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Founding a Group for New Business Librarians: The First Six Months

Being new in a profession that centers itself on specialized knowledge, such as business librarianship, can be intimidating. A new librarian may hear of colleagues' fantastic faculty relationships, the library's rich collection, and varied and lively reference services, and ask, "Where do I even start?"

Greta Wood of Mississippi State University and I met at ALA Anaheim in June 2012. I had been a business librarian for a month, and she was on the verge of transitioning from Instruction Librarian to Business Librarian that July. Earlier that morning Greta attended an ALA program which centered on a group of new distance learning librarians who created a small community of practice by meeting once a month. This seemed to both of us like a great idea.

At our first meeting in October, we set the goals and general policy for membership. The group was meant for librarians who had been business librarians or liaising to a business department for two years or less. We wanted to serve as a networking and support group for these new business librarians in order to promote knowledge sharing and publication, though we had no intention of replacing the many great listservs and online resources which exist for business librarians. Rather, we strove to create a community of librarians at similar points in their careers who could learn from each other's baby steps.

We assembled our original group of five librarians through professional connections, but we grew quickly as we publicized ourselves through the Business Reference 101 class and through our professional networks. In two months the group swelled to seventeen new business librarians in the United States and Canada. This rapid growth of many perspectives challenged our informal style and cohesion, and we needed increasingly better organization. On the flipside, such growth benefited the group as those perspectives combined to make it more

robust.

We meet for an hour once a month via Skype, and each meeting has a general theme. The