

Margaret Louise Ruwoldt

From: a.mannion@pgrad.unimelb.edu.au
Sent: Tuesday, 20 May 2008 5:49 PM
To: Information Futures Commission
Subject: Feedback via InfoFutures web site

From the Information Futures feedback form:

----- Comments -----

As a member of the Libraries Committee reporting back representing the University of Melbourne Postgraduate Association, I would like to highlight my concern at learning the following statistics from the draft consultation paper on Information Futures.

Compared with other institutions, our library expenditure per user is below par (about 2.65 per cent of total university expenditure in 2006 compared with 3.16 per cent at Sydney, 3.76 per cent at Queensland and 3.81 per cent at Monash) although Melbourne's libraries are among the most heavily used. Primarily we are delivering a high volume of transactional or commodity services: loans, physical spaces, online catalogue and search. We loaned more than 1 million items in 2006 and had more than 3 million visitors to our libraries. Most users our libraries daily or 2-4 times per week, in person or online, and Melbourne scholars borrowed almost 40 items per full time equivalent scholar in 2006 compared to 36 at Sydney and Monash, 33 at Queensland and 25 at ANU.
(p.8 of the draft of "Scholarly Information in a Digital Age: interim report to Academic Board"™)

The overall quality of our library services this year slipped from the top 50 per cent band for Australian universities (we now rank slightly below the median).

(p.9 of the draft of "Scholarly Information in a Digital Age: interim report to Academic Board"™)

It is my belief that if the University of Melbourne wishes to truly support and encourage postgraduate research and teaching, then it needs to commit to having a first class library that is at, or above, the standard of the best in other Australian universities. It is my belief that this will necessitate a level of spending equalling the highest in the country.

In addition it is necessary that we match not only overall spending, but importantly that we match other elite university libraries in their spending on scholarly materials, be they physical or electronic. Thanks for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Aaron Mannion

----- Contact -----

Aaron Mannion

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have read privacy

Margaret Louise Ruwoldt

From: mclaae@unimelb.edu.au
Sent: Thursday, 5 June 2008 5:49 PM
To: Information Futures Commission
Subject: Feedback via InfoFutures web site

From the Information Futures feedback form:

----- Comments -----

Response to the Draft Strategy of the Information Futures Commission:

The Role of the Baillieu Library's East Asian Collection in the University's Strategic Plan

To: Prof Glyn Davies, VC; Prof Peter McPhee, Provost; Prof Mark Considine, Dean, Faculty of Arts, Prof Janet McCalman & other Members of the Information Futures Commission.

From: China-focus Scholars in the Faculty of Arts: A/Prof. Anne McLaren, Professor David Holm, Dr Liping Du, Dr Jia Gao, Dr Lewis Mayo, Dr Shaoming Zhou of the Asia Institute; Dr Audrey Yue & Dr Fran Martin, Cultural Studies, School of Culture and Communication; A/Prof Antonia Finnane & Dr Justin Tighe, School of Historical Studies cc. Bick-har Yeung, Head, East Asian Collection, Baillieu Library; Prof Abdullah Saeed, Director, Asia Institute; Prof. Vera Mackie, ARC Professorial Fellow, School of Historical Studies & East Asian Collection Interest Group.

Date: 5 June 2008

The East Asian Collection of the Baillieu Library makes a vital contribution to key elements identified in the Draft Strategy plan of the Information Futures Commission. This submission by China-focus scholars in the Faculty of Arts will address four specific areas:

- i) meeting the needs of a multicultural, diverse student body and active student engagement
- ii) access to cutting-edge digital research material with an Asian focus
- iii) the preservation and maintenance of unique, distinctive or prestigious collections within the University

iv) the internationalization of research and collaborative links with the Asia-Pacific region.

1 Meeting the needs of a multicultural, diverse student body The Baillieu Library's East Asian Collection comprises the largest source of print and digital material in Asian languages in southern Australia. From inception it has sought to meet the needs of Australian born members of the University as well as increasingly diverse student groups, many of them from the Asian region. Currently the East Asian Collection offers a rich site within the Baillieu Library that allows staff, students and members of the public to engage with cutting-edge material in digital and printed form. The site has long been a much valued focal point for China-focus scholars and postgraduates both on campus and beyond. It regularly runs library-based tutorial groups, open to all students of China-related topics across the campus, to introduce students to data research methodologies and electronic databases in Chinese and Japanese language sources. In addition, the East Asia Collection has for the past decade regularly organized university-wide postgraduate seminars that bring together China-focus postgraduates across the Faculties and Chinese speakers on campus.

