Connections with Mutual Benefit: Veterinary Medical Libraries & Specialty Examination Reading Lists

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Objective and Methods: Librarians who collect veterinary medical literature and candidates studying for veterinary specialty examinations need to think beyond the "one specialty" method of organizing these resources in order to attract and assist people with finding the information they need. The objective of this project is to collect, verify, and distribute reliable information about items on these lists in an easy-to-use format that could be easily transferred to others for future care and maintenance of the project.

We recognize that this project will require frequent checking and updating and in the event of its continued development and eventual collaboration with the specialty organizations based on a two-way information flow. We can notify them when there are new additions of items on their reading lists. They can provide us with updated information each time their lists are reviewed. Recognizing that this could, and in our minds should, be a long-term project, Washington State University (WSU) and Oklahoma State University (OSU) are working to develop a methodology that could be easily transferred to others for future care and maintenance of the project.

We had already received sufficient feedback from a prototype to announce that the next step in this project will be to expand the information base, develop metrics, and publish a formal basic list of veterinary medical books as a companion to the "VMLS Basic List of Veterinary Serials." Our timeline is not yet finalized. Our intent is that, as with the "VMLS Basic List of Veterinary Serials," it will be submitted as a refereed publication and be available on the VMLS website.

Our initial goals are:
- assist people with finding the most current specialty organization lists
- share the bibliographic data for free
- assist people with locating the items

Our Delicious social bookmarking site links specialty organizations, their diplomate candidates, and other interested parties to the current lists at the specialty organization’s website.

WorldCat shares lists provide bibliographic data to disambiguate the items for diplomate candidates and libraries alike. We perceived early on that this could be a powerful collection development tool for veterinarians in the veterinary, medical, animal science, and agricultural disciplines. This collection development tool could also be used by practitioners who want:
- a core collection of materials in their practice
- an up-to-date expert opinion about selections.

Who knows better than the specialty organizations about their discipline?

Recently we provided rough data from this project to four colleagues to use as a resource for four diverse projects:
- tool for creating a list of recommended items to be掌 use for collection development
- a criterion in analysis for a collection development project
- a criterion in analysis for a selection development project
- a metric in creating a core list of journals

Recognized Specialty Veterinary Organizations

The first two specialty veterinary organizations approved by the American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA) Executive Board in 1996 were the American College of Veterinary Pathologists and the American Board of Veterinary Public Health. An additional 16 have subsequently been approved for a total of 20 organizations covering 39 specialties. As of December 2009, there were 9,800 diplomates, although it must be acknowledged that some are involved in more than one specialty or by more than one specialty organization.

(All of the information in this section is from web pages linked from the American Board of Veterinary Specialties at the AVMA website. It was verified accurate as recently as 13 May 2010. The base URL is: http://www.avma.org/education/abvs/)

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