IBRARY A Newsletter of the Oberlin College Library PERSPECTIVES

Number Sixteen March 199'

Faculty Workshop on Information Literacy

During the January 1997 Winter Term well over fifty faculty members from both the College of Arts and Sciences and the Conservatory participated in a workshop on information literacy. The two main goals of the workshop were 1) to acquaint faculty more fully with the new electronic information technologies, which have now become an essential aspect of using academic libraries, and 2) to begin discussion of how information literacy might be more effectively incorporated into the curriculum. Over the course of four weeks the participants met to listen to lectures, ask questions, share ideas, and work on lab exercises.

The workshop consisted of nine hour-long sessions (see outline), the first eight of which focused on core information



Faculty at Information Literacy Workshop

literacy issues, such as understanding the structure of information and knowing how to access and evaluate it. These sessions were taught by librarians from the

main and branch libraries. At the ninth session, which dealt with curricular issues, the participants discussed ways of incorporating

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OBIS Now on the Web

It's now possible to search OBIS, the library's online catalog and circulation system, using a World Wide Web browser, such as Netscape or Microsoft Explorer. OBIS is accessible through the Library homepage (http://www.oberlin.edu/~library/OCL_homepage.html), or you can search it directly at: http://obis.oberlin.edu.

One of the advantages of having a Web interface for OBIS is the capability of linking directly to other sites on the World Wide Web

from within an OBIS record. For example, if you perform a title search in OBIS for the Henry James Review you would receive the following message:

CLICK ON THE FOLLOW-ING TO

Connect to *Henry James Review* (Online)

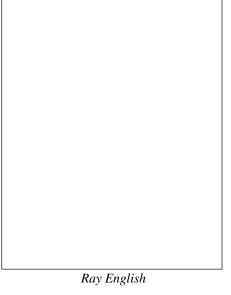
By following that link campus users can go directly to the full-text of the journal, which is located on the Project Muse server at Johns Hopkins University. This feature will become increasingly useful to

researchers as more and more Internet resources are cataloged and their "addresses" (or URLs, Uniform Resource Locators) are included in OBIS records.

Although the new OBIS Web interface is quite functional, please note that it is still under development. There are some features of the standard, terminal version of OBIS that are not yet available in the Web version, so for some types of searches the terminal version of OBIS is preferable.

From the Director

What's All This Information Literacy Stuff Anyway?



It's downright amazing what one can do with the new electronic information technologies. From any well-equipped networked computer I can quickly produce a bibliography of recent criticism of a Shakespeare play, and I can read some of that criticism in electronic journals that are accessible through the Internet. I can scan today's New York Times as well as daily newspapers from virtually any major city in the world. I can delve into a collection of rare antislavery materials at the Library of Congress. I can search the *Ency*clopedia Britannica and other online reference sources to find out about a scientific technique that I just heard about. Along the way, whenever I run across print materials that aren't in Oberlin's Library, I can easily use my computer to request them from libraries in Ohio, in other states, or even in other countries. That represents extraordinary access to knowledge and information.

At the same time, my ability to draw on the universe of available information is, to a real extent, dependent on my ability to understand how information is produced, disseminated, and organized as well as how it is accessed. To find what I want, I need to understand the underlying structure of electronic data-

bases and techniques for retrieving information from them. I also need to have a sense of how the electronic world relates to the print world, which is still the foundation of library collections. I especially need to know how to evaluate information in terms of its suitability for my particular purposes. Put another way, I can take full advantage of libraries and the information sources they provide, whether in print or electronic form, only when I have developed a sufficient level of skill in using them. That's roughly what's meant by becoming information literate.

The report on information literacy issued by the General Fac-

ulty Library Committee, as well as the Winter Term faculty workshop on information literacy (both of which are described in the lead article of this issue of Library Perspectives), represent important initiatives for the Library, the faculty, and for Oberlin's undergraduate curriculum. They reflect a growing awareness that Oberlin must do a better job of empowering its students by helping them develop sound information literacy skills. The experience of our reference staff has borne out repeatedly that Oberlin students have noticeable difficulties in using the new information technologies to best advantage. That's the case despite the fact that our library staff work with faculty to teach numerous bibliographic instruction sessions.

