

# Back Talk — June 1, 2010

## Southern California State University

### Post Google Super Print and Post Tsunami

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Column Editor: **Anthony (Tony) W. Ferguson** (Library Director, University of Hong Kong; Phone: 852 2859 2200; Fax: 852 2858 9420) <ferguson@hkucc.hku.hk>

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**Eleanor Wireman** sat thinking about what she was going to say to the new president of the **Southern California State University**. Sixty days previous, at about this same time of the day, she had been lost in abstract thought looking, but not really seeing the ocean view, from her office on the third floor atop the main library when a huge wave came up the beachhead pushing cars, trees, and people in front of it into the parking lot adjacent to the library. She had been preparing to join her staff for a semester break BBQ out on the lawn of the library. The lawn and many of the staff were washed back out to sea. As the wave withdrew, she had the feeling that she was back at the **University of Los Vegas** as the ocean view was transformed into a desert like landscape devoid of vegetation for as far as she could see. Then the succeeding two waves returned with even more power and pushed the debris that had been in the library parking lot further into the campus and wiped out nearly all of the library's collections, including the new robotic automated storage and retrieval collection that had been strategically placed below the grass and flowers of the main quadrangle of the university. At the same time the first wave hit, the library's staff had begun enjoying the BBQ. One day she was the director of a library of 4.1 million books and journals plus access to more than 25,000 e-journals and databases with a wonderful caring and creative staff, the next day her staff and the visible portion of her kingdom was gone.

During the first month after the disaster, the focus was on mourning the loss of staff and students. Soon thereafter, however, it seemed that the university's teaching program recovered fairly quickly. Classrooms sprang up in tents, churches, and idle rooms all over their part of the city. The science faculty who had always wanted to spend all of their funds on electronic serials got their wish since there was no place to put the books if bought. The humanities and social scientists were given one year library cards for neighboring institutions. Eleanor realized that some of them were a bit too happy with being forced to go to **UCLA** for the books they needed, and of course there was **Google Super Print**.

While in the beginning **Google Super Print** had been ridiculed by California's librarians using the same arguments they had applied to **Google** overall: You get too many hits, the collection wasn't built by experts with **SCSU's** students and faculty in mind, it contained a lot of trash, etc. Yet by the time that the tsunami hit, it was clear that books more than 10 years old were no longer being checked out anyway. **Google Super Print** was just too easy to use and 57 million titles were too many to ignore.

Three weeks ago the vice president to whom **Eleanor** reported came over to see her in her temporary office in the big tent where reserve readings and scores of computer terminals could be found. He said that the President had asked that she pull together some ideas for a new library. However, he suggested that since the tsunami had wiped out the entire library program and with the advent of **Google Super Print**, they had the opportunity to rethink what the future should be like: What services would need to be offered in the future? What materials would be purchased given so much is free? Did the materials purchased really need to be catalogued as in the past? What kind of library buildings and furnishing would be needed since most of what might be read was freely available? What kinds of technical infrastructure? What kinds of staff would be needed and how should they be organized — again would the library need the same sized staff given what **Google** was doing? Which of the many cooperative programs **SCSU** participated in should they continue to support — would programs like resource sharing continue? Most importantly, what kinds of budgetary support would she need to accomplish what she felt needed to be done?

**Eleanor** had thought long and hard about all of these questions. But these thoughts generated as many new questions as conclusions. To get her mind around the whole problem she had prepared a chart listing the needs she felt that her library needed to meet, the things they had been doing before the tsunami obliterated her library,

and some ideas on how she might handle these needs in a new way. Since the President was not yet ready she glanced at her chart in order to prepare for what she might say:

Need	Old Response	Possible New Response
Student classroom related readings library.	Printed books and journals supplemented by e-materials.	Ask faculty to pick from available e-journals and e-books already purchased by the  Library will insure that stable links to their learning platforms work.
Faculty research eBooks  Print when fees, with research needs.	Printed books and journals supplemented by e-materials.	For out of print materials rely upon Google Super Print. For current materials push and e-journals, pay for the per page charges incurred when using newer Google Super materials, user initiated document delivery that doesn't work and pay the net borrowing and set up an <b>Amazon.com</b> deposit account overnight delivery for all other faculty
Library as place as for interaction, times use of library materials, using and personal study  Use	Traditional library with tables mixed in with the book shelves, group study rooms, and graduate and faculty carrels.	Large Information Commons with 5 times many public access terminals as before, 10 as many group study rooms, 10 study halls empty classrooms across campus, but also set up a Deep Silence Research Materials Center with an outsourced coffee lounge for graduate students and faculty members.
Book and serials librarian, acquisitions, cataloguing, orders and processing what the	Large technical services department with more than 50 desks for library professionals, clerks, and supervisors.	Single department with 1 professional 5 para-librarians to handle the more difficult and 5 clerical support staff to fill in behind others are doing.
Collection development Response Team specialists.	Department with supervisor, 7 bibliographers, and 5 clerical support staff.	Replace with a single Patron Needs made up of one supervisor and 12 subject
Reference Team	Department with supervisors for the main	Replace with the Patron Needs Response

information	library and each subject division, 15 librarians, and 20 clerical support staff.	and a 7X18 hour help desk in the commons staffed by 10 para-librarians.
Binding and conservation hard one staff	Conservator, three assistants, and funds for outsourcing binding, etc.	Replace with an extra systems librarian with responsibility for digital conservation. Order backs when absolutely necessary and teach member to do simple soft back stiffening.
Circulation and Information shelving staff collections	100+/- FTE staff in the main and branch libraries performing these functions	Cut back to 5 FTE student helpers for the Commons area to reshelve the limited and refill the printers.
Building information research	A 5 story main library and 2 medium sized plus 3 small branch libraries.	One 3 story building: 2 floors for the commons and 1 for the deep silence materials use center.
Infrastructure stations in the etc.	Wireless and places to link to campus backbone	Wireless everywhere, laptop recharging new building, and lots of terminals, printers,
Budget for other.	60+% for staffing, 30+/-% for content, and 10% for other.	25% for staffing, 65% for content, and 10% But perhaps 30 to 50% less than before?

At this point the President's secretary said, "Excuse me **Ms. Wireman**, the President will now see you." **Eleanor** followed the secretary into the President's office full of resolve to show she had vision and drive — but wondered if she would dare attend an **ALA** meeting ever again.