

Barker Engineering Library Annual Report, 2002-2003

In 2002-2003, Barker was successful in creating a more productive information environment, both physical and virtual. In a year of interim management, the Barker's team spirit has demonstrated itself in many ways, with staff coming together and working hard to maintain and improve the service excellence to which our community has become accustomed, continuing to keep the library and its services moving forward. Barker staff have worked hard to think creatively about new service models and be flexible in this dynamic environment. Our successes this year can be attributed to our very talented staff working together and in collaboration with the other staff of the MIT Libraries. Barker staff have worked towards meeting the strategic goals of the MIT Libraries, actively participating in both local and system-wide initiatives. This report focuses on the contributions of the Barker Engineering Library, while the Aeronautics and Astronautics Library has provided their own report.

PROVIDING EASY ACCESS

3rd Barton

Implementation of 3rdBarton, continued to be a major focus for many staff at Barker. Michael Finigan and Stephanie Hartman continued to take lead roles in implementation as representatives for Circulation and Processing to the Barton Advisory Group. Tracy Gabridge also continued in her leading role in the customization of the WebOPAC and the implementation of the no-frames version of the WebOPAC. All of their contributions have been instrumental in the final stages of implementation and have truly been key in the Libraries' ability to bring the wonderful 'Your Account' feature to our user community. 'Your Account' has been met with much excitement by our users. These and the many other improvements to 3rd Barton have made finding materials in Barton much easier and we believe that these improvements have enabled our users to be more self-sufficient – this is reflected in our reference statistics found at the end of this report. Processing and circulation staff also continued on improvements in workflow in Aleph.

E-Resources

This has been a challenging year on the e-resources front. With no additional money as we have had in past years, we were challenged with identifying opportunities to reallocate resources where there was a new and important need to be met. With free access to patent information having reached a point where there was no longer a need for licensed resources on patents, we took the opportunity to reallocate the resources spent on the Derwent World Patents database towards materials to which we had inadequate access – standards. We are now providing electronic access to the highly used ASTM Standards, as well as to British Standards Online, which includes ISO standards. Online access to these standards represents a great improvement in service to our users. They are now able to access some standards online that they have always had in print, but now they can also access ISO standards that have become increasingly important and until now have been unavailable at Barker. Increasing access to more standards continues to be a goal for Barker.

Funding itself has not been the only challenge this year. Unreasonable pricing models proposed by publishers have also presented a major challenge, which we have attempted to start to address. For several products we have begun serious conversations with vendors about exploring new pricing models that will work for us now and in the future. As a result of many conversations, IHS was able to present us with a new pricing model for various standards organizations packages that we were able to begin to take advantage of, buying the ASTM standards with the hope of locating funding for other purchases such as this. Other key products for which we are in discussion with vendors about are Knovel [online handbooks,] Safari [technical books.] There is still much work to be done, but we have seen a willingness on the part of many publishers to talk.

Barker librarians have also continued to play a leading role in advocacy for improved usability of interface design for products to which we subscribe or would like to subscribe. We have actively worked

with Elsevier Ei's Engineering Village2 developers to make improvements to the interface and have seen it improve greatly. We see this as a very important leadership role for the staff of the Barker Engineering Library staff and will continue to actively pursue this type of activity in the future.

Reference, Instructional and Outreach Services

The reference vision for the MIT Libraries created in FY02 has served as a wonderful vehicle to help us shape our reference, instructional, and outreach services over the past year in a very effective way. It has allowed us to make changes both locally and system-wide that have helped us to make progress towards that vision.

Barker staff have actively been involved in working with the Centralized Reference Services Coordinator and the Reference Committee on creating an 'Extended Virtual General Help Service.' All librarian staff participated in the Ask Us! Live service in the Fall until it was put on hold. As members of the Reference Committee, Eileen Dorschner and Deborah Helman have been closely involved in the creation of a centralized phone and email service that will begin in the Fall term of FY '03 to be staffed from 10am-9pm. This service will provide users with expert help for an extended period of time and should also provide quicker turnaround time for email questions. Next year as this centralized service becomes more established, it is our hope that we will be able to begin to think about changing local reference services so that librarians may spend more time on the instructional and outreach services that have become increasingly important in the digital age.

