Along with the rest of you, I’ve been thinking a lot lately about budget cuts, the economy, deficits, etc. In particular, I’ve been trying to sort out the impact of recent budget reductions on the library and its ability to support the work of the academy: the work of students, the work of faculty, the work of staff. Your work. My thinking has been inchoate, and not exactly linear, but join me for a moment.

At the risk of greatly oversimplifying, I want to start by saying that the academy’s core job is to create understanding: understanding of the world and understanding of one another. Moreover, comprehending our world, ourselves, and others involves a lot more than simply knowing things. Knowing things is clearly a very important first step, but it’s just the beginning. To understand, we take any information that we have and we convert it into something larger than the bare facts themselves. We transform the merely known and make something ultimately more useful: something bigger and more powerful, something capable of even greater explanatory feats. Big, bold, thought-provoking ideas.

We do this by thinking about what it is we know. Thinking takes us from a mere collection of information and ideas to an understanding of them. Thought carries us from a simple apprehension of our world to a comprehension of it. When applied in the right ways and brought to bear on the things we know, our thought converts our knowledge into further understanding, even intellectual vision. And this of course is the goal. But it essentially involves not just knowing things, but also thinking about them.

And it is just here that today we might be facing some challenges in our quest to build new big ideas, those that will advance our understanding. In fact, word on the street from respected (dare I say thoughtful) commentators is that there is a bitter irony in our having entered the highly touted Age of Information, the era of Big Data. It is this: As counterintuitive as it may seem, we live in an age where we know more than ever, but we don’t seem to be thinking about it. Our data machines are humming, but our thought engines are sputtering. As a result, new big ideas—those that have the potential to elevate and transform our thinking and not just our material lives—are in short supply. And where these new, big, transformative ideas are being generated, they are not receiving much attention. Sadly, our interest in new ideas seems to be limited primarily to those that can be

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E-books: A Brave New World

BY KATY GINANNI | KSGINANNI@WCU.EDU
Collection Development Librarian

According to Encyclopædia Britannica, an electronic book, or e-book, is “a digital file containing a body of text and images suitable for distributing electronically and displaying onscreen in a manner similar to a printed book.” A Wikipedia article posits that the first e-book may have been the Index Thomisticus, “a heavily-annotated electronic index to the works of Thomas Aquinas, prepared by Roberto Busa beginning in the late 1940s.” Other e-book developers and projects are listed as the potential beginnings of e-books. (Coming to the table a bit late in the game, Postmodern Culture, published by Johns Hopkins University Press, is considered the first electronic journal. It was begun in 1990.) At any rate, libraries began to acquire and provide access to electronic books in the mid or late 1990s, as libraries began to have reliable and widespread access to the World Wide Web.

As more and more people become familiar with e-books, Hunter Library receives more and more suggestions from our users to add them to our collection. The truth is, the library has been buying (or otherwise making available) e-books for quite a few years now! But just as with old-fashioned printed books, there are a number of factors to consider when buying an e-book or a collection of e-books.

Price

Sometimes the online version of a book is equivalent to the print version. Sometimes, though, there can be a significant difference. For example, Hunter Library recently considered purchasing the latest revised edition of a standard reference source. The last print edition we purchased was $65. The newly revised online version, on the other hand, could be purchased for the princely sum of $3,000! On occasions like these, we must consider how many users will benefit from having the online version available and if that justifies the price increase.

Format

As many different publishers began creating e-books, different formats were created. Some of those formats are proprietary, meaning that the book can be read on that producer’s software/hardware and no other’s. Fortunately, some standardization has occurred. Today, publishers tend to produce e-books mainly in PDF (portable document format) and HTML (hypertext markup language), although there are a great many others out there. If a book is produced in a format for which we do not have the appropriate software installed on our public computers (and it is not freely or inexpensively available), then we will not buy it.

Reader/Platform

As some publishers produce e-books in a proprietary format, some also require a proprietary reader or platform. Again, if the reader or platform is not something easily available to Hunter Library, we will not purchase that book.

