification could be achieved in a number of ways, but the discovery that the Institute had subscribed to the British Library's BLAISE system prompted the author to investigate the options that opened up. The idea of buying in full records has already been discussed and rejected as too expensive, although it would obviously always be an option at a later date; the author found, however, when asking advice from British Library representatives at a library exhibition, that it is possible to call up records on a "browse" option and incur only connection-time charges. Using the author or title details from completed catalogue slips, it should be possible to access records and note down the classification numbers in the minimum time necessary, at a relatively small cost. It does after all make sense to use the BLAISE facility that has been subscribed to, and hopefully the majority of books will be classified in this way.

Only experience will show how many books will remain unclassified, and the librarian will have to be prepared to recommend additional methods as necessary. The purchase of

a set of Dewey schedules may prove to be an essential expense, but the author feels that such a course will be best undertaken in the light of experience and further investigations, when more informed advice can be given. In the meantime, once the classification numbers have been added to the catalogue records, individual books can be physically classified and the shelf arrangements adapted as necessary. The timing of this will follow on from the initial cataloguing activity, and will depend to some extent upon the librarian spending time with Mr. Coles in familiarising herself with the BLAISE system, so as to make the most efficient use of the connection time. The author would expect to have the bulk of the initial classification work completed by December, 1992.

7.5 Organising the non-book material

As already indicated, the Institute's library has a large collection of pamphlets and other non-book items, which are at present held in box files in no particular order. The immediate task where these are concerned will be to go through the files in turn and weed out items wherever possible, at the same time identifying common themes under which material can be grouped. Each file should then be provided with an index sheet on which the contents are noted in as much detail as is considered necessary. Indexing the pamphlets will open up the collection, which at present is virtually unusable because there are no

records of what it contains, and no one has time to search through the whole collection for relevant items.

The intention of indexing the material rather than cataloguing and classifying it was confirmed by St. Clair and Williamson, who recommend keeping cataloguing to a minimum (19), and lay down as a rule: "do not classify anything unnecessarily." (20) Ferguson and Mobley also state that much of the printed material dealt with by special libraries does not "lend itself to conventional handling", but is only "handled adequately by the techniques of indexing and/or abstracting." (21) The priority for the Institute will be to provide guidelines as to what the files contain that can be quickly and easily scanned. Ultimately, the indexing information can be added to the computer records for even better access. Although it is an important activity, the organising of the non-book collection will lend itself to being accomplished on an ongoing basis, rather than as an immediate priority. For example, it could be useful as a task that could be taken up for short periods, as a break from a concentrated session of cataloguing.

7.6 Organising the journals collection

The importance of the journals collection to the Institute has already been acknowledged, and its organisation warranted careful consideration. The first

factor that becomes obvious when dealing with a collection of journals is that it can quickly become physically unwieldy and difficult to house. Any policies must include procedures for dealing with back copies of journals, and in the case of the Institute's existing collection that would mean decisions being made on the files in the library. Back copies of Time magazine, for example, occupied a large number of files and took up a complete run of shelves. This could not be an efficient use of the limited space available.

It is therefore proposed that all the back copies of journals in the library be scanned for relevant articles, which could then be photocopied and filed elsewhere. This could again be an ongoing activity to which a number of hours are dedicated each week, to fit in around other activities. There is certainly a case for imposing a one year limit on the storage of most journals, particularly as the important currency factor obviously becomes less relevant with time. This would mean that a large proportion of the existing collection could be disposed of, once relevant articles have been photocopied, thus creating more space immediately. As soon as the collection is up-to-date, procedures should be established for indexing journals as they come into the library, followed by regular weeding and photocopying where necessary as copies reach the yearly deadline. A computer index of all relevant articles would again be the ultimate goal.

7.7 Comments

The first observation that can be made about the process of planning the means of gaining access to the information held in a collection is that one should be continually asking oneself what is best for the particular library involved. Any policies should be geared towards the circumstances of the library and the needs of the clientele, and in this respect no two libraries will ever have exactly the same plans and goals. The benefit of the planning will be felt as soon as the librarian starts work, as it will be possible to start realising a number of the goals immediately.