This year, we have already begun to look at how our local reference services are provided. For many years, Barker has wanted to integrate our service desks, creating only one library service desk that users could go to for both circulation and reference services, as the reference vision proposes. This year we were finally able to do this. While we were unable to obtain funding that would enable us to renovate the service desk area so that it would best serve both circulation and reference, we have made small changes that enabled reference to move into the circulation desk area and will continue to make more changes as the service progresses in the coming year as needed to allow our staff to easily provide excellent service. We believe that this has benefited our users, creating a less confusing service environment.

In order to do this we began to expand the core competencies of our staff, training librarians to provide circulation services, and all other staff (circulation, processing and our LTE) to provide information service. A mentoring program was established for information services staff, pairing a librarian with circulation, processing, or LTE staff that would foster a relationship where both staff members could learn from each other. This has worked very well and we expect to continue this in the coming year. This has improved our ability to provide basic information services to users in the evenings and on weekends. This will also help us as we re-envision reference services in the library over the coming years.

We have also already begun to focus more on instructional services this year. Collaboration has been a big theme this year and staff have worked with library staff from other units to co-teach interdisciplinary classes. Staff have been involved in course-related instructional sessions, including several ongoing classes as well as some new and interesting opportunities. Also, contacts have been made with faculty about new teaching opportunities for next year. One of the most exciting opportunities for next year is involvement in a communications requirement class taught to all seniors in Course VI. Staff continue to teach a variety of courses during IAP, including the very popular series on copyright and the patenting process. In the coming year, we will need to begin to develop a strategy to expand our instructional activities in the School of Engineering.

In addition, Barker continues to actively pursue outreach opportunities. We continue to have good relationships with the departments we serve in the School of Engineering. Tracy Gabridge and Anne Graham have begun to develop excellent relationships in their new departments. Of note is Tracy's invitation to be part of the Course VI graduate student orientation.

Collections

Barker has been the beneficiary of new monies this year in support of the expanded programs in environmental studies, as well as the increasingly important and abundant literature in telecommunications. In addition, the new MIT Libraries' Honor with Books program has benefited Barker Engineering Library greatly. Appeals to parents of the senior class and the Emma Rogers Society have both been very successful in obtaining donations to support Barker collections. With all of these additional funds, we have been able to expend all of our monograph budgets, expanding our collection to better support current and emerging programs in Engineering. We continue to hone the YBP approval plan and it appears as if it is working more effectively now and we are receiving more books. Also, the government documents review has finally been completed thanks to the hard work of Carol Robinson and our other subject selectors. In addition, we completed an inventory of non-text materials in our collection, including the videos and films, as well as diskettes.

Thanks to the efforts of the circulation staff, Carol Robinson and Craig Thomas a four month journal use study was completed, recording circulation and in-house use was completed. Craig designed a database for staff to use to gather data easily. This information will prove to be invaluable in addition to electronic use data in helping collections staff make decisions about managing the collection. In the coming year, the MIT Libraries will all be doing a similar use study and we will participate as well and will need to fully analyze all this data.

One of the greatest accomplishments this year was the completion of the "supermove." Three years have passed since the beginning of the move, and we have finally finished the bulk of this move thanks to the extremely hard work of the processing staff. While this year's numbers for the "supermove" are considerably less [monographs -745; serials; 2797; journals 2411; withdrawals - 98,] it should be noted that many of these titles were serial in nature and thus more complex to manage, bringing our grand total for the "supermove" to 39,146. In addition to the "supermove", Diana Hackman completed the final phase of a journal storage project in which items were barcoded, added and sent to RSC. Also, the reference weeding project is near completion with a total of 1952 items moved out of reference to another part of our collection or withdrawn when appropriate. We await the go ahead from RSC to send the remainder of the reference collection [the abstracts and indexes] and hope to finish this early in the coming year.

IMPROVING LIBRARY SPACES AND OPERATIONS

This year has been an exciting and forward-looking year for the Engineering and Science Libraries. We began a programming study for a state-of-the-art Engineering and Science library to serve the MIT community in the 21st century which was funded by the Provost. Jennifer Banks, Steve Gass, Deborah Helman, Howard Silver and Jim Mullins have been working with Facilities and a consultant to develop a program for a future ESL. All staff have been involved in various planning sessions. A benchmarking study has been done on 9 peer institutions. We have held focus groups with students to find out directly from them what they want in a new library, as well as surveying the faculty for their vision of a new ESL. In addition, we brought in leaders in Engineering and Science Librarianship and from Academic Computing to help us envision a state-of-the-art facility. With all of this information we have begun to develop alternatives and are currently working on clarifying a vision for this library. We expect to finalize the program in the Fall of FY04 and hope to have our recommendation approved so that we may begin developing the funds needed to build this very important and much needed facility.