Digital Rights Management

One of the most complex things about purchasing e-books is the rights management, or license requirements. Unlike most print books, which we purchase one time, process, and make available on our shelves, there are a number of different pricing models and access models for e-books.

1. Lease: For some e-books, or collections of e-books, we do not actually purchase the content—we lease it. That usually involves an annual fee. And if we are ever unable to pay the annual fee in times of budget cuts, for example, then we no longer have access to the content of those books.

2. Purchase: For other books, we may actually purchase and own the content, but we may have to pay an annual hosting fee to the publisher or vendor. Again, if we should decide not to pay the annual hosting fee, the publisher might provide the content to us, but we would have to figure out how to store it, and how to provide access to it.

3. Users: Some pricing models allow only one user at a time to access an e-book. That’s not much of an improvement over a print book. Some publishers determine the price based on how many simultaneous users you wish to allow. It could be from one to three users to unlimited users and variations in between.

In recent years, a number of interesting projects regarding e-books have begun. I’ll mention just a few of them here:

Project Gutenberg

Launched in 1971, Project Gutenberg may be the very first book digitization project. Most of the books in the collection are ones that are in the public domain—works whose copyrights have expired. It is a volunteer-based organization, and donations to continue the work are welcome. Interestingly, Project Gutenberg is currently hosted at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

Google Books Library Project

The Google Books Library Project is a digitization effort started by Google. The project was announced in December of 2004 and has been controversial ever since. The rather immodest goal is to create “a comprehensive, searchable, virtual card catalog of all books in all languages....” Early partners were the library at University of Michigan and the Bodleian Library at Oxford University. That list has grown to include libraries at prestigious universities such as Harvard University, Princeton University, Stanford University, University of Virginia and University of California in the U.S.; and the Bavarian State Library, Ghent University, University Complutense of Madrid and University of Lausanne in Europe.

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Mae Miller Claxton, associate professor of English, will spend her year as Hunter Scholar for 2012-13 in a collaboration with George Frizzell, head of special collections, on a research project involving the Horace Kephart collection. Her goals are to help make the collection available and accessible to a larger audience and to pursue several scholarly projects emerging from a close study of its manuscripts.

Kephart scholarship is growing by leaps and bounds, spurred by recent publications and the upcoming 100th anniversary of his book, Our Southern Highlanders. A recently published new edition of Camping and Woodcraft, a book by Kephart known as “the camper’s bible,” features an introduction by George Ellison and Janet McCue that reveals new details about his life. The library’s Kephart holdings include 26 extensive journals that formed his personal reference library, correspondence, magazine articles, a photo album and other materials. Claxton’s research will examine how Kephart’s writing fit into his time, how the materials became a cohesive literary work and how his work influences Appalachian writing today.

“People often approach Kephart’s work from separate paths—from his writing, or a historical study of the mountain region, or his role in the establishment of the Great Smoky Mountains National Park,” said Frizzell. “Mae Claxton’s research will create a unified vision of his exceptional life and achievements.” Her study connects to several disciplines—history, literature, biology and parks and recreation—and will create opportunities for collaboration with other faculty members and their students, leading to more use of the collection.

A member of the WCU faculty since 1996, Claxton won the Chancellor’s Engaged Teaching Award in 2008. A native of south Georgia, she earned her bachelor’s and doctoral degrees at the University of Georgia and her master’s degree at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Kephart is one of the writers her students read in English 367: “Appalachian Literature,” an interdisciplinary course that Claxton teaches.

The Hunter Scholar award, now in its 24th year, was established to support faculty scholarship. It provides a $400 stipend for travel and supplies, reduction in teaching load for the research year and the services of a graduate student to assist with the project. Hunter Scholars also have the use of a study room in the library.

Thinking (and Other) Deficits in the Age of Information

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immediately monetized. There is a yearning for the big, grand ideas of the past. Where today do we find the likes of Darwin, Freud, Einstein, Keynes, Rawls, Gandhi, Steinem, Mailer, MLK, Niebuhr and Hawking? Such thinking is out there no doubt—we’re not less intelligent—but it’s somehow not in vogue and getting very little play.