Time will have to be carefully planned out in order to balance the demands of the different tasks that have been set, and there will obviously be a period of intense activity while the current collection is organized. The variety of jobs involved does at least mean that by spreading and alternating the tasks across a period of time it will be possible to avoid monotony while still getting work done on schedule. One of the lessons learnt by the author is the practicality of using what is readily available, such as CIP information. In this way it will be possible to achieve a good proportion of the work, and the experience gained can then be used when taking potentially expensive decisions like the need to purchase a set of Dewey Schedules.

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CHAPTER 8

DEVELOPING SERVICES TO USERS

8.1 Introduction

The duties and responsibilities of a librarian, in what is after all a "service profession" (1), go beyond the development and organisation of a library's collection. It is "the depth and breadth of service provided to users" that characterises a special library, according to Ahrensfield (2), and White writes that "in order to provide more than a basic, reactive service, the library manager must make clients aware of the enhanced professional services that the library can and should perform." (3) St. Clair and Williamson emphasise the fact that in a one-person library, the librarian carries the sole responsibility for seeing that the organisation of the collection is "complemented, and indeed enhanced, by the library's special skill in providing personalised library service." (4)

It is surely one of the attractive features of being a one-person librarian that the opportunity exists to work closely with users in providing services that increase the benefit they receive from the library; in fact, the initiative for any proposals for enhanced services "must come from the library staff." (5) The author was aware that in planning the development of the Institute's library the

responsibility for providing as full and beneficial a service as possible lay very much with her. The main focus of the first few months would in this case have to be the setting up of a service and the organisation of the existing collection, and it would be impractical to aim for a full range of services immediately, as this would impose too much pressure on both staff and resources. The best course of action was thought to be to concentrate on those services specifically mentioned by the Directors as being desirable, and to promote those wherever possible.

8.2 A current awareness service for users

A current awareness service was acknowledged to be very useful by the Directors of the Institute, and Webb confirms that such a service helps to "ensure that maximum benefit is derived from the stock." (6) Knowing what is coming in to the library from the various sources available has to be of benefit to users as they plan their own work, and will promote use of the library. It is envisaged that the service could start in a general way with the journals, particularly as many will be coming directly into the library rather than to users. The copying and circulation of contents pages is one form of service that is widely promoted in the literature, although one drawback that is noted is the tendency for titles to obscure the true content of the articles. While being aware of this, it is proposed that a trial period is initiated for the

circulation of contents pages, with an assessment of its usefulness after four to six weeks. Users would of course be able to visit the library or request photocopies of any relevant articles that were indicated by the contents pages.

If the trial proves unsatisfactory, the service could be expanded to include the information provided by the regular scanning and indexing of journals that will become a regular part of the library's duties. Relevant articles could be included in a bulletin that will need to be issued on a regular basis, and which could also provide details of new acquisitions in the book collection, video recordings, major newspaper articles, etc.. The provision of this service presupposes two things: a commitment of time from the librarian in making up the bulletin; and a knowledge of the information requirements of the Institute personnel. Time may well be a precious commodity in the first few months of setting up the library, but it will be a worthwhile commitment if it results in good relations with users.

The librarian will be able to draw on the information gained from the interview process when needing to know the particular subjects which might interest users, but this is an area in which regular updating will be necessary, to increase effectiveness in all aspects of the library's work. There will have to be frequent dialogue with users on

their current subjects and the librarian will need to keep abreast of the work of the Institute. Since the next stage of a current awareness service is the Selective Dissemination of Information (SDI), which serves more individualised information needs than is possible in a bulletin, the library will work towards providing this service for key users, as the day-to-day running of the library becomes established and the fields of interest of users are more clearly identified. In this way, the library will be helping users to keep abreast of news and developments in their fields of interest, although the librarian should always be aware of the warning given by White that busy individuals actually need less information rather than more - what they get just has to be very relevant. (7) St. Clair and Williamson also point out that SDI is only valid "if the professional who received the material wants it and uses it" (8), and the onus is therefore on the librarian to seek continuous feedback on the usefulness of the service, in order to avoid wasting both staff and client time.

8.3 The addition of abstracts to computer records

The immediate goal once a computerised system is up and running will obviously be to provide basic records for all the material in the library as quickly as possible, with the bulk of the work completed before the official opening of the Institute. In the longer term, however, the

value of records will be considerably enhanced by the addition of abstracts wherever appropriate, because of the increased number of access points that they offer the system. Mr. Coles specifically mentioned the importance of abstracts when "making initial searches" because of the help they offer in choosing relevant items. (9) There is no doubt that the creation of abstracts to a professional standard is a time-consuming job that is best performed by someone with experience in the work and an understanding of the subjects covered, and the author is aware that neither time nor expertise will be available within the library in the near future. The purchase of abstracts from a commercial source will have to be considered, and the expense set against the value of the records retrieved in this way, but such a study has not been considered relevant to this present work.