In the meantime, we continue to try to improve the quality of facilities for the current MIT user community, as well as our own library staff. At the end of FY03, we began an exciting project to renovate the former Media Services Area, creating two group study rooms that will seat up to 16 people, and a soft seating area to promote community that will seat up to 7. This project should be completed by the beginning of the FY04 Fall Term. We have established a new Signage Committee (Anne Graham, Carol Frederick, Stephanie Hartman, and Angie Locknar) who have begun to work on creating more effective and creative navigational signs and policy signs to help our users easily use our facilities, services and resources. We made minor renovations to the circulation desk, lowering the counter to a

more ergonomic level, which was one of the enabling factors that let us integrate reference services at that desk. In the coming year, we need to review what else might be done in that space to improve our services. Another key accomplishment this year was creating personal workspace for all Circulation staff and our LTE. When DSpace staff moved to new space, Barker regained access to that space and occupies most of it, leaving space for other staff if swing space is needed in the Libraries. In addition, one of our offices in the librarians suite is now being occupied by the web department and houses the web manager's assistant and will serve as a usability test room.

In the coming year, we will need to continue to review our spaces as we move part of the reference collection to storage. In addition, we need to begin to review where basic facilities improvement can and should be made to improved the basic quality of our user's experience in our library.

BE A LEADER IN THE USE OF APPLIED LIBRARY TECHNOLOGY

New technologies continue to emerge and Barker continues to contribute to the MIT Libraries' efforts to enhance our resources and services by incorporating these technologies to meet the needs of the MIT community. As noted above, Barker staff have been actively involved in the completion of 3rdBarton implementation, bringing Your Account and a no-frames WebOPAC to our users. Darcy Duke was involved in the implentation of SFX, enabling users to easily navigate between electronic resources. DSpace went live this year and Deborah Helman is now a member of the DSpace Advisory Group, which will help bring the user's needs and issues to the DSpace staff. We continue to work towards a more mobile computing environment. The laptop pilot supported by Academic Computing was a success. Three laptops were available for check out in the middle of the Fall semester and have become a very popular item as the year has progressed. We will continue to support this program and will look into expanding this in the future. This year we have also begun to explore PDAs and have purchased one for Tracy Gabridge. We have rolled out new and faster public computing stations. With a fulltime LTE we have been able to spend the time configuring these computers so that they will be easier to maintain and have installed the Clean Slate software so that computers will reboot daily to their original configuration. Another important addition to our computing environment this year was an Adaptive Technology Workstation to provide access to resources for members of the MIT community with low vision, who are blind or have learning disabilities.

Technology is an integral part of the daily work of the staff and enables us to provide excellent service to our users. One of the most important things this past year was the addition of Craig Thomas as our Local Technology Expert. Having someone dedicated to technical support fulltime has helped us to achieve all that we have in such an effective way. He has begun to make regular upgrades a more streamlined process and has been able to keep staff aware of new development in technology. He has also had time to dedicate to special projects, which has made initiatives that we began easier to carry out. Creating a fulltime LTE position has been one of the most beneficial things Barker has done in recent years. The Barker staff, especially the Circulation staff, should be commended on their flexibility and willingness to help out to cover the loss of the Circulation position created when we made a fulltime LTE position.

SERVICE TRENDS

The use of our electronic collections continues to expand and plays a vital role in the research process for members of the MIT Community. In addition, as we have continued to send more to storage one might expect to see diminished circulation and use of our in-house collections. This year, however, we have seen a fairly stable trend, with a slight increase of 2.9% in the use of our in-house collection [see Table 1] and a 1.2% increase in loans. After a surprising decline last year, the number of visits to the library has increased by 14.5% [see Table 1] and we expect this increase to continue next year with the addition of our much desired group study rooms.

