Preface

Response to the call for chapters about mergers, acquisitions, collaborations, partnerships, and joint ventures proved to be so rich in scope and topics that it resulted in an unprecedented number of proposals and relevant manuscripts. As a result, the material accepted for publication was split into two volumes. This volume includes chapters which present material which is mostly in the form of case studies at the operational level, while Volume 36, published earlier in 2013 presented chapters broader in scope. The chapters herein range from a library and community agency collaboration to create a multimedia to the beginning angst and anxiety engendered by two librarians in Jamaica as they undertook preliminary investigation for creating a two-library consortium to purchase e-resources. The chapters fell generally into two categories: (a) collaborations among organizations and (b) mergers of organizations or units within them. The first section contains seven chapters about organizations seeking collaboration short of actual merger (albeit requiring many similar decisions and compromises). The second section contains five chapters covering mergers not unlike those presented in the previous volume, but on an institutional and more local or regional scale. Chapters in both sections present actual case studies with useful insights into both full-blown mergers as well as collaborative ventures.

Some of the background material from the preface of the earlier volume is repeated here, as it remains a relevant introduction for both volumes, reflecting the volatile nature of the world economy calling for new approaches to business, be it in the for-profit or nonprofit sector. The two companion volumes provide details within the nonprofit sector of libraries and information services.

As pointed out in the previous volume, libraries and information service providers are but part of a larger information industry and can be significantly affected by related industries and their M&A activities. Research by Munroe (2000) found there were 60 publishing merger and acquisition events in the years of 1998 and 1999, with more than $20 billion spent by companies to buy other companies. According to Munroe, publishing companies merged in order to broaden product offerings, control a niche in the market, achieve economies of scale, and increase market share. Volume 36 described

the pending merger of Penguin and Random House, recently approved by the U.S. Department of Justice (Pfanner, 2013), and the European Commission on April 5, 2013 (Cooper & AP, 2013). Penguin is owned by Pearson, a British media conglomerate and Random House by Bertelsmann in Germany. The merger is in part an attempt to deal with challenges arising from the growth of e-books and the competitive pricing power of Internet retailers like Amazon and Google. Cost savings are foreseen by analysts in operations such as editing, marketing and supply chain distribution, despite claims that the new company "is not about cost efficiency, but about efficiency in better services" (Chozik & Pfanner, 2012, para. 4). The merger, if approved by the European Commission, will create the largest consumer book publisher in the world, with a global market share of more than 25%. Bertelsmann is to hold a 53% controlling interest in Penguin Random House, as the new company is to be called, and Pearson, 47%. Such consolidations in the publishing field result in it being dominated by a group called the Big Six, all owned by large media conglomerates.

Reactions to the Penguin Random House merger have come from literary agents who fear that it will result in fewer imprints, and freeze out authors who do not write for the mass market. Analysts speculate that Penguin Random House could squeeze out smaller houses, reduce the number of bidders vying for authors, and that authors might be affected both financially and artistically. Lipscom (2001), writing about the impact of mergers in science, technology and medicine, stated that M&A "concentrates the power to set prices in fewer hands" (p. 307). A further cautionary issue, as pointed out in the previous volume, is that bigger is not always better. There now is serious questioning of the ideas behind "too big to fail" and this holds true in not just the financial world, but also in the world of information services. Yet, various shades and permutations of M&A and collaborations persist in our environment as attested by headlines in journals, on web sites, and other media in librarianship, to wit:

- Consolidation of Illinois library systems approved [Five to become one: RAILS]
- Member Votes Finalized Amigos/MLNC Merger [Amigos and the Missouri Library Network Corporation]
- Academic and public library networks join forces in Ohio [OhioLINK and SearchOhio]
- LYRASIS and CERN to collaborate on SCOAP3 [To convert peer-reviewed literature on particle physics to open access]
- Cornell and Columbia Prepare for Library Collaboration – 2CUL [To improve efficiency and effectiveness in collection development, acquisitions, and processing]
- Sister library, where art thou? [10 county libraries across Kentucky partnering]

The headlines above indicate that collaborative efforts can be an alternative to mergers for resource sharing and consolidation, but while they might be less risk-prone, can nevertheless be daunting.