For some pundits, the situation is even bleaker. They say that it’s not just that we’re thinking less, but in this post-Enlightenment era, our style of thinking, too, has changed. According to them, our thinking has devolved from that suffused with rationality, debate, and logical argument to that doused with a heavy reliance on superstition, faith, and opinion (they invite us to tune in to some of our cable news programming or recent political debates).

Still gloomier commentators are saying we’ve moved past post-Enlightenment thinking into an imaginatively inert post-idea world. The difference here is that in a post-idea world it’s not just that our style of thinking has changed, but we’ve practically given up thinking altogether. A further related claim is that our advances in technology have made available such an avalanche of information—much of it trivial and meaningless, oriented to the daily routine of a narrow set of acquaintances and served up by our newly developed social media in the form of 140-character tweets about what we had for breakfast—that our attraction and attention to this socially oriented effluvium has snuffed out both our desire and our time to process any of it.

This state of affairs and its portents raise the specter of a deficit that is at least as inimical to our national interest as our budget deficit. It is our thinking deficit.

For cash-strapped libraries these are sobering thoughts, especially as we face the budget challenges of providing the quality information that your work requires, as well as the thinking/learning spaces—virtual and physical—that you need. As you might expect from what I’ve said thus far, our thinking about these things has hardened our resolve, given us some new ideas, and motivated us to redouble our efforts. Moving forward, we’ll continue to do all we can to be your quality information store and your private thought emporium. We’ll support your knowing things AND your thinking about them.
Two Seniors Named Outstanding Student Workers for 2012

Jason Beck of Sylva and Linda Kue of Morganton have been named outstanding student workers at the library for 2012.

Beck has worked in the interlibrary loan department for one and one-half years. He assists with fulfilling requests from other libraries for items in the WCU collections and sending requests to other libraries for materials needed by WCU faculty, staff members and students. More than 8,000 such requests are handled each year by the department. Materials arrive and depart from the library via the postal service, fax and email. In his work, Beck has handled inquiries from as far away as Australia and Iceland and packaged and shipped materials ranging from books, CDs and DVDs to rare manuscripts and music scores.

“Jason is invaluable to our department. He's always motivated and does a great job seeing what needs to be done and doing it,” said his ILL supervisor, Bethany Ketting. “He's organized and has made suggestions for our office that have improved the workflow.” He also is writing a training manual that will be useful for student assistants who are new to the ILL department.

Beck, who is majoring in English and philosophy, will graduate in May. He plans to go to graduate school and work toward a master's degree in library science.

Kue, who has worked in the circulation department for one and one-half years, is a transfer student who came to WCU from Western Piedmont Community College in Morganton. She is majoring in communication science and disorders and will graduate in May.

At the library, Kue has helped with checkouts at the circulation desk and assisted with book shifting to free up more space on the library shelves. This year, she also was instrumental in the success of the book repair program. Hundreds of books with loose pages and torn spines were saved, thanks to the efforts of Kue and student workers.

“Linda is a pleasure to work with. She has excelled at every task we've ever given her,” said her supervisor, Shirley Finegan. “She has become one of our most resourceful students. Due to the economic downturn and budget restrictions, our need to fix tattered titles has increased tremendously. Linda has done a fantastic job restoring damaged books so they can return to the shelves.”

Ketting and Finegan belong to a committee of library staff members who each year select two most outstanding student workers. In all, 44 students worked at the library this year. “They helped us to fill in all the little details to serve our patrons the best we can,” said Finegan. The students will be recognized during Student Appreciation Day on April 18.

E-books: A Brave New World  continued from page 2

HathiTrust

The HathiTrust was founded in 2008 by the Committee on Institutional Cooperation and the University of California. It is a membership-based organization composed mostly of research libraries in the U.S. and Europe. Its 60 partners have joined to carry out the first goal of HathiTrust: “To build a reliable ... comprehensive digital archive of library materials converted from print that is co-owned and managed by a number of academic institutions.” HathiTrust currently has more than 10,000,000 digitized books.

