Introduction
It was an absolute honour and pleasure to work as part of the Information Services team as the Collections Intern during the 2008-2009 school year at the Faculty of Information. This report will provide an overview of the projects I worked on as part of my internship as well as my overall impression of the internship experience.

Nature of the Work
I had the opportunity to work in three primary areas during my internship: collections, information literacy and public service. I worked on three projects throughout my year-long internship as well as some ad hoc projects. All of these assignments and responsibilities are discussed in detail below.

Three Primary Projects

1. Discussion Paper
The focus of my internship has been researching and writing a discussion paper on the benefits and challenges associated with collecting print and electronic journals. The goal of the paper is to make a strategic collection development recommendation for the Inforum’s current journal subscriptions with respect to format moving forward.

I conducted extensive research by completing a literature review and by engaging in discussions with Marte, Elisa and Joe. I also, with Elisa’s assistance, did a brief review of the current journal subscriptions. Preliminary research results were presented to the Information Services staff in January, 2009 and I asked for their input, questions and thoughts prior to writing various drafts of the paper between February and April of 2009. The paper was revised in collaboration with Joe and Elisa. A second meeting with Information Services staff was held in April, 2009 to discuss a draft of the report with a particular focus on its recommendations.

The result will be a 20-plus page paper that discusses the broader issues affecting academic journal publishing and collecting today, including:

- User preferences
- Ownership versus licensing
- Economic considerations
- Open access alternatives
- Repositories
- Consortial purchasing
- What other academic libraries are doing

These broader issues are then related to the Inforum’s current journal subscriptions. Three alternatives are presented for consideration and a strategic recommendation is made on how to proceed. This discussion paper, called *Multiple Format Journal Collections: Benefits and...*
Challenges, will be presented to various iSchool communities and committees, such as the Information Services Committee, as well as to Faculty Council for input and discussion. Other UTL committees, such as the Collection Development and Management Committee (CDMC), will also be consulted.

This project has taught me several things. I learned first-hand about the complexity of serials management as well as about current trends in collection development and management with respect to journals. I also learned quite a bit about the Inforum’s collection and technical services, the University of Toronto Libraries and the working relationship that Information Services has with the central library. The opportunity to apply what I had learned at a broader level to a specific institution and to make strategic recommendations was an invaluable experience.

2. Retrospective Serials Project
The retrospective serials project was established to provide users with more detailed information about the Inforum’s print journal holdings. When the catalogue records for serials were originally created, they provided basic information about the journal titles but the records did not include a list of the volumes and issues held by the Inforum. This meant that users would need to go to the stacks to see if the journal issue they required was part of our holdings. Therefore, the retrospective serials project was started to update serials records to ensure users have access to accurate information on all journal titles. This project involved creating or verifying MARC holdings records as well as updating bibliographic records to reflect current cataloguing practices. I also updated the training manual to reflect the new Sirsi interface and to provide additional examples of challenging records.

Information Services staff have been working through the serials collection alphabetically by title. I inherited the project part way through the titles beginning with the letter L and I finished part way through the letter R. This translates into one catalogue card drawer full of records or three and a half rows of journals in the stacks. Meera will be taking over this project and I have provided her with in-depth training.

This project was an excellent introduction to working with MARC records, Sirsi and to serials collection management in general.

3. Vertical File Project
Information Services accumulated substantial collection of vertical files on library-related topics and groups over the course of several decades. Approximately 815 files were in the collection and their contents included information on library associations from around the world, on library and information schools, on specific libraries as well as subject files relevant to the profession such as library architecture and public lending rights of authors. Some of the material dates back to the 1920s.

The purpose of the project is to reduce the collection without weeding important materials, to make relevant items accessible to users and to enable the reallocation of space used by the vertical file filing cabinets on 5th floor of the Bissell building. The approach taken was to assess the content of each file and if the materials were produced by an association or group, to offer...
them to the organizations that originally produced the materials. If the file was not affiliated with an institution (e.g. subject files), a decision was made as to whether or not the file in its entirety should be retained or if specific items should be added to the collection. Files and items not relevant to collection and not wanted by other organizations were deselected.

I inherited this project in May, 2008. At that time there were three five-drawer filing cabinets full of vertical files. As of April, 2009, there are three and a half drawers of files left, many of which have been designated for retention. I personally processed 401 files, some with the assistance of Andrea Gagliardi, one of the Student Assistants. I created an Excel spreadsheet to track the status of each file, converting the existing Word table into a much more user-friendly format. The following chart summarizes the statistics on this project and provides statistics specific to my contribution.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>File Category</th>
<th>Total Number of Files per Category</th>
<th>Number of Files Processed by Alexandra Ross per Category</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Files sent to organizations</td>
<td>176</td>
<td>113</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Files weeded</td>
<td>489</td>
<td>251</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Files retained</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Files to be assessed</td>
<td>57</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Files awaiting response</td>
<td>18</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Files not found</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Items offered to other libraries</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Items to be added to the collection</td>
<td>128</td>
<td>128</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Judging by the content of the files and the dates of the items, some of the materials are historically important. All but two of the organizations I heard back from wanted to have their files sent to them in the event the contents might be useful additions to their archives. I received many thank you emails expressing gratitude for thinking to contact the organization and for sending the files.