Given the complexity of the evolving information environment and the fundamental importance of these skills, it's essential that Oberlin develop a more coordinated curricular approach to information literacy. We are very pleased at the overwhelmingly positive response to both the Library Committee's report and to the faculty Winter Term workshop. Members of the Library staff and I look forward to continuing discussion of these issues.

Ray English Director of Libraries

Center for Research Libraries Collections Now Available Through OhioLINK

The holdings of the Center for Research Libraries in Chicago have been loaded into the OhioLINK central catalog and can now be requested through OhioLINK patron initiated borrowing.

The Center is a non-profit, membership organization which makes available to the scholarly community research materials that are rarely held in North American libraries. The Center has collections of over 3.6 million bound volumes and 1.3 million microforms. Its collections contain large numbers of primary sources, including personal papers, papers of organizations, international government

documents, and American and foreign serials and newspapers. Regional collection strengths include Africa, South Asia, Southeast Asia, and Latin America.

Items held by the Center may be requested like any other item in the OhioLINK system.

Margaret Atwood Delights Capacity Audience at Friends Dinner



Margaret Atwood

Author Margaret Atwood addressed an overflow audience following the Friends of the Library dinner on February 8. In a talk suffused with intelligence and wry humor, Ms. Atwood spoke about her experience as a user of libraries and especially about the research involved in writing Alias Grace, her most recent novel. A major best-seller since its publication in December 1996, Alias Grace tells the story of a young Canadian maidservant who was convicted of participating in a notorious double murder that occurred near Toronto in 1843. In the novel Atwood explores whether Grace Marks was "the cunning female demon many considered her to be" or "simply a terrorized victim."

Atwood first encountered the story of Marks by reading Susanna Moodie's *Life in the Clearings versus the Bush*, an account of nineteenth-century Canadian life. In the 1970s Atwood wrote a televi-

sion script about the story, relying largely on Moodie's account. In delving back into the story to write the novel, she did extensive research and discovered how divergent the historical accounts of Marks were. Newspapers, in particular, expressed viewpoints that coincided with their own political agendas.

Her talk emphasized the importance of historical research for writing fiction. In her words, she finds "the discovery of authentic details helpful in the fabrication of illusions" — that is, in writing novels. Alias Grace is filled with fascinating details taken from original source documents. All of its major elements were suggested by written accounts of the murder or of mid-nineteenth-century life. In writing the novel Atwood said she "stood by solid facts," when they were clear, but also "felt free to invent in the gaps."

Her talk included an explanation of the research behind three different passages of the novel. Herresearch explored such topics women's fashions in the 1840s, whether or not jellyfish inhabited the harbors of northern Ireland, the likely origin of the name of a particular quilt pattern, and psychological theories prevalent in the mid-nineteenth century. Ms. Atwood noted in particular how remarkable she found it to discover the extent to which Freud's ideas were expressed by earlier thinkers.

Atwood concluded her talk with thoughts about why the past (and why libraries) are important. As ambiguous and difficult as the truth of the past is to discover, it tells us how we got where we are. In her words:

The past no longer belongs only to those who lived in it. The past belongs to those who claim it and are willing to explore it and to infuse it with meaning for those alive today. The past belongs to us, because we are the ones who need it.

Margaret Atwood Signing her Books

Atwood Videotape Available

A videotape of Margaret Atwood's lecture at the Friends of the Library dinner is available on request. The cost of the tape, including shipping and handling, is \$6 for Friends of the Library members.

Request copies from: Friends of the Library, Mudd Center, Oberlin College, Oberlin OH 44074.

Please do not send payment with your request, as you will be billed when the videotape is shipped. Allow four weeks for delivery.

Friends Honor Life Members

The Friends of the Library awarded two life memberships and one special citation at their annual dinner on February 8.

George and Ruth Bent, both of the Oberlin Class of 1952, received life memberships in recognition of their generous support for the Library. The Bents recently established the Walter and Emma Schoeni Endowed Conservatory Library Fund in memory of Mrs. Bent's parents. This fund supports purchases in the areas of Western classical music, light classical music, and folk music of European and American origins. The Bent family also established in 1984 the Eleanor Hopkins Bent Memorial Fund in memory of Mr. Bent's mother, Eleanor Hopkins Bent, Class of 1922. Income from this endowed fund is used primarily for purchases in the field of American art.