Recommendation 1. The vital role of the Baillieu Library's East Asian collection in providing a much needed hub of activities for all East Asia focus members of the University should be recognised and promoted as both an educational and marketing asset.

However, as with other parts of the library system, lack of funding, lack of shelf space and zones for activities, administrative neglect, and low prioritization, have led to a number of urgent problems.

Recommendation 2 The East Asian Collection site should be upgraded to ensure that the site can provide a welcoming Asia-focus hub for university members, visiting scholars and the public, in this way clearly signalling the University's respect for the cultures of our Asian-heritage and international Asian students and staff members, and the importance of the University's internationalization effort in the Asia-Pacific region. Resources should be made available to build on existing activities to better meet the needs of Asian international students and Asia-focus scholars.

Recommendation 3 The East Asian Collection should be refurbished (the collection is the only place in the Baillieu that is not carpeted) and extended to provide enough shelving space for a ten-year collection growth. An exhibition area should be added and more library computers for student and public access. Holdings should be expanded to include popular vernacular material (eg novels, digital movies etc) as well as scholarly materials to provide a welcoming site for leisure reading as well as scholarly work and research.

2) Access to cutting-edge print and digital material The Chinese collection already has well-developed

digital databases but there are a number of important databases that we are unable as yet to subscribe to (Taiwan Periodical Services: Social Sciences- full text journals; Chinese academic journal full text database: social sciences and education, pre 1994; China Yearbooks fulltext database; China major newspapers databases; China Data Centre database-statistical data; and full access to China dissertation database,etc).

With regard to print collections, there are a number of problems in optimising access to print collections. The main one is space to allow for browsing and data access- too many major collections are held off-campus. Another problem is the backlog of cataloguing required. There is a total of 10,000 volumes in Chinese big sets kept at the University Store that are not available in the online catalogue. A third problem is the low priority given to maintaining a basic level of cleanliness in the shelf collections. This is evidenced by accumulated dirt on many of the lower shelves of stacks. A fourth problem is that Chinese books remain piled high on top of book shelves, trolley and sorting shelves because there is no room to shelve new books. East Asian staff members have to send low use items to Store in order to provide space for incoming materials. This kind of "One book in and one book out policy" is not cost-effective and has resulted in a catalogue backlog of some one thousand Chinese titles. Much more can be done to make the spatial configuration of the EA Collection a vibrant attractive place for all East Asia focus scholars and students to meet and conduct research, including collaborative research.

Recommendation 4 That the site of the East Asian Collection be extended to allow for adequate shelving, that regular cleaning and maintenance of the site be carried out, and that staff assistance should be provided to clear the backlog in books to be catalogued.

3) Enhancing the distinctiveness of the Library profile.

We note that the East Asian Collection has the largest collection of Chinese and Japanese holdings in southern Australia and provides book loans and other services to the Melbourne area and nationally. With more space, enhanced digital data bases, and a larger number of professional staff it can play a key role in promoting the distinctiveness of the Baillieu Library.

4) International research collaboration.

A vibrant East Asian Collection is essential to the enhancement of international research collaboration in the Asia-Pacific area. In recent years the EA Collection has made great efforts to build up holdings in multiple disciplines in which the University has long-standing and emerging research interests (architecture, archaeology, economics, environment, geography, education, law etc). However, the funding to the Asia Institute for acquisition of Chinese materials has been unchanged since 1978. An infusion of funds is required to keep up with the rapid expansion of print and digital holdings that is taking place all around the Pacific Rim and amongst the University's major competitors.

Recommendation 5

That the importance of the University's East Asian collection to the University's agenda of enhanced student engagement and the internationalization of research be formally recognised in the strategy and planning documents of the Information Future's Commission and that the Commission liaise with members of the East Asian Collection User's Group (currently headed by Prof Vera Mackie) to assist with the implementation of the University's strategic plan in this area. Contact: A/Prof Anne McLaren, Asia Institute mclaae@unimelb.edu.au

----- Contact -----

Anne McLaren

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UNIVERSITY OF MELBOURNE
INFORMATION FUTURES COMMISSION

Progress Report and Draft Strategy

Response on behalf of Fellows, School of Historical Studies

Introduction

We welcome the opportunity to comment on the documents. Our expectation is that consultation with all the interested parties in the decision-making process will continue through the stages which lie ahead.