The first section of this volume focuses on collaboration, and the first chapter by Kathleen Spring and Brenda DeVore Marshall, from Linfield College in Oregon, USA describes a project which focuses on documenting the historical and contemporary roles of dory fishers, which forms a significant part of Oregon's history. They used ethnography for theoretical background and oral history as method, drawing on artifacts, interviews, and community organizations which resulted in the creation of a multimedia searchable archive for open access. The project generated practical results, including a positive model for "town and gown" relationships and also for intra and interagency collaboration for all types of libraries. Next, Hui-Yun Sung from the National Chung Hsing University in Taiwan and Mark Hepworth at Loughborough University in Leicestershire, UK provide three case studies of community engagement by public libraries. Drawing on semi-structured interviews, direct observations, and document analysis, they provide a framework for systematic research around the concept of community engagement. They conclude from empirical data that a stronger level of partnership and community involvement and more systematic research of the process in practice in public libraries are needed.

Emy N. Decker looks at a successful cross-campus collaboration between the School of Art and the Department of Classics at the University of Georgia in building a shared art image database. In pursuing this collaboration, they experienced a number of ancillary benefits including the creation of a new shared faculty position during a time of fiscal austerity as well as engagement of student workers as true partners in the project. An overview of strengths and weaknesses in the collaboration is provided as a guide for others attempting such ventures. Emily R. Ford from Portland State University and Laura Zeigen from Oregon Health & Science University offer insight to the challenges confronting anyone providing services in support of interinstitutional joint degree programs. The lessons presented in this chapter in the field of public health provide useful lessons for future collaboration within higher-education libraries about any discipline at any level of education.

Emily Weak and Lili Luo, conducted a review of the literature from 2000 to 2012 about collaborative virtual reference services (CVRS) followed by a survey of academic and public librarians. The latter indicated that forging new relationships and learning new skills were the two major benefits of participating in CVRS initiatives. Their chapter raises the fundamental issue faced in many collaborations – strong cultural differences in workers and/or patrons. The following chapter by Wendi Arant Kasper and Gail A. Macmillan, both from Texas A&M University Library, argue for a boutique service model for libraries, found normally in the high-end retail industry, and support this argument with a case study involving implementation of

such a model at the University's Policy Sciences and Economics Library. Rather than a traditional customer service model, their approach was more of a partnership with librarians serving as a "matchmaker" to link faculty with similar interests. The authors conclude that their approach is both scalable and readily transferable.

Betina Gardner, Trenia L. Napier, and Russell G. Carpenter at Eastern Kentucky University Libraries, similar to the previous chapter, demonstrate via case study the value of collaboration across organizations within the academy, namely Libraries, Information Technology, and the English and Communication academic departments. The resulting collaboration enabled students to receive support from inception of their research through to oral and written communication through formation of a new entity, the Noel Studio for Academic Creativity, which in many respects was as much a merger as it was a collaboration.

In the concluding five-chapter section devoted to mergers, many of the issues raised earlier in this preface are illustrated, albeit on a somewhat smaller scale than mega-publisher mergers. K. Megan Sheffield, Susan L. Silver, and Lily Todorinova, at the University of South Florida's Libraries at the time, describe the merger of circulation and reference desks into a single service desk or "one desk" model at that university. The processes they used provide a strong exemplar, or model, of best practices in terms of communication and cultural adjustments needed even within a single institution. Next, Darryl Mead of the National Library of Scotland, Edinburg and Steve Homer, Absoft, Ltd, Aberdeen, UK (formerly with the National Library), discuss merging back office services between the National Library of Scotland and the National Galleries of Scotland. Their careful analysis and strategies for integration of back-end operations such as human resources, finance, and the like serve as a model for other like organizations. In fact it has become an acknowledged leader in implementation of recent government policy changes in the United Kingdom.

