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Assignment 1  
LI 801- Dr Mirah Dow  
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Interview with Dean Corwin  
Catalog Librarian  
Mabee Library and Curriculum Resource Center  
Washburn University

On January 20<sup>th</sup> I spoke with Dean Corwin, who is a Catalog Librarian in the Mabee Library at Washburn University. He seemed ambivalent about the interview and was surprised that anyone (even a SLIM student) would consider interviewing what he called “the quiet and unglamorous position of a cataloger.” He eventually relaxed when I sincerely expressed interest and seemed slightly honored when I asked his opinions about cataloging, weeding and technology.

Dean Corwin was reluctant to talk about himself. However, I was able to piece together his career path. He received a BA in Music at the University of Kansas and continued down that path resulting in an MA in Music at West Chester in Pennsylvania. During his graduate studies at West Chester he obtained a work-study position in circulation at the university library to pay for school. He became “hooked into librarianship” and as soon as he finished his MA he went on to the University of Illinois to obtain an MLS. His combination of a music and library degree gave him the necessary skills to become a Music Librarian at the University of Nebraska. He later applied for the Catalog Librarian position he currently holds at Washburn. What “hooked” him into this career shift was the elevated attention to details. Corwin stated, “I am naturally a detail oriented person. That is why I was attracted to music. Cataloging involved the ultimate in details. Thus it became my music.”

His music now comes to the sound of original cataloging (using OCLC) and copy cataloging academic materials (books, online resources, journals, etc.) for Washburn University. A Catalog Librarian does more than basic data entry; the cataloger needs to be able to understand the two different standards of the Library of Congress (Mabee) and Dewey Decimal System (Curriculum Resource Center). He also gets to decide what materials to weed (into the dumpster). This part of his job has become larger over the last five to ten years due to the obsolescence of old technology brought about by recent advances.

Materials in an academic setting have to be relevant to today's students. Corwin points out that information technology changes constantly and believes that as an information provider he has to stay on top of those changes. This is a huge undertaking especially when those changes involve the OCLC databases, the Internet and e-resources. Some changes he quietly admitted he has not caught up to. He still saves his work on floppy disk rather than CDs and thumb drives (yet admits he should), has not investigated blogs (not sure he has time to) and tries not to worry about the archival viability of electronic resources and electronic materials.

Since his music librarianship skills are not needed at Washburn University, Corwin has recently let his Music Librarian Association (MLA) membership lapse and noted that he probably hung on to it for sentimental value rather than for any real professional use. As part of his professional affiliations, he belongs to American Library Association (ALA) and Kansas Library Association (KLA), but feels that they do not address issues in cataloging sufficiently. "Perhaps cataloging is just not glamorous enough."