Dr. Michael Shinagel, Oberlin Class of 1957, was also awarded a life membership in recognition of his generosity in establishing two endowed book funds.



Sam Goldberg and Mary McGill

Dr. Shinagel created the Owen Paul Thomas Memorial Book Fund in memory of his late friend, Dr. Owen Paul Thomas, Oberlin Class of 1956, who taught English, linguistics, and education at the University of California, Irvine. The fund supports the purchase

Sam Goldberg Presents Life Membership to Ruth and George Bent

of books in the field of American literature. In addition to his own generous gifts to the fund, Dr. Shinagel encouraged other classmates and friends to memorialize Dr. Thomas by contributing to the fund. Dr. Shinagel has recently created an endowed book fund in memory of Howard and Harriet Mitchell that will be used to purchase books in the field of history.

Mary McGill, daughter of the late Professor Barry McGill, received a special citation honoring her father. Professor McGill, who taught European History at Oberlin from 1952-1990, maintained a strong interest in the Library throughout his career. He contributed generously to a fund he established in 1991 to purchase books and other materials for the Science Library in memory of his late wife Barbara McGill, who taught Chemistry at Oberlin in the 1960s and was also an assistant in

the Main Library Serials Department for many years. Until shortly before his death, Professor McGill was a devoted volunteer in the Main Library Special Collections Department, working on a project to index the Oberlin town newspapers.

Library Perspectives, a newsletter for users and Friends of the Oberlin College Library, is issued two times a year.

Printed from an endowed fund established by Benjamin A. and Emiko Custer. Editors: Ray English, Megan Mitchell, and Dan Zager.

Friends Meeting Highlights

At their annual meeting on November 9, 1996, the Friends of the Library discussed the Oberlin Fund and its relationship to the Friends of the Library; saw a demonstration of the new Friends homepage and offered suggestions for its improvement; heard reports from the membership, program, and acquisitions committees; and discussed the progress of the Student Friends of the Library.

The Friends Council approved spending of \$15,000 in Friends funds for special acquisitions for the Library (see related article on this page). The membership also elected new council members and officers for the 1997-98 year. At the conclusion of the meeting, the Friends heard remarks from Samuel Goldberg, the incoming Friends President.

Minutes of the combined Friends Council and Membership meeting are available on the Friends homepage (http://www.oberlin.edu/~library/friends/friends.html) and by request from:

Friends of the Library Mudd Center Oberlin College Oberlin OH 44074-1532

Purchases with Friends Funds

In November the Friends of the Library authorized the use of Friends funds to acquire a variety of resources that will improve library support for selected curricular areas and generally enhance the Library's collections. The following is a summary by category of the most recent Friends purchases:

Materials for New Curricular Areas (\$4,000)

- 1. Asian American Studies. Funds have been provided to acquire books and videocassettes supporting new courses in Asian American studies taught by Professors Benson Tong (History Department) and Linda Vo (Sociology Department). The Library houses the Asian American Resource Center (maintained by the Asian American Alliance) and is working to improve its holdings of books and other materials in Asian American Studies.
- 2. Native American Studies. Courses in Native American Studies have been offered recently by the Anthropology and History Departments. Library holdings in this area will be augmented to support a new course offered by Professor Tong.

3. South Asian Studies. Professors Michael Fisher and Paula Richman offer courses in South Asian history and religion. The Library's collections in this area are growing but still relatively weak. The Library has received a "challenge grant" from an alumnus for \$1,500 to acquire additional South Asian materials, and the Friends have matched this amount.

Major Reference Work (\$2,250)

The Friends continue to support the purchase of the 34 volume *Dictionary of Art* (Grove's Dictionaries, 1996), the definitive English language reference source for art and art history.

Italian Language and Literature (\$635)

The Friends have provided further support to the efforts of Professor Davida Gavioli to fill gaps in our holdings of twentieth-century Italian literature.

