A Case for CD-ROMS.

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Abstract: Since the introduction of the compact disc in the early 1980's, there has been an expansion of the disc beyond audio recordings into other storage-uses, notably for computers (CD-ROM). This article is going to look at the implications of this growth for theological libraries.
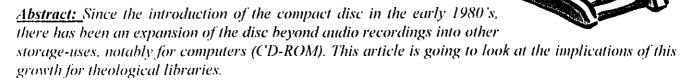
At Moore Theological College Library, there is a significant increase of CD-ROM material being acquired by the library. The CD-ROMS arrive in books or individually, with or without instructions. Why is there a growth in CD-ROM production in the marketplace? What CD-ROMS are being used at Moore? How do we notify staff and students about our CD-ROMS? How do we train staff and students to utilise the CD-ROMS?

A CD-ROM is an 'abbreviation of compact disc read-only memory, type of computer memory in the form of a compact disc that is read by optical means' ... 'they must be read by a computer, and they generally contain up to 680 megabytes of computer programs and data.' The CD-ROM is a convenient way to distribute digital information on Macintosh, DOS and Windows computers. It is durable and cannot be deleted accidentally or replaced. The CD-ROM can also be used as storage, it can be written as an archive or backup of important graphics, text, or other files. There are CD-ROMS that contain multimedia presentations and educational materials; these install additional utilities onto a computer in order to run programs.

Using the world-wide-web to find information on 'CD-ROM', the search engines found millions of hits, there was such a large hit rate, the search was narrowed down to 'Christian CD-ROM', which again showed thousands of hits, so the search was narrowed to 'Christian CD-ROM publishers' which produced 503 items. Some examples of hits were:

- Logos Library System CD-ROM Unlockables   http://www.worldmicro.com/bookndx.html
- YUL Research Guide for Christianity. Yale University Library. Selected Internet Sites and Electronic textshttp://www.library.yale.edu/div/electext.htm
- CCMag Past Software Reviews   http://www.gospelcom.net/software.shtml

Dr. Watson (technical editor of Christian Computing Magazine) comments:
'With more and more resources now available on CD, much of my **library now fits in a single CD case instead of several massive bookcases.**' Many libraries are facing real space problems, one CD-ROM held at Moore; '20:21 Library of Mission and Evangelicalism Resources' on two CD's and each CD contains the equivalent of two hundred books. Dr. Watson goes on to describe some CD-ROMS from different publishers, eg. Logos Research talks about many, but one that we have at Moore, is Dallas Theological Seminary journal 'Bibliotheca Sacra' from 1955-1995. This CD-ROM fills our hard copy gap between 1955-1962. Moore has a few indexes that are also held in the print version, eg. New Testament Abstracts and Old Testament Abstracts.

'CD Technology: The standard for secondary storage' a white paper states: 'Inexpensive replication, low drive costs, and the legacy of audio standards created the initial impetus for the development of the CD-ROM publishing industry in the early 1990's.' Research conducted by InfoTech, of Woodstock,

VT. Title caption read 'Worldwide installed base of CD-ROM drives now exceeds 65 million. InfoTech study finds that the **single greatest contributor to growth was the high rate of CD-ROM incorporation in desktop PCs.**' The InfoTech President Julie B. Schwerin forecast that the worldwide installed base to grow to more than 100 million by the end of 1996, 'CD-ROM is a more attractive publishing medium than ever for both consumer and institutional applications.'