Internet Archive

The Internet Archive is a nonprofit foundation that was created to build an Internet library. Its website reminds us of the loss of important cultural artifacts, such as the Library of Alexandria and early motion pictures that were recycled for their silver content: “The Internet Archive is working to prevent the Internet–a new medium with major historical significance– ... from disappearing into the past.” Hunter Library recently contributed books to the Internet Archive via the North Carolina Open Library, a project of the Internet Archive. It is accessible to North Carolina residents on NC LIVE (www.nclive.org).

Award-Winning Writer to Speak on Role of Libraries

Scott Huler will give two talks in Jackson County on Friday, April 13, in conjunction with National Library Week, April 8-14. His visit will be sponsored by the WCU Visiting Scholar Program, City Lights Bookstore in Sylva, Friends of the Jackson County Public Library and Hunter Library.

Huler will discuss the importance of research and libraries at 10:30 a.m. in the theater of A.K. Hinds University Center. At 7 p.m. he will give a talk in the community room of the Jackson County Public Library in Sylva. The Friends of Jackson County Public Library will host a punch and cookies reception following the presentation, and Huler will be available to sign his books.

The 2011 Piedmont Laureate, Huler writes for newspapers, magazines and radio programs. He is the author of six books, including On the Grid, No Man’s Land, Defining the Wind, On Being Brown, A Little Bit Sideways and From Worst to First. A native of Cleveland, Ohio, he has lived all over the United States and in England. His work has appeared in such newspapers as The New York Times, The Washington Post, The Philadelphia Inquirer and The Los Angeles Times. He has been heard on “All Things Considered” and “Day to Day” on National Public Radio and on “Marketplace” and “Splendid Table” on American Public Media.

Folklorist Lee Knight Explains Why He Loves Libraries

A folk singer, musician and WCU alumnus, Lee Knight carries in his wallet library cards issued from several public libraries in Western North Carolina and his native New York. “One of the gifts I’m most grateful to my parents for is a love of reading,” he said. “I’ve probably had a library card since I was old enough to write my name.”

Several times a week, Knight can be found ensconced in a work space next to a window on the library’s main floor. Notebooks, papers and a collection of audiotapes are spread out on the table in front of him. The audiotapes belonged to a close friend, Marjorie Lansing Porter, who died in 1973.

She recorded traditional music and songs of her native Adirondack Mountains, and her work was a resource for Pete Seeger and others. Knight is editing her materials. “I enjoy reading and research,” he said. “When I’m doing research, I can find information here at the library that I know about, but more fun is finding what I didn’t know exists. Libraries are also a source for out-of-print books and materials that aren’t affordable or that I need to use only once.”

As a music educator familiar with the world’s folk ballads and a musician who plays a variety of instruments, Knight has performed in venues ranging from the Jackson County Public Library in Sylva to Carnegie Hall in New York. He is a popular speaker and performer for local schools, summer camps, and Elderhostel programs, and teaches dulcimer and storytelling at John C. Campbell Folk School in Brasstown.

“Pure and simple, I go to libraries because I like being surrounded by books, journals and other sources of information and the people who use them,” he said. “I enjoy the company of people who work in libraries and the people who go there.”
Hunter Library employees show through their many collaborations that they work to embody the ideal of engagement that defines the university.

**Jill Ellern**, head of library systems, and **Robin Hitch**, library systems, co-presented the program “What Does a Person Have to Do to Use a Computer Here?” at the North Carolina Library Association Biennial Conference in Hickory on Oct. 7, 2011. The presentation was repeated at UNCA on Nov. 11, 2011, to the UNCA librarians and instructional technology staff and some other regional librarians. Ellern also published the article “How to Successfully Survive a Mandated Project” in *Computers in Libraries*, Nov. 2011.


