On October 13th at the RTSS and CUS Workshop

There were 21 surveys returned, and below is a brief question by question summary:

1. The first question asked about the areas in which participants work. (Since participants were encouraged to indicate as many areas as applied, the sum is greater than 21.) Five participants work in reference; 4 in cataloging; 1 in systems; 6 in acquisitions; 2 in circulation; and 10 in collection development.

2. The second question asked about the type of library the participants were from. There was 1 special librarian; 1 public librarian; and 19 academic librarians.

3. The third question asked about cataloging practices. One of the difficulties of providing access to titles within aggregations is having the resources to first catalog them, then maintain them (as titles drop out, are added in, change URLs, and vary as to their similarity to their print counterparts in completeness).

   A. The first part of this question asked if aggregates were cataloged in the OPAC as single entries (e.g. "JSTOR"), and if so whether this is done always, or sometimes; and if there is a live link from the OPAC entry to the resource.

   Fourteen respondents said their library does have single entry records for aggregations in their OPACS. Of these, seven responded that they "always" cataloged aggregations as single entries, thought one qualified this by saying "searchable and browsable titles," one left the "always/sometimes" question unanswered; six answered "sometimes" but one of these was only for accounting purposes (in an integrated OPAC acquisitions system), another one of the six answered that they excluded aggregators like Academic Universe (with a mixture of full and partial text, and frequent additions/subtractions in the titles they offer). [My intention in asking this question was to find out if libraries differentiated between relatively stable, and full text aggregations like JSTOR and very large and very variable aggregations like First Search. Unfortunately, the question wasn’t phrased well enough to convey this successfully, and the intent wasn’t always clear.]

   Of the remaining seven respondents, four (including the one from the public library) do not have single entry records for aggregations in their OPACS, and one (the lone special librarian) does not yet have an OPAC. Two respondents left this question blank.

   B. The second part of this question asked about cataloging in the OPAC each journal title within an aggregate.

   Eighteen respondents indicated that their libraries cataloged journal titles within an aggregate. Three indicated that they always catalog all
titles (or try to, the full text ones), and 15 sometimes catalog aggregated journal titles (some only for aggregations like JSTOR, Project MUSE, etc), but tend not to do so for large aggregations (like NCLive, or large aggregations).

Three respondents do not catalog journal titles within aggregates separately. One respondent (from a special library) is currently without an OPAC, another is from the public library, and the third is from an academic library.

C. The last part of this question asked how many respondents’ libraries link from the OPAC to the resource.

Fourteen respondents indicated their library links from the OPAC to the e-resource. Five do not, but one of those hopes to soon. Two respondents left the question blank.

4. The fourth question asks whether a respondent’s library has a web page separate from the OPAC that lists e-resources. Twenty respondents’ libraries do, and of those, 20 list and link aggregations (like JSTOR), and 16 list and link titles within aggregates.

5. The fifth question asks about decision-making responsibility for displaying or cataloging e-resources. While the responses varied, four identified individuals as the decision makers (two in cataloging, one unspecified, and one the electronic resources serial librarian); four more specified committees (in technical services, systems, or a special Consortia Advisory Committee); twelve listed various committees, a mixture of committees and individuals, or ad hoc decision making. One respondent left this question blank.

6. The last question asked respondents to identify, from their perspective, the greatest problem with aggregates. There were thirteen responses, which fell into three categories. The first was about lack of stability of content, the "here today, gone tomorrow" syndrome that plagues so many aggregations and makes it so difficult to determine what the library actually has access to. The second addresses the untenable maintenance effort that keeping up with changing URLs, changing content, and changing technology requires. The third concerned the problems of establishing and coordinating internal communication/processing strategies. In addition, there is the problem of knowing how you can use your e-resources (especially important for distance education and electronic reserves).