The author has also taken note of a suggestion by Mr. Coles that readers might be asked to provide abstracts of books that they take out of the library, perhaps by the use of slips provided with each book. The obvious disadvantages of relying on this method are the difficulties inherent in asking inexperienced and busy individuals to perform such a service, and the fact that it depends upon books being taken out before they can be abstracted. On the positive side, any abstracts written in this way would benefit from the writers presumably knowing at least a little about the subject covered by the book involved, and the points noted

down would be relevant to Institute personnel and therefore to future readers. While not a complete answer, it would certainly be worthwhile setting up a trial for such a procedure at some point in the future.

8.4 Performing searches for users

Being able to provide users with the information that they need at any given time must be counted as one of the most satisfying parts of the librarian's work, as it not only serves to fulfil a special library's function of meeting its parent organisation's information requests, but also emphasises the important part that the librarian can play in the work of that organisation. The author wants very much to be seen as an asset to the Institute and an essential part of its workforce once working as the librarian, and intends to create a positive impression by responding to information requests as fully and quickly as possible. The Directors made it clear that they considered that a vital part of the librarian's role was to know where to find information both in the collection and elsewhere, and such knowledge will serve to save users valuable time. Ashworth says that the concept of saving users' time is a vital one for a special library, and that "users and library staff work together in their search for information." (10) St. Clair and Williamson confirm that there can be two-way benefits from this process, when they quote Ruth Finer's statement that "there is something

particularly pleasing about using one's skills and experience to supply information that otherwise might not have been traced." (11)

The author is aware that the usefulness and depth of the searches performed by the librarian will be greatly enhanced by a working knowledge of the on-line databases available to the Institute, and intends to familiarise herself with them as soon as possible. Although Mr. Coles will not need to enlist the librarian's help in their use, other users are not as familiar with the computerised sources; Mr. Jones specifically said that having someone available to conduct searches on computer would help users such as himself who waste time and money when they try to access the databases. (12)

The immediate implementation of this goal should not be too time-consuming for the librarian because of the limited number of users who are currently likely to ask for help, and it will be more a matter of making a response to information requests a priority among all the other calls on time as the service is set up. Eventually, however, increasing use of the library will make this a larger part of the librarian's responsibilities, with the need to provide a service in response to telephone or postal queries a distinct possibility. This is an exciting rather than a daunting prospect, however, as a wider vision for the development of the library has to include the opening

up of its resources to a far greater prospective clientele.

8.5 Alternative sources of information

It would be unrealistic to expect the Institute's library to meet all the information needs of its users, and even as the collection grows, practical and budgetary considerations will mean that it will never be possible to hold all the items that might provide useful material. Space limitations and budget constraints will have to guide decisions as to the most relevant and cost-effective purchases, with all parties being aware that any subsequent gaps in the collection will have to be met with information from other sources. The Directors showed that they are in fact aware of the need for cooperation, and Mr. Jones mentioned the importance of establishing links with local libraries, and of finding out if "they have got what we lack." (13) Cooperation, of course, implies two parties receiving mutual benefit from an association, and it has to be accepted that the Institute may not be able to offer much in return to ,say, a large public library. That will become clearer with time, and in the meantime the author believes that the first step will be to contact libraries, starting with those in the Coventry area, and begin to build up a relationship with key individuals - making the Institute known, and preparing the ground for future requests for help.

The responsibility of the librarian to promote any links that are necessary is confirmed by Ahrensfield, who writes that "one of the most important aspects of the librarian's job is to know, or be able to locate, outside sources that can be of assistance in locating authoritative information on unfamiliar subjects." (14) Such sources are not only found in public libraries, of course. The librarian will need to build up a file of potentially useful contacts, including specialist libraries, organisations that work in a field of interest to the Institute, government agencies, and even commercial information brokers. The scanning of journals and newspapers may well provide details of possible sources, if the librarian keeps this need in mind, and the file could be used to bring together and coordinate all the sources used by individual members of the Institute at present.