**Katy Ginanni**, collection development librarian, as president presided over the 26th annual Conference of the North American Serials Interest Group in St. Louis. In 2011-12, while she serves as past president, Ginanni will have primary responsibility for raising sponsorships for NASIG’s 27th conference, to be held in Nashville, Tenn. Ginanni, along with former WCU colleagues **Elisabeth Leonard** (now with SAGE Publications in Thousand Oaks, Calif.) and **Anna Craft** (now at UNC-Greensboro), made a presentation at the 31st annual Charleston Conference, Issues in Book and Serial Acquisitions. The presentation, titled “Champagne wishes, caviar dreams: Incorporating e-readers into leisure reading while on a beer budget,” reviewed Hunter Library’s project to make Kindle e-readers available as part of our leisure reading collection.


**Suzanne Raether**, formerly of interlibrary loan, published her Southern Gothic novel *Judaculla*, which began as her master’s thesis in writing while enrolled in WCU’s graduate writing program. Set in Western North Carolina, the book has been well-received by critics.

**Dana Sally**, dean of library services, was invited to present the Ogilvie Lecture, “The Next Generation of North Carolina Libraries,” at the second general session of the North Carolina Library Association’s 59th biennial conference on Oct. 6, 2011, in Hickory, N.C. He attended the American Library Association’s annual meeting as chair of the Association of College and Research Libraries’ Doctoral Dissertation Fellowship Award Committee (divisional-level) June 24-27, 2011, in New Orleans, LA, attended the American Library Association midwinter meeting as chair of the Association of College and Research Libraries’ Doctoral Dissertation Fellowship Award Committee (divisional level), Jan. 20-23, Dallas, Texas; and was selected to serve as a technical field review panelist for the Institute of Museum and Library Services’ Laura Bush 21st Century Librarian Program, a national grant initiative.


**Mark Stoffan**, head of digital, access, and technology services, published a review of the website “John F. Kennedy Library and Museum” in the September 2011 issue of *College and Research Libraries News*. He served as a member of the American Library Association’s Presidential Task Force on Equitable Access to Electronic Content. He also became chair of the automation and networking committee of the UNC system’s University Librarians Advisory Council.

**Alessia Zanin-Yost**, research and instruction services, in collaboration with the WCU Art Education Program and the Mountain Heritage Center, organized, developed and delivered a week long program for fourth- through sixth-graders. The camp, “Good Old Time Camp,” focused on the arts and culture of Appalachia. She published the chapter “Seeing Is Learning: The Synergy of Visual Literacy” in *Observe, Reflect, Act: A Primer on Qualitative Research by Librarians*. In June 2011, she presented “A Blueprint for Learning: Information Literacy in the Art Curriculum,” a poster session at the American Library Association meeting in New Orleans. The presentation showcased how she implemented the ALA information literacy standards into the interior design curriculum and how the standards have been used to support evidence-based teaching and learning. In October 2011, she co-presented with **Serenity Richards**, branch manager at Albert Carlton Cashier Community Library, and **Elizabeth Marcus**, circulation assistant at Hunter Library, at the North Carolina Library Association Conference in Hickory, NC. The trio presented a poster session and a presentation. The poster session, “Breaking
the Rules: Bringing the Community into the Academic Library,” highlighted how it is possible to create interesting, educational and entertaining exhibits in the library by collaborating with community artists. The presentation, “A Display of Engagement: Learn, Teach, and Collaborate in the Library,” discussed how art exhibits in the library can act as a new venue to support faculty teaching, student learning, campus partnership and marketing the library as a center for all types of learning. In November 2011, she presented “Collaborative Endeavors in Graphic Design” at the annual conference of the Art Libraries Society of North American, Southeast Chapter, at Duke University. The presentation presented how visual and information literacy concepts can be incorporated in a graphic design course to develop critical thinking skills. Zanin-Yost also is a member of the WCU 2020 Commission team, which is looking at developing a strategic plan to engage internal and external university constituents in helping to chart the future of WCU. She also was elected vice-chair/chair of the arts sections of the American Library Association and has been nominated webmaster for the Arts Librarians of North America Southeast Chapter.