1 What type of library should we have?

The draft plan describes the *learning precincts model* as the preferred option and goes on to describe a humanities precinct library. This includes *significant print collections*, digital collections of primary reference materials, etc. One must assume that this is intended to be a library intended primarily for the use of students up to about Masters level, with its student information centres, social spaces, coffee shops et al. Depending on the definition of *significant print collections*, such a library is unlikely to be *at the heart of all scholarly endeavour* since it will not cater for the needs of researchers to any great extent. It should, however, provide admirably for the requirements of teaching and learning.

There is also a grand vision of a *great research and cultural library* which describes ready access to *low use research collections* which will be housed in a closed access repository. The reference to low use collections presumably includes those currently known as the Special Collections and the Cultural Collections, presently housed in a closed access location for reasons of security and physical protection. It appears, however, from the incessant use of the phrase *low use research collections*, that this possibly also refers to the collections currently described as the Research collections and largely located in the ERC building. Hopefully, it would also include the magnificent research collections built up over a century in the small sciences branch libraries. These latter collections are used sporadically, but by a wide range of people, across a myriad of disciplines. If these collections are not to be included in the Research Library, then this needs to be clarified and their fate explained.

As noted in the original response submitted by the Fellows, we do not have a particular objection to the segmenting of the library collections so that very low use materials are kept in off-campus storage. Our response did, however, constantly emphasise the need for **browsable** collections wherever they are stored.

We note with pleasure that the desire to “grow” these collections is clearly indicated. The Fellows would like to state again our view *that far more money should be allocated to the*

development of the Collections, in the broadest meaning of this term, to maintain the real standing of the University as a research institution.

The vision looks like a very long term plan but funds and space will need to be provided for the adequate housing of the library and its collections and users in the near and medium term.

2. What should be in the libraries?

The choices offered under this heading oppose concepts such as *physical browsability and serendipity* and *online tools for sophisticated searching, recommendation and discovery* in a way that suggests that they are the two extremes of a continuum. The same is true of other concepts listed here such as open shelving and closed access on campus. This is a simplistic way of dealing with the problems thrown up by limited space availability. If really adequate space was to be provided for all the collections there would be no need to articulate these differences. It is disappointing to see that the University plans to continue to rely on *the existing quantity of open access shelving*, and *moving print collections into secure storage*. It is not clear how the vision of a great research library fits in with the above statements.

The Fellows would seriously oppose any plan that places all of the current Research (aka low use) collections – those from the ERC and those from the Branch Libraries - in closed access locations. They would always opt for a combination of study and collection spaces; open shelving for the majority of the collections and browsable high density storage for the really low use items; a closed collection for the special and cultural collections; **and** the provision of *online tools for sophisticated searching*. In most research environments, but especially in the Humanities and Social Sciences, physical access to the collections together with the provision of tools for sophisticated searching are the basic and essential requirements of a research library. A catalogue, no matter how sophisticated, is no substitute for the capacity to move amongst the collections, following up references and chasing up additional information as the need arises.

3. How should we organise ourselves to achieve our preferred information future.

The Fellows would always argue for a structure that consults the users in any decisions made about the way in which the library is developed. Research methods and needs are different across the broad disciplines and also within disciplines. Only close consultation with the practitioners will mean that the Library, however it is managed, gets its services right.

Dr Helen M. Davies
Ms Dorothea Rowse

Comments by the Committee of Convocation on “Scholarly Information in a Digital Age – Choices for the University Melbourne” (Progress report), and “One possible strategy”, Information Futures Commission, the University of Melbourne.