Primary Source Materials (\$5.115)

1. William Blake facsimiles. From the 1950's through the 1970's the Trianon Press published fac-

1996-97 Council Friends of the Oberlin College Library

Samuel Goldberg, President Ruth I. Hughes '85, Vice President Nathan A. Haverstock, Secretary Marian H. Baum Paul Erler '32 George & Jane Hannauer '58/'57 Robert H. Jackson Norman Jung '56 Al McQueen '52 Marlene D. Merrill Carl Peterson Kristen Pohlman, 98 Mary E. (Molly) Raphael '67 Barbara Richards '61

Ex-Officio and Appointed
Members
Robert Geitz, Chair,
Faculty Library Committee
Eric Carpenter,
Collection Development
Librarian
Megan Mitchell,
Reference Librarian
Ray English,
Director of Libraries

simile editions of the illustrated works of William Blake (1757–1827) on behalf of the William Blake Trust. Oberlin owns a number of these exquisitely reproduced editions of Blake's poetic texts and engravings. Friends funds will enable the Library to purchase Blake's Illustrations of Dante and Jerusalem.

2. Beethoven score facsimile. Friends funds will also permit purchase of a recently published complete color facsimile of the manuscript score and orchestral parts of Ludwig van Beethoven's

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Honoring Susi: A New Name for Lanyi Fund

The "George A. Lanyi Memorial Book Fund," which was established in 1982 to honor the memory of George A. Lanyi, Professor of Politics at Oberlin from 1950 to 1976, was recently renamed the "George A. and Susan P. Lanyi Endowed Library Acquisitions Fund." The new fund name recognizes the many contributions to Oberlin of Susan P. Lanyi, Professor Lanyi's widow.

The renaming of the Lanyi fund, suggested by Clyde Owan '79 and enthusiastically endorsed by faculty of the Politics Department, was celebrated at a luncheon honoring Susi Lanyi at the Oberlin Inn on November 10, 1996. The occasion also celebrated Mrs.

Lanyi's eightieth birthdav.

Those in attendance at the luncheon included President Dye, William Perlik, Chairman of Oberlin's Board of Trustees, Ray English, Director of Libraries, Harlan Wilson, Chair of the Politics Department, and other faculty from the department.

The new Lanyi Fund bookplate, which bears the original design created by Susi Lanyi in 1982, is displayed at the right.



Lanyi Bookplate

Purchases... from p. 5

Symphony no. 3 in E-flat Major, op. 55 (*Eroica*).

- 3. Piero della Francesca edition. The first volume of the National Critical Edition of the writings of the Renaissance artist Piero della Francesca has been purchased in facsimile. The *Libellus de quinque corporibus regularibus* is the first Renaissance treatise on geometry.
- 4. Roosevelt papers. A full text, indexed database on CD-ROM of the presidential papers of Franklin D. Roosevelt has been purchased with Friends funds. In addition to sixty photographs from the FDR Library, the CD-ROM contains over two thousand documents: transcripts of press conferences, letters, speeches, proclamations, executive orders, and messages to Congress.

Collection Preservation (\$3,000)

The Friends of the Library are assisting in microfilming the 1930–1969 portion of the *Oberlin News Tribune*, a project that likely will

Friends of the Library Spring 1997 Programs

Monday, March 24, 4:30 p.m., Wilder 101

Faculty Book Talk by Thomas Sherman, Emeritus Professor of Biology, Author of *A Place on the Glacial Till: Time, Land, and Nature within an American Town* (Oxford University Press, 1996)

Friday, April 18, 4:00 p.m., Wilder 115

Student Friends Program, Book Talk by Thea Joselow, OC '96, Author of *When Divorce Hits Home: Keeping Yourself Together When Your Family Comes Apart* (Avon Books, 1996)

Friday, May 2, 4:30 p.m., Moffett Auditorium

Faculty Book Talk by Marc Blecher, Professor of Politics, Author of *Tethered Deer: Government and Economy in a Chinese County* (Stanford University Press, 1996) and *China Against the Tides: Restructuring Through Revolution, Radicalism, and Reform*(Pinter/Cassell, 1997)

Saturday, May 24, 3:00 p.m., King 106

Commencement Weekend Program. "Words, Words, Words," Dewey Ganzel, Professor of English

be done over a four-year period at a total cost of approximately \$12,000. The Library's paper copies of the newspaper are deteriorating. The Library will use other funding to film the 1897–1929 portion of the paper.

In Memoriam: Eileen Thornton and Benjamin A. Custer



Eileen Thornton

The Oberlin community was saddened by the recent loss of two librarians whose lives had an important impact on both the Oberlin College Library and the profession of librarianship.