This year, reference and directional questions continue to follow a well-established trend [see Table 2.] Reference questions asked at the reference desk continue to decline both for in-person queries (-22.8%) and queries over the phone (-16.5%), while reference questions asked via email are increasing at a dramatic rate (+59.4%). We also continue to find many of the questions that we do receive both in-person and via email to be more complex in nature. We expect these trends to continue.

Instruction and outreach activities continue to become more active. We more than doubled the number of sessions in which Barker staff led and participated (see Table 3,) reaching a significantly larger number of members of the MIT community than last year (+50.4%). Barker staff have also been actively involved in cross-training within our library – librarians learning circulation, circulation obtaining more reference skills, and processing learning both circulation and reference skills. We expect these trends in both user and staff training to continue.

Table 1. Occupancy and Circulation

<i>Barker</i>	<i>2002</i>	<i>2003</i>	<i>Change</i>
Door count	81,139	92,910	+14.5%
In-house use	54,407	55,969	+2.9%
Loans	38,960	39,428	+1.2%
Renewals	26,751	25,221	-5.7%
Returns	43,244	43,752	+1.2%
Bookpage requests	136	139	+2.2%

Table 2. Reference and Directional Interactions at Barker

	<i>2002</i>	<i>2003</i>	<i>Change</i>
Reference (in-person)	4,215	3256	-22.8%
Reference (phone)	818	683	-16.5%
Reference [†] (Email - Ask Us! –email & email directed to librarians)	798	1272	+59.4%
<i>All Reference</i>	<i>5831</i>	<i>5211</i>	<i>-10.6%</i>
Directional (in-person)	1,461	1154	-21.0%
Directional (phone)	47	67	+42.6%
<i>All Directional</i>	<i>5831</i>	<i>5117</i>	<i>-19.0%</i>
<i>Reference questions directed to a subject specialist</i>			
In person (in office)	67	34	-49.3%
Phone (in office)	81	83	no change

[†] Barker Reference (email) statistics also include questions answered on the off-campus email list by Darcy Duke.

Table 3. Instructional Activities at Barker

	2002	2003	Change
Instruction Sessions	20	42	+110%
Attendees ¹	1257	1891	+50.4%

¹ For FY03, attendees include 692 participants in 20 sessions sponsored by Barker staff, and 1199 participants in 22 sessions in which Barker staff have participated that were either system-wide events or sponsored by other libraries.

FUTURE PLANS

Barker Engineering Library will continue to strive for excellence in the services, collections, and space which we provide in support of the communities we serve. We will identify ways in which we can better support interdisciplinary research, working closely with the Science Library and other units as needed. We will need to do focus on outreach and new ways of marketing our services as our users continue to use our electronic services and collections increasingly. As usual, we will actively contribute to system-wide projects and planning. Among the goals for the coming year are:

- Explore new service models at the integrated service desk [circulation/reference]
- Improve space configuration at the integrated service desk
- Make improvements to public space in Barker, creating a better environment in which our users can do research, study and interact with each other: including better signage, reallocation of space, basic facilities improvements
- Complete new ESL programming study and move forward on recommendations
- Take part in system-wide journal use study and fully analyze data in order to make informed collections decisions
- Identify new monies for expanding e-resources, working with publishers on potential new pricing models
- Develop an archival vision
- Take steps to manage uncataloged collections and non-text materials, providing improved access and preservation
- Begin developing strategies to expand instructional and outreach activities, targeting communications requirement classes in FY04
- Organize and bind print society papers
- Barcode the remaining unbarcoded journal collection
- Hire and train a new Circulation Supervisor
- Improve support for mobile computing within the library for our user community
- Create more systematic procedures and tools for network account and hardware inventories, as well as software inventory, versioning, and configuration
- Identify strategic ways to work with the Science Library that will move us towards a time when we are all under one building

PERSONNEL

- Anne Graham appointed as Civil and Environmental Engineering Librarian, August 2002
- Tracy Gabridge reassigned as Electrical Engineering & Computer Science Librarian, August 2002
- Craig Thomas appointed as Local Technology Expert (fulltime), September 2002
- Stephanie White's position was reclassified to Library Assistant III, March 2002
- Stephanie White, after graduating from Simmons, resigned her circulation position to take a position as an Engineering Librarian at Olin College of Engineering, March 2002

Deborah Helman, 14 July, 2003