The 128 items that are to be added to the catalogue are valuable resources that users will benefit from. Some provide information on subjects that would be difficult to obtain elsewhere (such as rural libraries in Nova Scotia) while other items add dimension to our existing collection by providing additional sources (such as library legislation in Canada).

The Vertical File project taught me so much about the broader information services community. I learned about information associations and schools around the world and about their mandates and history. Deciding which materials to keep, which to weed and which might be good additions to the collection gave me the opportunity to participate in a de-selection process and judiciously apply weeding protocols. It was a pleasure to see such a wide variety of interesting materials that spanned nearly a century in time.

**Information Literacy Workshops**
I also had the opportunity to teach two series of workshops as part of the Inforum Instructional Series. The first was a how-to session for students wanting to improve their working knowledge
of PowerPoint. I inherited a lesson plan from a previous instructor and then I tweaked it to suit both my teaching style and current students’ needs. I also updated the handouts provided by the previous instructor.

The second workshop series was called Powerful Presentations. I developed all of the content for this session. It was a combination of theory and practical tips on how to organize presentation content and actually deliver a powerful presentation. Much of the workshop was focused on nonverbal communication behaviours that enhance presentations as well as how to practice presentations for maximum results. After an hour and a half of teaching and discussion, students were given the opportunity to present using their new-found skills and to receive constructive feedback. I also taught a version of this workshop to speakers preparing for the Housing Memory Conference held here at the iSchool.

Teaching these workshops was an invaluable experience for me. They taught me that I love to teach, and given the positive feedback I received from participants, that I may have an aptitude for it.

**Ad Hoc Projects and Responsibilities**

Spending one third of my hours working on the Information Desk was another invaluable experience. I had the opportunity to learn about all the aspects of the circulation process, to assist both students and faculty with their questions, and to do some technological troubleshooting. There were also several interesting shifts that required me to solve problems creatively (e.g. power outages, a water shut off, a bathroom leak, upset patrons, computer system/server failures, T-card reader issues, photocopiers with multiple paper jams etc.).

I created a PowerPoint template for the Faculty of Information to reflect the iSchool’s new branding. This process involved taking existing art and logos and creating a professional yet eye-catching template that faculty and staff could use for a variety of purposes, from presenting at a conference to marketing the Faculty and its programs to prospective students. Several staff members were involved in the process and several drafts were developed before six templates (all variations on a central theme) were adopted for use.

There were also some ad hoc collections projects that kept me busy at various times throughout the year. I assisted Elisa in researching potential new items for purchase. I also helped Nadia by updating item records for all of the theses prepared by the Faculty’s Masters and PhD students over the years and by preparing several trucks of items for shipment to Downsview.

**The Intern Experience**

The following are my thoughts on my internship experience in general.

**Training** – The training and orientation I received were excellent. I felt I was well prepared for all of my projects and responsibilities. I would only suggest providing some more information during orientation on the Faculty as a whole and groups in the Faculty as well as how the Inforum connects with them. For example, I really did not have an understanding of ATRC’s mandate and how they work together with Information Services to accomplish their goals. I also found it confusing to determine which groups have room booking privileges and which do not.
(Rotman, ATRC, PLC etc.). This is a minor point but one that could be easily addressed with an organization chart or verbal explanation.

**Work environment** – The work culture at the Inforum is everything one could hope for: warm, collegial and encouraging. Everyday was not only interesting but also enjoyable. I appreciated the opportunity to work independently while knowing I could ask questions or ask for help at any time. I greatly appreciated the positive feedback I received from Elisa and other Information Services staff. The willingness to include interns in work outings was much appreciated. I also found the staff birthday celebrations to be a nice touch.

**Challenges** – There were only four challenges I faced while working at the Inforum, three of which were related to juggling my projects. Once my hours changed to 15 to 20 hours per week, 6.5 of which were spent on the desk, it became more difficult to make substantial accomplishments on my other project simply due to lack of time. In order to prevent finishing the discussion paper in April, I would also have preferred to start this project over the summer, rather than waiting until the fall when my hours dropped to 15 to 20 per week and when I was carrying a full course load again. Additionally, when ad hoc projects came up, such as updating the thesis catalogue records, the time required to accomplish these tasks meant I had to put my regular projects on hold. I want to stress, however, that I really valued the experience the ad hoc projects gave me and I would recommend they continue to be part of any future internships. The juggling of my regular projects was well worth the effort in order to have additional opportunities to learn.

Looking back, it would also have been helpful to have some concrete goals set out with respect to the Vertical File project and the Retrospective Serials project. At the beginning of my internship, I was unsure what constituted good progress and therefore I had a hard time gauging if I was meeting expectations or if I needed to alter the time spent on or my approach to a particular project. Over time it became clearer.

**Generally** – I learned a lot about academic libraries and what it is like to be part of a larger university library system, as well as what different departments do and how. Working in collections taught me how all aspects of technical services come together to provide users with exceptional service and access.

My internship also provided me with invaluable professional experience in a variety of areas, particularly collections, public service and information literacy. I believe the diversity of projects gave me an opportunity to try different aspects of librarianship and to learn more about skills and experiences that I would like to build on during my career. I also believe that the internship experience makes me a more marketable candidate upon graduation. I support the Inforum’s and the Faculty’s efforts to provide students in the program with professional experience and would hope that the internship program will continue.