The value of personal contacts should not be underestimated, as already indicated in relation to public libraries. The author acknowledges that she has few personal contacts to draw on at present, but that will come with time, and knowing where to start looking for information is one advantage of having undertaken the Master's course. Personal membership of organisations is one option which offers the possibility of contacts with others in a similar field, and the author is seriously considering joining ASLIB, not the least because of their One Man Band group. The cost of such membership has to be

weighed against the benefits it offers, and it may be that the option of restricted membership of just the OMB group is more feasible at first. The Institute may also be prepared to sponsor all or part of the membership fees if presented with a viable case for the librarian joining this, or any other, organisation. Visits to library exhibitions have also already provided the author with a number of introductions to individuals or organisations that might bear fruit in the future; these include a company that offers a range of library and information services, and which has recently been set up less than thirty miles from the Institute. The key to finding alternative sources of information seems to be an awareness of the need to take every opportunity to make contact with such sources, while never forgetting to store details for future reference.

8.6 Comments

The immediate implication of the need to provide additional services to users would seem to be that the demands of those services have to be balanced against all the other essential work that will need to be done in the library over the first few months of operation. It may not be possible to offer a full service or devote as much time as is really necessary to the various aspects outlined in this chapter, but it is still vital for both library and librarian to be seen to be offering more than just a

clerical service. The Institute expects a professional library that offers real benefits to its users, and it will never be too soon to begin to provide that service.

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10. ASHWORTH, W. Special librarianship, 1979, p. 10.
11. ST. CLAIR & WILLIAMSON, ref. 1, p. 132.
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CHAPTER 9

CONCLUSION

9.1 Introduction

In concluding this dissertation it is necessary to look back through the work and identify those issues which were found to influence the plans that were made. The plans themselves that will be summarised here were not created in a vacuum or indeed for an ideal situation where all the resources necessary to create an "instant library" would be instantly available, but were shaped by a number of themes and circumstances that together are peculiar to the library and the Institute. Some of those themes might be relevant to anyone else who is in the situation of setting up a library service, however. The author aimed throughout the text to highlight her experiences and those factors which were found to be most helpful or otherwise, but they will be gathered together here in order to offer advice to others who might be in a similar situation.

9.2 Plans for the library

The author found that with such a wide variety of materials to consider and so many areas needing attention, it was essential to divide the planning into manageable sections, which could then be addressed in turn. The first step towards this was the logical progression from finding

out about special libraries in general to the specific assessment of the library environment, and this led to the identifying of the framework upon which the plans could be based. The interviews with the directors of the Institute indicated the goals which were important for the library to achieve, and it was then possible to work out the best way of putting each one into action. The plan which resulted from this took its timing from an understanding of the need to have a credible service in operation before the official launch of the Institute. It can be summarised as follows:

| <u>MONTH</u> | <u>ACTION</u> |
|--------------|--|
| SEPT. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">* Setting up the audio/visual collection.* Survey on centralising the journals.* Ordering equipment and stationery.* Contact Systematic Upgrade re. Personal Librarian training.* Liaison on newspaper cuttings with colleague.* Cataloguing to begin.* Indexing of journals and non-book material to be done as possible. |
| OCT. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">* Complete cataloguing of current collection.* Card catalogue created.* Continue indexing.* Begin loans system.* Work on computer programs begun.* Begin use of BLAISE to find classification nos.* Trial period for current awareness service. |

- NOV. * Continued work on indexing, classification, and
 computer programmes.
- * Expand current awareness service.
- DEC. * Complete classification and organise shelves
 correctly.
- * Bring newspaper cuttings service in-house.
- * Prepare to input information to computer
 records.
- JAN.- * Create computer records.
- MARCH * Begin adding abstracts to records.

As well as this work being done in the library, there will also be other, ongoing tasks which are harder to time, such as the enquiry service, building of reference files for the librarian's use, and contacts with other sources of information. At the same time, it is impossible to put a cut-off date on activities such as cataloguing and indexing as the collection is not static, and will be growing while all the initial activity is going on. The continued plan for the library will have to take these regular activities into account.

