Guide to the Research Libraries Group, Inc. (RLG) records

Descriptive Summary

Title: Guide to the Research Libraries Group, Inc. (RLG) records

Dates: 1974-2006

Collection Number: M1529

Creator/Collector: RLG (Organization)

Extent: 222 linear feet (172 record storage boxes, 2 flat boxes, 7 manuscript boxes, 2 small map folders)

Repository: Stanford University. Manuscripts Division

Abstract: Collection includes historical corporate documents, program and project files, grant proposals, system and software development files, digital material, photographs, and other documents and memorabilia.

Language of Material: English

Access

The collection is open for research; materials must be requested as least 36 hours in advance of intended use. Audio-visual materials are not available in original format, and must be reformatted to a digital use copy. Computer media files are unprocessed and unavailable.

Publication Rights

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Preferred Citation

Guide to the Research Libraries Group, Inc. (RLG) records. Stanford University. Manuscripts Division

Acquisition Information


Biography/Administrative History

The Research Libraries Group, Inc. (RLG) was founded by The New York Public Library and Columbia, Harvard, and Yale universities and incorporated as a not-for-profit organization in late 1975. In 1978 RLG moved its offices from Branford, Connecticut, to Stanford University in California; adopted Stanford’s library automation staff and computer system (BALLOTS) as the starting point for its own library system (RLIN), plus a series of complementary services and databases; and opened its membership to research institutions throughout the U.S. The 1990s brought a growing number of overseas members. RLG membership grew to over 150 research libraries, archives, museums, and other cultural memory institutions. RLG and its member organizations worked to provide information discovery services, develop and operate collaborative programs, and create and promote relevant standards and practices. It was not necessary to be a member, however, to use a variety of RLG products, and many libraries and archives did so. On July 1, 2006, RLG merged with OCLC (formerly the Online Computer Library Center). Its computer services were migrated into OCLC’s, its member programs and standards work were integrated into an expanded OCLC department, and the now-smaller California staff were relocated from Mountain View to San Mateo, California. Presidents: 1. James E. Skipper (1974-1978), previously executive vice president of Kraus-Thomson, became RLG’s first president. (Most Skipper material appears in Carton 161, with several folders across other cartons.) 2. Edward E. Shaw (1978-1982), previously Stanford associate provost. 3. Patricia M. Battin (1982 – early 1983), previously university librarian at Columbia University; served as interim president during search for Shaw’s successor, afterwards returning to Columbia. 4. Richard W. McCoy (1983-1986), previously Wisconsin University’s director of academic computing. 5. William P. Timlake (1987-1988), previously director of Technical Systems at IBM. 6. James Michalko (1988-2006), previously RLG’s director of Finance & Administration. Vice presidents: C. James Schmidt (1981-1989), John W. Haeger (1985-2000, thereafter “vice president emeritus”), and James Michalko (1985-1988, at which point he became president). Organizational departments: Departments, units, staff titles, and responsibilities changed as RLG evolved. Organization charts and memos in Carton 119 track some (not all) of these changes. In 2005-2006, departments were: “President’s Office (aka Administration),” “Member Programs,” “Product Management,” “Computer Systems (aka Development),” “Finance & Administration,” and “Marketing & Sales.” “Customer & Operations Support” was downsized and melded into Computer Systems at the beginning of 2005. “Corporate Communications,” a unit that shifted
among departments, is separately identified as an archival contributor.

**Scope and Content of Collection**

Each box has a scope & content note and more detailed description. Materials fall roughly into the following categories: Computer Systems (aka Development); Corporate Communications; Files of Noel Hanf, Wiggin & Dana; Finance & Administration; Marketing & Sales – photos; Member Programs; President’s Office (aka Administration); Product Management.

**Indexing Terms**

RLG (Organization)

[RLG M1529 Inventory](#)