Eileen Thornton, who served as Librarian of Oberlin College from 1956 to 1971, died at the Kendal Retirement Community on January 10, 1997.

Thornton's tenure as Librarian coincided with substantial expansion and growth to the College Library system. She played a central role in planning the new main library, now housed in Mudd Center, and in the construction of branch libraries for the Conservatory of Music and for the sciences. She oversaw the establishment of a collection supporting East Asian Studies, the computerization of library cataloging, the expansion of reference and other public services, and the creation of the Oberlin College Archives.

Born in Wexford, Ireland in 1909, Thornton graduated cum laude from the University of Minnesota in 1931 and earned her Masters Degree from the University of Chicago in 1945. Before coming to Oberlin she held several library positions, including College Librarian at the University of Chicago (from 1942-45) and College Librarian at Vassar College (from 1945-1956). She had lived in Oberlin since her retirement from the college in 1971.

Thornton served on the American Library Association Council and was president of two of ALA's divisions—the Association of College and Research Libraries (from 1957-58) and the Library Administration Division (1967-68). She received a disnipulation of the American Service award from

tinguished service award from the Association of College and Research Libraries in 1989.

Benjamin A. Custer, one of Oberlin's most distinguished alumni librarians, died at the Kendal Retirement Community on January 20, 1997.

A native of Lima, Ohio, Custer graduated from Oberlin in 1931. After earning a degree in library science from Western Reserve University, he held increasingly responsible positions in cataloging and classification at the New York Public Library, the University of California at Los Angeles Library, the Detroit Public Library, and the Library of Congress. From 1956 until his retirement in 1980 he was editor-in-chief of the Dewey Decimal Classification at the Library of Congress. The Dewey classification system is the standard means of organizing library collections in most public and many academic libraries in the United States ,and it is in use by thousands of libraries around the world.

Active in professional library associations, Custer was one of the six founders of the Resources and Technical Services Division of ALA. In 1954-55 he was president of ALA's Cataloging and Classification Division. In 1959 he received ALA's Melville Dewey Award for creative professional achievement.

A devoted volunteer for Oberlin and for the Oberlin College Library, Custer served as a member of the Library Visiting Committee and the Friends of the Library Council from their inception. He and his wife Emiko are among Oberlin's most generous donors, having established a charitable



Benjamin A. Custer

remainder trust that represents one of the largest gifts ever received by the Library.

Because of their important contributions to the Oberlin College Library, Thornton and Custer were named honorary members of the Friends of the Oberlin College Library at the organization's inaugural dinner in 1991. Custer was named Honorary President of the Friends in 1995.

Whitney Pape is New Special Collections Preservation Librarian

On November 1, Whitney Pape began work as Special Collections and Preservation Librarian, succeeding Dina Schoonmaker, who retired in June (see Library Perspectives, September 1996). Whitney earned the Bachelor of Arts (with honors) in French at the University of Connecticut in 1988. Her honors thesis focused on the development of the artist in Proust's Combray (Remembrance of Things Past) and in Joyce's Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man. She spent her junior year in France at the University of Rouen. Whitney holds the Master of Library and Information Science (1996) from the University of Texas at Austin, where she also completed the Certificate of Specialization in Preservation Administration. The preservation administration program involves an ad-



Whitney Pape

ditional twelve hours of coursework (including topics such as environmental monitoring, library buildings, bookmaking and repair, and commercial binding) and a practicum, in which Whitney focused on aspects of communication between the preservation department and other departments of the library (including branch libraries) at UT-Austin.

Whitney intends to function as an advocate for Oberlin's special collections, working to connect resources such as the antislavery collection and fine press books to existing courses in the curriculum. She hopes to increase the use of special collections and eventually to enhance the acquisitions budget for building our special collections.

In the preservation area, where she is quick to credit Dina Schoonmaker for building an active, effective program, Whitney hopes to streamline the book repair process, resulting in more efficient return of materials to the circulating collections. Whitney

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Project Muse Update

The Oberlin College Library began subscribing to Project Muse, the electronic journal publishing project of the Johns Hopkins University Press, in August of 1995 (see *Library Perspectives*, September 1995).