Betty Rozum, from Utah State University, and Lori J. Brassaw, from Utah State University College of Eastern Utah describe how they merged two distinct and geographically distant academic libraries – with one being a community college and the other a research university As with many other such mergers, careful consideration was needed not just of personnel, policy, technological differences, but also faculty and student needs. They emphasize their attempt to keep separate institutional identities intact.

In the next to last chapter, four authors from Finland (Vuokko Palonen, at Tritonia Academic Library in Vaasa, Sirkku Blinnikka, Fellmannia at the Lahti Region Educational Consortium, Ulla Ohvo, at the Lappeenranta Academic Library, and Susanna Parikka, at Lapland University Consortium

Library in Rovaniemi) cover how four joint libraries were formed in regional city-centers. Again, like Mead and Homer's chapter, these formations were the result of government policy to improve efficiencies and effectiveness. Their chapter describes several different models of how to operate joint libraries as centralized or decentralized entities – some with different compensation systems and some with newly formed and uniform procedures and policies across institutions.

Finally, the chapter by Cherry-Ann Smart and Christina Stewart-Fullerton, from the libraries at the University of the West Indies at Mona and the University of Technology, respectively both in Kingston, Jamaica explores the problems and opportunities of merging the acquisition of, and access to, electronic resources at their institutions. This case reflects the kind of careful planning demonstrated in some of the previous chapters in which successful mergers were achieved and gives recognition to the institutional and political aspects involved in creation of a consortium as a partnership. The systematic approach they used included literature review, interviews, and review of existing processes and documentation. As in many other mergers, the authors concluded, among other findings, that careful marketing strategies will be required to maintain institutional brands and educational cultures while benefiting from the advantages of increased purchasing power and expanded information resources.

The two sections totaling 12 chapters presented in this volume, when coupled with the chapters in Volume 36, provide both a broad and deep exploration of the landscape of mergers, acquisitions, partnerships, collaborations, and joint ventures in the library and information sector. Our hope is that readers, scholars and researchers enjoy this exploration and benefit from it in terms of their own innovations and search for improvements in services and efficiencies and cost savings.

As editors, our heartfelt thanks go first and foremost to the authors for enabling our work with their promptness and responsiveness to our questions and suggestions. Members of the Editorial Advisory Board deserve special thanks for giving us advice about the theme of the volume, for suggesting potential authors to us, and for reviewing submissions. The members are Kenneth Haycock, Professor Emeritus and Coordinator of the Center for Research and Innovations at San Jose's School of Library and Information Science, San Jose, CA; Maureen L. Mackenzie, Business Professor at Molloy College in Rockville Centre, NY; Pat Molholt, Principal of Words & Ideas, Ashley Falls, MA; Marie L. Radford, Chair and Associate Professor in the Department of Library and Information Science at Rutgers University's School of Communication and Information in Newark, NJ; Robert A. Seal, Dean of Libraries at Loyola University, Chicago, IL; and last but not least,

Barbara A. Stripling, President of the American Library Association in 2013–2014 and Assistant Professor of Practice at Syracuse University's School of Information Studies in Syracuse, NY. We also welcomed two new members of the Editorial Advisory Board as this volume was being prepared – Louise Schaper, Vice President of Schaper Consulting, Inc. in Naples, FL and Catherine C. Wilt, Executive Director of the Pennsylvania Academic Library Consortium, Inc. (PALCI) in Philadelphia, PA.

Once again, our gratitude goes to the staff members with whom we work at Emerald – Sarah Baxter, Virginia Chapman, and Wendy Lynch. Their support and help through the processes of receiving chapter proposals and manuscripts, and shaping them into a single themed volume is truly appreciated.

Anne Woodsworth
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Editors

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