NAC Handout: Technical Services in Libraries - Year 2020

Sarah McHugh, Montana State Library Statewide Projects Librarian, contributes the following resources and thoughts to the July 2010 meeting of the Network Advisory Council:

The April issue of OCLC's Next Space includes an excellent article on the rapidly increasing importance across a broad spectrum of private and public enterprise of catalogers and their expertise.   It is good reading (www.oclc.org/nextspace).

In particular, I take to heart the predictions of Susan Gibbons, University of Rochester (her full paper: *Time Horizon 2020: Library Renaissance*). (Underlining below is mine.)

- "The emphasis of technical services will change from the acquisition of content to the user's discovery of content. A library's success will be defined by whether its users are finding the best materials easily and quickly, rather than by collection metrics. A myriad of services, customized to the library's local needs, will emerge that will sit on top of a library's broad print and electronic collections. The success of these services will be dependent upon the availability and quality of metadata."

- "The need for all content to have some online manifestation, whether a full-text scan or a metadata record, will force all of a library's hidden collections into the light, including manuscripts, images and other special collections."

- "Dissertations, articles, books, working papers, technical reports and other such content will flood into the campus libraries for curation, description and distribution. Technical service staff will find an increasing percentage of their work shifted away from the procurement of external content to the care and distribution of locally created content."

- "The Google Book Project will cause a resurgence in the use of the print collections. As books are rediscovered, there will be a shift of resources toward identifying, preserving and republishing books held uniquely by each library."

 "The year 2020 will still find libraries creating, collecting, organizing, delivering and preserving information resources; the fundamental "what" of technical services and library collections will not change," Susan says. "However, we must be ready for a radical transformation in the 'how' and 'why' of these activities. I believe the focus will shift from external to internal content, from just-in-case to just-in-time collection development, and from disparate silos of information resources to a mandated expectation that those silos can communicate and interact in ways that meet the expectations of library users."

How prepared are we here in Montana for these shifts that are coming?