Library of Congress List of Companies & Organizations providing CD-ROM :
* Alexander Scourby Products
* American Bible Society
* Biblesoft Direct
* Bibles & Publications
* Christian Book Distributors
* Christian Duplications International, Inc.
* Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints
* Hosanna
* Thomas Nelson Publishers
* Zondervan Publishing House

In the proceedings of an ICCC/IFIP (International Council for Computer Communications/International Federation for Information Processing) Conference mentioned thousands of titles being published on CD-ROM, and
* Quality of the images and sound are hard to equal on the Web
* Limited bandwidth on the Web can make transmission of images unreliable and unsatisfactory
* Some parts of the world still encounter problems accessing networked information
* Easier to sell a CD-ROM than try to get payment for providing web access
* CD-ROM can be acquired and added to the collection

East and Leach (1998) concluded from a study of CD-ROM use by academic libraries that 'CD-ROM retains its popularity as a format for the storage and retrieval of electronic data.' If a library or archive wishes to make a manuscript collection widely available in a high quality version, while safeguarding the original from constant handling, and simultaneously generate a little income for further collection development.'If the previous comments are taken into account, then it becomes obvious that the quality of the CD-ROM would be preferred over the Web. Many theological libraries contain valuable material that may need to be preserved, and then possibly CD-ROM technology offers a viable option.

At Moore, when the CD-ROMS are ordered, if there is a cataloguing record available, it will be down loaded into the catalogue Horizon. If, however, there is no bibliographic record it will need cataloguing. Currently CD-ROMS are housed separately from the main collection. Some CD-ROMS are found in the catalogue, because they are asked for at the information desk.

The one CD-ROM that is used extensively is the ATLA (American Theological Library Association) Religion Database on CD-ROM. *ATLA Religion Database* on CD-ROM, includes five distinct indexes, searchable as a combined database. This database is used heavily and contributes to the utilisation of the serial collection. The staff is constantly training and explaining how to use this database. Next to the on-line catalogue, this would be the second

most heavily used resource in the library.

The other CD-ROMs are not used at anywhere near the same frequency as ATLA, possibly due to the lack of awareness of what is on offer.

Some other CD-ROM titles that Moore College Library holds are:
Anchor Bible Dictionary, Bible codes, Bible in English, CETEDEC Library of Christian Latin texts, Early Church Fathers, English-German Deutsch-English, Expositions Bible Commentary, Greek Tutor, Hebrew Tutor, PC Study Bible and ZID Zeitschriften Inhaltsdienst Theologie.

At Moore we would like to encourage staff and students to utilise the CD-ROMS that are available. We have two dedicated terminals that have multiple CD-ROMS loaded. One project that is currently underway is producing a **user guide** for the CD-ROMs in a pamphlet form. This form was chosen because it can be mass-produced quite effectively on the photocopier and it is not too bulky for users. We are working through the CD-ROMs to see if there is a guide and how closely it parallels the actual use of the CD-ROM. So far many CD-ROMS do not have user guides or if they do the guide is difficult to understand. The makers of the CD-ROM almost always include some help instructions on the CD-ROM itself, but unless you encourage the user to try, quite often the case is that they do not.

There have training programs, where students are asked earlier in the year if they would like to come to training sessions. They are shown how to gain access to the CD-ROM and how to use some functionality within the CD-ROM. The reality is that individuals tend to ask at the desk about the CD-ROM and staff then need to go and explain how to launch into the CD-ROM. Working through some of the CD-ROMs we have noticed that some have similar access programs for example, Acrobat or Views. This means that there is really no standard of CD-ROM development currently and each CD-ROM needs to be trialed and written up.

In conclusion, even though CD-ROMS are in the marketplace, and they save space, the reality is that it is labour intensive for staff to familiarise themselves with CD-ROMS. If user guides are required this again is a time and staff consuming procedure. However, once a pamphlet is made, it may save staff time if it is self-instructional. This avenue is possible if staff and time is allocated to this, the alternative is buying the CD-ROM material and hoping staff and students will preserver for themselves, which does not say much for client focused service.

Bibliography
1. Gunn, Angela A. and Moore Carole (1992) *CD-ROM : a practical guide for information professionals.* London: Ashford Press.
2. Linde, Peter et al. (2000) *Electronic Publishing in the Third Millennium* Washington : ICCC Press.

Nina Suprun has been employed by Macquarie University, Sydney University, University of Technology, Sydney and Moore Theological College libraries over the last twenty-six years.