9.3 Underlying themes which influenced the planning

9.3.1 The one-person library

The reality of working in a one-person library is indeed that there is only one person to do the work, and

this included planning the development of the library. The experience (or inexperience) and character of the author were bound to influence the final plans, although they were balanced by research and the need to consult with the directors. A more experienced librarian would probably have approached the issues in a different way, although inexperience did mean that nothing was taken for granted, and that all the issues were looked at in the light of the needs of the library and its users.

The independence possible in a one-person library also brings the responsibility to see that the goals are worked out, and that their progress is constantly evaluated against the original plans. It has to be acknowledged, however, that librarians are not superhuman and that there are limitations on what one person can do. Outside help will have to be considered where the workload is too great for one person to achieve within a specified time limit, or the effectiveness of the library will be greatly reduced. It is also necessary to accept compromises at first in areas such as the news cuttings, where a reduced service is preferable to the alternatives of no service at all or of imposing too great a strain on the workload. Short-cuts may be helpful, but always bearing in mind that the library is expected to expand in future, and that policies adopted now will have to be able to cope with increased use.

Finally, the commitment of the librarian to the aims

of the parent organization is especially necessary in a one-person library. It will be shown by a desire to achieve the best possible library in the circumstances, and the valid contribution that the library is then able to make. In return, the librarian has the opportunity to experience a uniquely close relationship with clients, and to participate in their work in a very satisfying way.

9.3.2 The role of the librarian

The author wants to play an active role in the work of the Institute through the services provided by the library, and is now in a much better position to see how that might be achieved. Developing the library can mean much more than just organising the collection, important as that is, and the process of identifying the information needs of the users, that was begun in the interviews, together with positive measures to get that information to them, will be a vital part of the librarian's work. It will be important to ensure that this aspect is not ignored in the first few months, and that the directors see real benefits from the presence of the librarian.

The relationship with the directors, and the opening up of channels of communication, that has already begun will also prove beneficial when the librarian starts work. The author realises that it will be part of her job to implement major changes to the practical running of the

library, and that although policies that affect the users, such as the loans system, will not be introduced without prior consultation, it may well be necessary at times to be firm about what will become standard practices. Mutual cooperation will be essential during this initial period, as the librarian seeks to establish her role and get the job done, while users become familiar with a new regime and service.

9.3.3 Budgetary constraints

In making decisions about the development of the library, the author found that often the need to get things done quickly had to be balanced against the cost of such a course. Unlimited funding would have enabled a far different plan to be proposed, with the opportunity to take advantage of all the resources available to libraries, at a price. The end result would not necessarily have been a better one, however, and in any case it is always necessary to work within the available means. The experience gained will be used in making future decisions as cost-effective as possible as well, since an organisation like the Institute will never be able to afford to waste money.

Experience showed that practical ideas could save money, such as the in-house production of cataloguing slips, although some purchases cannot be avoided. But even when buying items like cards and card holders it will be

possible to choose products sensibly and avoid wasting money. Wherever possible it is also practical to make use of available resources, such as using BLAISE to help with classifying the book collection. It is not cost-effective to subscribe to such facilities and then fail to use them.

Certain potentially expensive decisions can be deferred to a later date without losing time, when there are tasks to be completed first. For this reason it was unnecessary to rush into buying a set of Dewey schedules without first assessing the success rate of obtaining classification numbers in other ways, and comparing long-term costs of using BLAISE with the cost of the schedules.

9.4 Things that the author found helpful

Certain things were found by the author to be particularly helpful and should be highlighted here. Two books proved to be especially appropriate to the work being done. Sylvia Webb gives a wealth of information to anyone setting up an information service (1), and her checklists are very useful, being easily adapted to specific circumstances. St. Clair and Williamson have written a book that is full of information appropriate to those working alone (2), and which the author really appreciated because it is so positive in nature. Both of these books are fully recommended.

Visits to exhibitions were also found to be very useful, and the time and expenses were thought to be a worthwhile investment. Free advance tickets are often provided through journals in the field, as the author soon discovered, and countrywide venues mean that travelling expenses do not have to be prohibitive. It is not in any case necessary to go to all the exhibitions advertised, as there is a good deal of overlap in the exhibitors found at them, even among different exhibition themes such as computers in libraries and library resources. They do provide useful information, however, and the author also found that by taking the initiative in visiting some exhibitions, colleagues such as Dr. Coles were impressed by the commitment shown to the development of the library. This can only serve to increase the credibility of the librarian, and should not be undervalued.