Since that time thirty-five more titles have become available on-line, bringing the total to forty. More titles are slated to appear in 1997, including *Milton Quarterly, Postmodern Culture,* and *Prooftexts.*

For a look at Project Muse, use a World Wide Web browser to visit the "Electronic Periodicals" section of the Oberlin College Library homepage (http://www.oberlin.edu/~library/OCL_homepage.html) or connect directly to Johns Hopkins University (http://muse.jhu.edu/).

Project Muse Titles Now Available On-line:

American Imago American Jewish History American Journal of Mathemat-American Journal of Philology **American Quarterly** Arethusa Bulletin of the History of Medicine Callaloo Configurations **Diacritics** Eighteenth-Century Life **Eighteenth-Century Studies** ELH (English Literary History) The Henry James Review **Human Rights Quarterly Imagine** Journal of Democracy Journal of Early Christian Stud-Journal of the History of Ideas

Journal of Modern Greek Studies

Kennedy Institute of Ethics Journal Late Imperial China The Lion and the Unicorn Literature and Medicine Modern Fiction Studies Modern Judaism **MLN** Modernism/Modernity **New Literary History** Performing Arts Journal Philosophy and Literature Philosophy, Psychiatry, and Psychology The Review of Higher Education Reviews in American History **SAIS Review** Theatre Journal Theatre Topics Wide Angle **World Politics** The Yale Journal of Criticism

Retrospective Conversion at the Conservatory Library

Retrospective conversion—or "recon"—is the process by which card-based cataloging of a library collection is transferred to an online, electronic catalog. This process began in 1986 for the Conservatory Library scores collection (recon for the book collection had already been largely completed at all campus libraries). From July 1986 through June 1990, cataloging was completed for approximately 75 percent of the score titles needing

conversion. Work on the second phase of this project began in August 1995 when Maurine McCourry was hired through funding generously provided for this project by William G. Roe (see *Library Perspectives*, September 1995).

After one and one-half years of work, phase two of Conserva-



Maurine McCourry with Jack Knapp, Conservatory Technical Services Librarian

tory scores recon is progressing extremely well. Voluminous sets of the editions of composers' complete works have been completed, and work is well along on the monumental sets of scores from particular regions and periods. Once these sets have been completed, the third and final phase of the project will

begin. This will involve substantial original cataloging of titles not yet cataloged by other libraries, and therefore not yet accessible in the two large national databases conbibliographic taining records contributed by many of the country's libraries. These titles will include a significant portion of older scores unique to Oberlin—both unpublished works that exist only in the copy held here, and more rare and obscure pub-

lished works that, for one reason or another, are not held by the country's other major music libraries. When this project has been completed, Oberlin students and faculty, as well as remote users of our catalog, will enjoy complete online access to Oberlin's nationally significant music holdings.

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information literacy concepts and skills into their courses and the broader curriculum.

The faculty workshop grew out of a report entitled "Information Literacy and the Oberlin Education," which was issued by the General Faculty Library Committee in September 1996. Stressing the essential importance of information literacy for liberal arts education, the report outlined basic information literacy skills, summarized difficulties Oberlin students experience in using electronic information sources and libraries generally, and called for a more structured approach to information literacy within the curriculum.

At the suggestion of Clayton Koppes, Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, the report was discussed at a meeting of Arts and Sciences Department chairs, many of whom expressed a desire to learn more about new electronic information technologies. That discussion led in turn to the creation of a faculty task force on information literacy, which developed the outline for the information literacy workshop. The task force, chaired by Bob Geitz, Computer Science, included Richard Salter, Computer Science; Terry Carlton, Chemistry; Len Podis, Expository Writing; Gary Kornblith, History; Cynthia Comer, Head of Reference; and Ray English, Director of Li-

A full course outline and accompanying handouts are available on the World Wide Web at: http://www.oberlin.edu/~library/reference/wt97frontdoor.html.

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Information Literacy Workshop Outline

Session:

- 1. Overview of Information Sources and Search Strategies
- 2. Standard Reference Sources
- 3. How Catalogs and Databases are Organized
- 4. Effective Database Searching
- 5. Electronic Indexes
- 6. Lexis/Nexis and Other Full-Text Databases
- 7. Tools for Searching the Web
- 8. Government Documents
- 9. Information Literacy in the Curriculum