Finding Time to Help Others

In her spare time, reference assistant Ruby Banerjee brings warmth and good cheer to a variety of benevolent causes in the mountain region and as far away as her native India. This winter WCU art education students sold woolen hats knitted by Banerjee, using the proceeds to purchase prizes for young artists during Youth Art Month. She also donated handmade hats to the Mountain Regional Cancer Center in Sylva and to a charity in India. In all, she made 40 hats for charitable causes. In another activity, Banerjee and her husband, Debasish Banerjee, associate professor of computer information systems, and Tim Carstens, head of the library’s content and organization management department, joined a group of friends to prepare homemade cookies and healthy snacks distributed to the homeless. A talented cook, she will teach a class on Indian cuisine April 15-21 at John C. Campbell Folk School in Brasstown.

New Book Looks at Cherokee Pottery

Cherokee Pottery: From the Hands of Our Elders is a second book that grew out of a library collaboration. Published in 2011, the book traces the designs and patterns of Cherokee pottery as they have developed over centuries and into contemporary times. It recounts “the history of a tradition passed from elder to child through countless generations,” according to the book’s publisher, the History Press. The 160-page book contains both archival and new images of pots, potters and the region. The book follows the 2009 release of Cherokee Basketry from the same publisher. Since 2007, the library has been working with a number of Cherokee partners to document the arts and crafts of the Cherokee people.

Members of the library staff worked with staff at Qualla Arts and Crafts Mutual and the Museum of the Cherokee Indian to capture the stories of those potters whose work spanned the turn of the twentieth century. This was a period of transition, from a point when pottery was produced for home use to its status as an object that is collected and admired. The library’s director of digital programs, Anna Fariello, authored the book after completing extensive research using both local and national collections.

The From the Hands of Our Elders project includes work with Cherokee archival material that has been photographed or scanned and uploaded onto the website “Cherokee Traditions” and can be seen at www.wcu.edu/library/DigitalCollections/CherokeeTraditions.
Former student worker returns to Hunter staff

Tracy Musick has joined the staff as university library technician in the circulation department. She worked in the interlibrary loan department as a student from 2007-09 and continues to work in that department in order to help patrons at the circulation desk with their interlibrary loan questions. She also will help with reserve books and government documents.

Musick calls both Texas and North Carolina home. She moved to Jackson County from Yancey County in 2007 to complete her BA degree in art history. She received her MLS degree from North Carolina Central University.

Cataloging and Serials Hire New Staffers

Sarah Knight has joined the staff in the cataloging department. She comes to Hunter Library from the Florida State University Libraries, where she was a graduate assistant in the technical services department and reference intern in FSU’s Strozier Library. She began her job at WCU in November 2011.

Knight received her bachelor’s degree in English from the University of Florida in 2008 and her master’s degree in library and information studies from FSU in 2011. Before attending graduate school, she was an intern at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington.

On the Go and Need to Know?

On Exhibit

Cyanotype Prints  BY MATT LIDDLE

When you come to the library, make some time to enjoy the second-floor exhibit, “Cyanotype Prints,” showcasing the work of Matt Liddle, professor of print and book art in the WCU School of Art and Design. An expert in the art of printmaking, Liddle has exhibited widely throughout the United States. Some of his works are in the collections of the Dartmouth College Library, the Borowsky Center for Publication Arts of Philadelphia and at the museum of the State University of New York. A native of Albany, N.Y., Liddle earned his bachelor’s degree in visual studies at Dartmouth College and his master of fine arts degree in printmaking/book arts at the University of the Arts in Philadelphia, Pa. The exhibit at the library illustrates the cyanotype technique, a photographic printing process in which ammonium iron citrate and potassium ferricyanide are used to obtain the characteristic cyan-blue prints. “Cyanotype Prints” continues through December and can be viewed between 8 a.m.-5 p.m., Monday through Friday.

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