Finally, personal contacts have already proved to be useful to the author, even though they are limited at present. Conversations with staff in the Department at Loughborough University were very helpful, and led to the invitation to the demonstration of Personal Librarian. Within the organization, it will obviously be equally helpful to have access to the expertise of Dr. Coles, but it should also be noted that across the wider organization there are people who can give advice on issues such as the display stands, even though they are not working in the library field. It should always be possible to find someone

to ask for advice.

9.5 The future of the library

The conclusion of this dissertation actually marks the beginning of a new phase for the library of the Institute of World Concerns. The plans that were formulated by the author have been accepted by the directors as being in line with their vision for the library and the part it should play in the work of the Institute, and the author will shortly begin the process of putting them into action. The next few months will see a period of intense activity as the plans are realised, and the library is developed to the stage where it can really begin to meet the increased demands of the future.

It may be appropriate at some point in the future to consider whether the library should preferably be referred to as an information centre, in order to reflect its developing status. Ahrensfield says that many information centres have metamorphosed from special libraries, some of which see the information centre concept as a logical objective. (3) Among the characteristics of information centres are a wider variety of non-standard materials, a greater depth of control and analysis of information, and greater involvement in the preparation of reports, etc. There will certainly be a continual need to reassess the work of the library, and to seek to offer more advanced

services, and that may in time mean a change of title. At present, however, the vision of the directors is for a library. The author has had the task of formulating the plans by which that vision can be achieved, and has found that, as one writer put it, "planning a new ... special library facility can be a very satisfying, exhilarating experience." (4) The process of outworking those plans is expected to be equally satisfying and exciting.

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APPENDIX 1

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

The following questions provided the framework for the interviews:

- * Are you using the library at the moment?
- * What do you use the library for?
- * Is the library your first source of information at present?
- * Would you like to see the receipt of journals centralised in the library?
- * What do you expect the library to do for you?
- * Where do you obtain material for the library?
- * What do you expect from the librarian?
- * Who is the librarian responsible to, and what responsibility will she have as far as the budget is concerned?
- * What developments do you anticipate for the Institute in the future?

The interviewees were also asked to provide written answers to the following questions:

- * Please name those individuals whom you see as having an active interest in the library, and who would be likely to use its resources in the near future.

- * Please list specific subjects that are of interest to the Institute at this time.
- * What areas of research are you particularly involved in?
- * What journals do you regularly take and pass on to the library?
- * Do you pass on other material?
- * Would you find a current awareness service useful?

APPENDIX 2

SUBJECTS OF INTEREST TO THE INSTITUTE

- * The family
- * Women's issues
- * Racism
- * Ageism
- * Euthanasia
- * Social and pastoral aspects of AIDS
- * Statistics on costs of public and social services

- * Human rights
- * Refugees
- * Third World relations and economic structures
- * Ethics in the political arena
- * Nationalism and ethnicity
- * War and peace
- * Conflict resolution and mediation

- * The environment
- * Water conflict

- * Namibia independence
- * South Africa
- * U.S. foreign policy
- * The Middle East conflict - Israel and Palestine
- * Islam - Iran and Iraq

APPENDIX 3

THE POLICY STATEMENT THAT WAS SENT TO THE DIRECTORS

July, 1992

Dear

As you know, the interview that I had with you in May was an important part of the preliminary stages of the work on my dissertation. The interviews with yourself and other Institute Directors were intended to identify your needs and expectations regarding the Institute's library. The information that was obtained gave a focus to the next stage in the process of planning the development of the library. All of the points raised during the interviews were coordinated and developed into a series of goals and objectives that provide targets for the library to work towards.

The dissertation will document the investigations and decision making that went into the formulation of these goals and objectives, but it is also clear that you should have some form of feedback on the results of the interviews, and the opportunity to comment on the decisions that I have taken. For this reason, I have drawn up the accompanying policy statement, and I would appreciate it if you would take the time to read it and make any comments you feel are necessary.

The statement comprises:

1: A mission statement for the library, which defines its purpose, and recognises the prime motivation of supporting the Institute as the parent organisation.

2: Details of the goals which have been identified as being necessary for the library. The interviews revealed three broad areas in which action was thought essential, and this is reflected both in the mission statement and also in the grouping of goals. The goals are statements of what is wanted for the library, the basis of the policies which determine the strategies for creating the desired service. This document does not include details of the objectives which convert each goal into a set of actions: however, it should be pointed out that objectives are specific and achievable within a set date, and in this case have been given a timescale by taking the proposed official launch in March, 1993, as the date by which one should expect a professional library service to be operational.