The Committee of Convocation is very concerned with print materials. As the Progress Report notes, these continue to be produced at a greater rate than ever and Melbourne, its size, prestige and high volume of use notwithstanding, is falling behind in its acquisition and is now a net borrower within the inter-library loan system. The Progress Report properly draws attention also to deficits in staffing levels, computers (which carry the catalogues among much else), cataloguing, seating and, for special collections and archives, conservation. Most obvious to the eye is the shortage of book-storage space and computers. The Committee of Convocation would urge you to be forthright in asking that consideration be given to enlarging the Baillieu Library, looking closely at the use of space within it and to building a large new facility, all with a view to greatly increasing Library storage space and study facilities on campus.

The Committee is disappointed that in emphasizing the future role of offsite storage and closed access for materials, which may not be old, rare or fragile, there is no reference to provision for browsing by arrangement. The commitment to complete and improved cataloguing is most welcome, but the catalogue is not always a satisfactory substitute for direct access to books, which permits not only serendipitous discovery but the quick checking of contents. In any case, the more materials on campus the better, be they closed or open. More study spaces are clearly needed, including those with computers. The question is not whether the University should provide space for study by students, singly or collaboratively, but whether Library books should be removed off-campus to make way for study space, whether or not the students are using Library materials, real or virtual.

The proposed redistribution of libraries seems appropriate, with small libraries being left *in situ* near their chief users who are remote from the main campus and/or with specialized needs. When small units are closed to join others from related disciplines, it will be very important to

provide ample space to accommodate the printed materials they require. It is good that the disparate needs of the disciplines are recognized. The Baillieu Library, by its size and construction, seems the obvious place for storage of the books and other physical items needed by the Arts and Social Sciences, with browsability preserved to the extent possible, at least for those requesting it.

The Committee is pleased that the necessity of keeping originals of the print special and cultural collections, and archives, is accepted, and that these are valued both for their attraction to scholars and their “showcase” properties. Should the building of a research/cultural library of the kind described in the Strategy be found practicable, it is hoped that scholars will have browsable access as appropriate not only to “research reference works”, which suggests a rather limited scope, but to a wide-ranging research collection.

It is also hoped that the proposed policy of further restricting access to Library collections will permit of some exceptions, for example to those who, while having no formal connection with the University, can show that they have some serious research interest to pursue.

We commend the decision to join consortia seeking to protect in perpetuity access to digital publications.

We agree that, if this University has fallen behind others in I.T. staffing and infrastructure to the detriment of teaching and research, funds should be sought to bring it at least to the standard enjoyed by the best-equipped Australian Universities.

As for funding to carry out any plans, the Strategy identifies the possible sources: Federal and State governments, philanthropy (which might be particularly engaged by the idea of a research/cultural library), and the University itself. We hope for successful approaches.

Please note that in the Progress Report to the Academic Board (May, 2008) you have quoted the submission from the Committee of Convocation twice but attributed the comments to the Committee’s Library Sub-Committee, rather than as coming from the Committee as a whole. Please remove “Library Sub-Committee”.

Attention:

Professor Glyn Davis, Vice Chancellor

cc: Members of Information Futures Steering Committee

From:

Vera Mackie, on behalf of the East Asian Collection Users' Committee

Re:

Information Futures Commission Draft Strategy

Dear Glyn,

I am writing to you on behalf of the East Asian Collection Users' Committee, an informal interest group of librarians and academics who use the Japanese and Chinese language collections in the library for teaching and research purposes.

We welcome the opportunity to comment on the Progress Report and Draft Strategy for Melbourne's Information Future.

We note that the Progress Report identifies several key issues of concern: **staffing levels, library expenditure, uncatalogued items, the physical environment and space**. We would like to point out that all of these issues are of particular concern in the East Asian Collections, as outlined below. We would also like to comment that issues which affect the library as a whole are particularly acute in the East Asian Collection, where a small group of expert staff undertake all of the services provided in the library: acquisition, collection management, cataloguing, reader services and public outreach. They undertake these expert activities with limited resources, space and infrastructure, in conditions where **occupational health and safety** is an acute concern.

We would also, however, like to point out that the East Asian Collection could play a unique role in the future of the library, providing a **mini-hub for researchers and students** who need to access scholarly information in East Asian languages: a group which goes well beyond those enrolled in Asian Studies programs, to include a large proportion of our international student body. These points are outlined in more detail below.

