

OCLC Distinguished Seminar Series

March 11, 2004

The Social Role of Digital Libraries

Derek Law

Librarian

Head of Information Resources Directorate

University of Strathclyde

9:00-9:30 am

Coffee and Pastries

9:30-11:00 am

Presentation and Q&A

**OCLC Online Computer
Library Center, Inc.
Kilgour Auditorium
6565 Frantz Road
Dublin, OH 43017-3395**

You are welcome to attend this presentation.

Registering in advance allows us to plan sufficient refreshments and to alert you if for any reason the lecture needs to be rescheduled.

Please RSVP, either by email to disbrowk@oclc.org or by calling OCLC Research at (614) 764-6073, and indicating your name, affiliation, and telephone number.

Advance registration is encouraged, but not required.

Professor Derek Law, of the University of Strathclyde in Glasgow, will discuss the social opportunities presented by digital libraries. While digital libraries pose significant technical problems, they enable libraries of all types to contribute digitized or born-digital collections to the shared environment in which libraries have traditionally operated.

The huge social success of libraries in the print arena suggests that similar challenges can be managed in the digital environment.

Scattered communities can be brought together, scattered collections can be unified, and confrontational communities can be brought closer. Additionally, we can learn from older oral traditions how to deal with issues facing us today. While these issues may be technically novel, the principles discovered are not.

The low entry threshold to digital libraries, such as cheap technology, shareware, and OAI, suggests that digital libraries can be an inclusive phenomenon that enlivens rather than excludes a variety of cultural traditions.

Derek Law has earned an international reputation for his work in developing services to support innovative learning. He is currently President of the eIFL (Electronic Information for Libraries) Advisory Board, in addition to holding several positions at the University of Strathclyde, including University Librarian, Head of Information Resources Directorate, Head of the Centre for Digital Library Research, and Professor in the University's Department of Computing. Professor Law has published over 150 book chapters, articles and conference papers and his work has been honored with several awards, including the Barnard prize for contributions to Medical Informatics.

Background information:

Derek Law:

<http://www.mis.strath.ac.uk/IS/staff/IRDDerek.htm>

eIFL:

<http://www.eifl.net/>

Maps available online at <http://www.oclc.org/about/headquarters/maps/>.

This document and further information about the Distinguished Seminar Series, including web media files, are available online at <http://www.oclc.org/research/dss/>.

