ACRL Women and Gender Studies Section

Research Agenda — Scholarly Communications

Non-western evolution in information creation

**Bennett & Radloff (2002)** examine information generation within an African context. The advent of the Internet has seen a proliferation of research in the area of gender and ICTs. In an effort to free themselves from the hegemony of western feminists they are sensitizing themselves to the politics of communication. Information creation and generation results from gender & women’s studies work emanating from NGOs. Email, listservs and radio are critical modes of information exchange. There are still considerable challenges regarding the collecting, organizing and dissemination of published information that is not as easily visible. Bennett & Radloff include an appendix of websites providing information on gender justice issues in Africa and list of four core women & gender studies journals published in Africa.

**Vyas (2002)** takes a look at women’s information sources from India. The first National Conference on Women’s Studies (1981) of the Indian Association of Women’s Studies (IAWS) urged the development of information clearinghouses of research and other types of information emanating from governmental, institutional and commercial organizations. This article outlines the types of information sources coming from each of these sources, the core resource providing access to information from each of these sources. The information landscape for women in India is complex, well organized and diverse. She provides an outline of key access points (re: institutional archives & publications). Secondary sources for accessing these materials are well developed in the form of bibliographies, abstracting & indexing services, directories & resource guides. In addition, there has
been a proliferation of Websites developed by government and women’s organizations. The commercial sector reflects the keen interest in women’s information needs through popular media. Finally, numerous research centers have been established within the university systems for collecting and archiving materials.

- How has WGS knowledge creation and information dissemination evolved in non-Western countries, and how is it still evolving? How is that evolution the same or different from Western knowledge creation and dissemination?

**Western evolution of information creation**

[Gerhard (2002)](http://example.com) outlines the historical development of formalizing women’s studies and feminist literature starting in 1972 with Ms. Magazine. From here core publications begin to emerge and include reference materials, journals endemic to women’s studies (Signs, etc.) and then journals reflecting the interdisciplinary nature of the field (e.g., Women & Health, Journal of Women’s History, etc.) She points to the development of compendium of resources for locating information about women’s studies or feminist serials (e.g., Feminist Periodicals: A Current Listing of Contents (1981– ), Women’s Periodicals in the United States: Social and Political Issues, etc.), the development of core lists, index & abstract development, TOC & alerts (noting that some of the serials are now available electronically) and finally to the advent of critical institutional repositories which are maintaining archives newsletters, ephemera and other difficult to locate materials from across the past couple centuries. She suggests that the advent of e-zines will likely give rise to new voices (girls?). With the advent of the Internet, access to and dissemination of information will become easier, but women’s studies librarians will still be critical.

- Where is women and gender studies as a field in changing scholarly communication?
- How is women and gender studies contributing to the evolution of open access scholarly communication?
- How has WGS knowledge creation and information dissemination evolved?
• How do scholarly communications within women and gender studies differ across countries and cultures?