We are pleased to be working at an institution which has made an ongoing commitment to the collection and management of teaching and research materials in Japanese and Chinese, and consider our collection to be among the best collections of East Asian library materials in Australia. As part of the distributed national collection, our East Asian collection also serves academics throughout the country. We have excellent specialist librarians who work closely with staff and students here at Melbourne and take a leading role in discussions of the provision of information services in East Asian languages in national and international forums.

We are pleased that the library is currently undertaking consultation on Melbourne's Information Future, and would like to see that the needs of the East Asian Collection are addressed as part of that process. In that context, we would like to emphasise that the users of the East Asian Collection are more than just the research and teaching staff in Asian Studies programs and the undergraduate and postgraduate students enrolled in Asian Studies courses, although this group is growing. Just this year, for example, we have seen a huge increase in students from other faculties enrolling in Japanese language subjects. All of the staff and students of the university who have reading ability in Japanese or Chinese are likely to make use of the East Asian Collections for their study and research. The number of such students is likely to increase with the advancement of the internationalisation of education and the changes associated with the Melbourne Model.

Our vision is for an East Asian Collection which builds on our established strengths and improves on them. We would like to see an East Asian Collection where specialist library staff are housed in adequate and safe office space, which has adequate space for staff and students to undertake quiet study, where our impressive collections can be shelved, displayed and browsed, and where students can access both printed and digital materials in a pleasant environment. An East Asian Collection with a mini-learning hub attached would serve as a valuable resource for staff and students engaged in Asian Studies research and a focus for international students from the East Asian region on campus. The recently renovated Asian Collections Reading Room at the National Library of Australia would provide a suitable benchmark for the kind of work and study space which would serve our needs.

However, we are a long way from achieving this ideal, and we would once again like to draw your attention to some matters of concern, which are affecting our ability to make the best use of these collections. Some of these are matters which have been raised repeatedly over the years, but at the current juncture it seems particularly important to raise these issues once again. With the renovation of the ERC and the likelihood of re-organisation and re-location of some collections, it is particularly vital that the needs of the East Asian Collection be included in these deliberations.

The space in the office area of the East Asian library section is clearly inadequate, and there are health and safety issues involved for the staff working there. There is inadequate shelving space for East Asian materials. If there is any re-organisation of library space to be carried out, then the provision of adequate space for the East

Asian Collection should be given a priority, whether in the existing Baillieu Library or some other space.

We welcome the provision of learning hubs, and welcome the opportunity to access electronic resources in character-based languages. We would like to request that the East Asian Collection be provided with an adequate number of terminals and space for students to undertake such searches in character-based languages, perhaps in the form of a 'mini' learning hub close to the East Asian Collection.

We would also, however, like to emphasise that historical research on Japan and China is still largely dependent on print-based sources. It is vital that we be able to consult monographs, journals, maps and gazetteers from earlier eras. Primary document collections and historical runs of journals are often still produced in print format rather than microform, CD-ROM, or on-line access. We need access to these materials, preferably in open access shelving.

There is a huge number of uncatalogued items, particularly in the Chinese language. In some cases, this involves items which are in storage but difficult to access as they do not appear in the catalogue. In other cases, the cataloguing is inadequate. For example, there might be only one catalogue entry for a multi-volume set containing several hundred individual titles, making it difficult to locate the relevant volume for particular research. As of last year there was a total of 20,000 uncatalogued items located at off-campus storage and in the East Asian Closed Stack. We are pleased that some funds have recently been allocated for this purpose and hope that this allocation can be built on in the future.

Users have noted that the inquiries window of the East Asian Collection is sometimes closed. We understand that this is because the East Asian librarians take their turn at working on the Information Desk and other user services, and there are no casual staff members to back them up at these times. While we welcome the integration of East Asian library staff into the mainstream operations of the Library, it should be noted that it is difficult for staff from other parts of the Library to reciprocate due to the language requirements.

It needs to be recognised that the East Asian Collection is different from other specialist areas of the library because of the language requirements. The small number of staff in the East Asian Collection undertake all of the functions of a research library: collection management, acquisition, cataloguing, reader services, the provision of information through electronic sources, and contributing to the discipline through presentations at professional conferences.