3: A checklist drawn from both goals and objectives which establishes some priorities for action through the identification of short-term and longer-term aims.

THE LIBRARY OF THE INSTITUTE OF WORLD CONCERNS

A POLICY STATEMENT

Mission Statement

The mission of the library of the Institute of World Concerns is to support the Institute's stated aim of "collecting, evaluating and disseminating information on issues of world concern:

- through the development and organisation of a relevant collection that lends credibility to the Institute's work;

- by providing access to the information held in that collection;

- by providing access to alternative sources of relevant information.

It is also the library's intention to develop services that further enhance the reputation of the Institute and assist its members.

Goals for the library

1. The development of a relevant and credible collection

1.1 GOAL: To support the Institute's Directors in the building up of a comprehensive background collection on topics relevant to the Institute's remit.

1.2 GOAL: The development of the general reference section.

1.3 GOAL: The creation and development of an audio/visual collection, to incorporate video recordings of televised material.

1.4 GOAL: To perform a comprehensive newspaper cuttings service within the library.

1.5 GOAL: To centralise the receipt and display of journals within the library.

2. The provision of access to the information held in the collection

2.1 GOAL: To create a catalogue of all the books in the collection.

2.2 GOAL: The classification of the book collection using

a generally accepted classification scheme.

2.3 GOAL: The organisation and indexing of the collection of pamphlets, reports and other non-book material.

2.4 GOAL: The indexing of relevant articles found in the journals collection.

2.5 GOAL: The adoption of a loans system.

2.6 GOAL: The adoption and setting up of a computerised information retrieval system, with databases that are able to deal with the variety of materials found in the library.

3. The further development of services to users

3.1 GOAL: To provide a current awareness service for users.

3.2 GOAL: The addition of abstracts to the computer records.

3.3 GOAL: To perform comprehensive information searches for users.

3.4 GOAL: To establish links and promote cooperation with alternative sources of information.

Comments

The majority of the goals outlined in the preceding statement are primarily concerned with the immediate priority of establishing a library that is both operational and effective. In this sense they are more short-term than goals are normally intended to be. However, the practices that are established as these goals are implemented, through the objectives that have also been determined, will become the ongoing policies that enable the library to meet the increased demands of the future.

One motivation behind many of the goals is the creation of a library service through which the librarian plays an active and positive role in the meeting of the information needs of the Institute.

PRIORITIES FOR ACTION: A CHECKLIST

Immediate action/Short-term aims:

- The establishing of the audio/visual collection.
- Liaison with Roger Day on the development of the newspaper cuttings service.
- A survey on the receipt of journals.
- A display stand for the journals.
- The ordering of cataloguing and loans stationary and equipment.
- A final decision on the suitability of Personal Librarian for the library's information retrieval requirements.

Preparation for the official launch/Longer-term aims:

- Newspaper cuttings service performed in-house.
- The cataloguing of the book collection and creation of a card index.
- Classifying the books.
- Creating an index of journal articles.
- Creating an index of pamphlets and similar material.
- Setting up databases for the different types of material.
- Inputting information to the databases - order of priority:
 - books;
 - news cuttings;
 - journal articles;

- pamphlets, etc.;
- audio/visual material.
- Initiating a current awareness service.
- Developing links with other information services, and personal contacts.

Ongoing Activities

- Building files of potentially useful publishers' information.
- Making recommendations on useful reference titles.
- Creating abstracts.
- Responding to information requests.

RESPONSE TO POLICY STATEMENT

I have provided this additional sheet for you to note any comments that you may have on the policy statement. For convenience sake I have divided the sheet into sections that roughly correspond to the statement, but please feel free to use the sheet as you wish, and ignore any sections that you don't wish to comment on. Please return the sheet to me as soon as possible, as I will take account of your comments in my dissertation.

Thank you for your help.

Kate.

1. Comments on the mission statement:
2. Comments on the goals:
 - 2.1 The development of a relevant and credible collection.
 - 2.2 Providing access to the information in that collection.
 - 2.3 The further development of services.

3. Comments on the checklist, and the timing of the goals:

4. Additional comments or suggestions:

