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IRs Rx for Libs? Possibly

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Little Red Herrings — IRs Rx for Libs? Possibly.

by Mark Y. Herring (Dean of Library Services, Dacus Library, Winthrop University) <herringm@winthrop.edu>
Little Red Herrings
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afield, into a desk drawer, a trunk, or even the wastebasket. But it falls into these places, not because it deserves to go there (though some certainly do), but because there really is nowhere else for it to go.

Look at it this way. If professor A of physics, who is working on Time, knew that professor Z of political science was also working on Time (but, of course, from a completely different angle), wouldn’t it be worth getting them together? The only way that’s likely to happen now is if the two bump into each other in the cafeteria or at the ball game and begin talking shop.

Of course faculty aren’t the only stakeholders here. So are students, administrators, librarians and really everyone involved in that academic community. Take just a few examples. Think of how valuable it could be if student B, who’s working in biology, stumbled upon student P, who’s working in Philosophy, and the two combined their differing intellectual outputs for a common effort much greater than their parts. Or, an administrator working in student services might discover that another administrator working in institutional design

Using Rare Books to Inspire Learning — Part 2: Drama - Travel

by Gene Waddell (College of Charleston) <waddelle@cofc.edu>

New scholarly discipline, or set a new course for the study of a subject. In my opinion, the approaches used by these authors are the ones most likely to continue to provide the best basis for adding knowledge.

Even when the information they contain has been largely superceded, these titles represent the best thinking that had been done on their subjects at the time of publication. They provide models for how to try to deal with an entire field of knowledge and how to go about solving problems. They are most worth reading to learn how major problems were finally solved.

I have had to omit many famous histories and works of literature to be able to focus on the ones that I considered most worth acquiring. I have preferred well established principles to theories. I have nearly always omitted titles by living or recently deceased authors.

In some cases, better editions than the first have been subsequently published, and these editions and translations are also needed. In some cases, such as the first printing of the Columbus letter or the Gutenberg Bible, a facsimile or later edition will nearly always have to suffice because of their extreme rarity. One first edition of a Shakespeare play could substitute for the First Folio. Regardless, every library should have as many first editions of key works as it can acquire.

To make more facsimiles and translations widely available of standard works is also a publishing opportunity. A surprising number of these titles are out of print, and some have never been fully translated into English.

As more first editions are becoming available online, what is the point of having copies that are too valuable to be handled? The point is to inspire similar accomplishments. A first edition can be as inspiring as an original work of art no matter how many copies exist. It is to make readers wonder why these books are important, what it took to create them, why they have been so influential, and why so many of them still need to be read.

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