There has been no increase in the dollar amount of the book vote for Japanese and Chinese materials for some years, despite the increased enrolments in Japanese and Chinese language subjects, and the increased number of staff and students undertaking research on Japanese and Chinese materials. Although the value of the Australian dollar has shown some improvement in recent years, the purchasing power of the Australian dollar is well below that of ten or twenty years ago, so that materials from overseas have become more and more expensive. The inadequate

budget of the Baillieu Library for acquisitions is felt particularly acutely in an area almost wholly reliant on overseas acquisitions.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on these issues.

Please contact me should you require further information.

Vera Mackie

On behalf of the
East Asian Collection Users' Committee.

5 June 2008.

Margaret Louise Ruwoldt

From: Mark Brodsky
Sent: Friday, 6 June 2008 4:21 PM
To: Information Futures Commission
Subject: FW: MGSE Response

Attachments: Response to Melbourne.doc



Response to
Melbourne.doc (27 ..

From: Pam Macintyre
Sent: Friday, 6 June 2008 4:17 PM
To: Mark Brodsky
Cc: Appy Laspagis
Subject: MGSE Response

Dear Mark

Attached is MGSE's response to the Draft document.

We would like to thank you for the way that the Commission has conducted the process, and for the listening to, and acknowledgment of, the various opinions in the document.

We all commented on the document being informative, readable and an example of clear communication.

Best regards

Pam on behalf of ELUC and MGSE

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Response to Melbourne's Information Future: one strategy draft document

MGSE would like to endorse

- The partnership of academic staff with information professionals – 'scholar librarians'
- A Landmark Building for special collections giving them a dedicated space.
- Embedding of scholarly literacy in the curriculum
- The discipline-specific library at the heart of the discipline-clustered precincts
- Improvement in levels of staffing and consequent funding as fundamental
- Acknowledgement of the importance and continuance of the teaching materials in the Education collection

Concerns for Education

- The driver for education is social impact rather commerciality.
- Collaboration is a workable model for some situations, but use of libraries is generally individual and intensive.
- Quality student work could be considered for a searchable repository taking into account copyright issues.

MGSE would like to thank Mark Brodsky for his willing, cheerful support and clear background information to us over multiple meetings.

The Melbourne School of Graduate Research (MSGR)

Response to Information Futures Commission

General Principles Regarding the Provision of Scholarly Resources to Graduate Researchers

The following response lists the principles that MSGR believes should guide the development and implementation of Melbourne's Information Future Strategy. It focuses on the needs of the diverse Research Higher Degree (RHD) student cohort at the university. It notes the key challenges for developing and enhancing information and communication technologies, services and infrastructure to contribute to the success of our graduate research candidates and consequently, to the research reputation of the University.

Access

Access to the highest quality resources

- meeting the diverse information resource requirements of the research student/ academic community through its collections, or via resource-sharing opportunities (e.g. inter-library lending schemes)
- developing a collection policy that acknowledges that preference for print or digital format may be discipline based
- continuing to develop the University's collections to support the interdisciplinary nature of research
- providing ready access to well-catalogued off-campus library research-collections through timely retrieval services
- meeting the needs of off-campus students by providing resources in digital format where possible, or by providing flexible delivery arrangements

Access to required level of research information technology and infrastructure

- providing students with access to additional computer workstations
- providing enhanced large-scale computing capacity and data storage where required
- improving wireless infrastructure for the Graduate Centre and other locations where graduate students congregate

Access to quality information and technology training and support

- assisting the diverse RHD student cohort to develop competencies in the use of information technologies for scholarly and professional activities
- providing early career researchers with targeted e-research and information literacy training either early in candidature, or at the point of need
- providing researchers with research data management and information consultancy services
- assisting RHD students to become adept at keeping up with technological change - learning in a range of ways through advances in information and communication technologies

Access to high quality library and study spaces

- providing quality library and study spaces that foster interdisciplinary research, with a mix of both quiet and collaborative research spaces

Responsibility

The issue of responsibility is key. Given that access to scholarly resources is fundamental to all Teaching and Learning, both undergraduate and graduate, an senior academic (perhaps the PVC (T&L)) must take responsibility for the development of a clear strategy for, and the delivery of, a sustainable, adequately financed plan for the provision of scholarly resources over the next 10 years.

Dick Strugnell
PVC (Graduate Research)
Melbourne School of Graduate Research (MSGR)
6 June 2008

with considerable assistance from:
Jennifer Warburton
Research Consultant
MSGR
Information Services