Current Awareness

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This column contains summaries of articles (print and electronic) about online services, CD-ROMs, networked information, electronic publishing, multimedia etc. including, with permission, abstracts identified with an * next to the author initials, drawn from Current Cites, the monthly publication distributed electronically by the Library, University of California at Berkeley:
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The Current Cites database of citations now numbers over 1,000 and is searchable at http://sunsite.berkeley.edu/CurrentCites/bibondemand.cgi. This service is called "Bibliography on Demand" because it can be easily used to create printable or linkable bibliographies on information technology topics.

EDUCATION

Meadows, Jack. "The immediacy effect – then and now" *Journal of Documentation* 60 (6) (2004): 601-608. Provides an overview of the bibliometric studies that have examined the rate of obsolescence among disciplines, or between the different fields within a discipline. Discusses some of the assumptions made, and sets out some ideas for new questions to be answered for the librarian in charge of electronic library collections. - [CJU]

Wilder, Stanley. "Information Literacy Makes All the Wrong Assumptions" *The Chronicle of Higher Education* 51(18)(7 January 2005): B13. (http://chronicle.com/prm/weekly/v51/i18/18b01301.htm). - Wilder makes an interesting case for why information literacy programs, a staple at many academic libraries, are a bad idea. Wilder cites such problems as students who feel like they don't need any help finding information, and our inability to reach even a fraction of the potential audience with formal instruction. After arguing his case, he then suggests an alternative model for librarians as teachers, stating that "Librarians should use their expertise to deepen students' understanding of the disciplines they study." By pairing discipline-based and situational teaching moments with smarter, more effective and more easily used information systems, "we can create educational programs that reach everyone on our campuses, every time they turn to us." [full disclosure: I'm quoted in the piece] – [*RT]

ELECTRONIC PUBLISHING

Appleton, Leo. "The use of electronic books in midwifery education: the student perspective" *Health Information and Libraries Journal* 21 (4): 245-252. Describes the evaluation of a pilot implementation of an e-book collection for student midwives in a college of higher education. Focus group (n=10) findings showed that students viewed e-books as alternatives to printed books, considered payment of use of e-books entirely unfair, and did not like slow downloading (particularly when studying remotely). They liked the idea of having chapters available via a VLE, and would like to search full text for information they required, to obtain chapters, in much the same way as they search for journal articles. - [CJU]

Gnatek, Tim. "Libraries Reach Out, Online" *The New York Times* (9 December 2004) (http://www.nytimes.com/2004/12/09/technology/circuits/09libr.html?ex=1260248400&en=bc31f3ce53fcf024&ei=5090&partner=rssuserland). - Yeah, yeah...we know. E-books are dead. Aren't they? Apparently not, as public libraries add extensive collections of electronic books, "laying claim to a massive online public as their newest service audience." This article discusses the New York Public Library's new collection of 3,000 electronic titles and how check-in and check-out by websurfing cardholders is handled. And the NYPL is not the only system offering e-books to its customers. The article mentions similar collections at the Cleveland Public Library and the King County Public Library. Libraries are also beginning to offer audio books in downloadable MP3 format, and some systems are even putting movie trailers online. The article also mentioned online book clubs, virtual reference, IM-based tutoring, library-sponsored LAN parties for online video gaming and free wireless Internet hotspots. – [*SK]

McGrath, Eileen L., Metz, Winifred Fordham, & Rutledge, John B. H-Net Book Reviews: Enhancing Scholarly Communication with Technology. *College & Research Libraries* Vol 66 (1) January 2005: 8 – 19. This article describes the evolution of free, scholarly electronic book reviews which are available from the electronic forum H-Net: Humanities and Social Sciences Online. H-Net is an umbrella organisation for approximately one hundred and thirty-eight listservs in the Humanities and Social Sciences subject areas which has been growing since 1992. A comparison is made between electronic-only reviews available via one listserv, H-South, and the same books which are reviewed in an established print journal, The Journal of Southern History (JoSH). The study successfully answers the question are the electronic-only reviews published via H-South significantly different from the print reviews found in JoSH? The conclusion is yes. Criteria used to answer this question are: the choice of books for review, the academic status of reviewers, how positive or negative evaluations are and an assessment of how evaluative or descriptive are the reviews. The authors draw attention to the increased availability of H-Net Reviews because of the decision by the Library of Congress to link records in its online catalogue to H-Net Reviews. H-Net Reviews are easy to retrieve through Google by typing "H-Net" and the title of the book. [AS]

GENERAL

Ball, Mary Alice. "Libraries and University Presses Can Collaborate to Improve Scholarly Communication or "Why Can't We All Just Get Along?"" *First Monday* 9(12) (6 December 2004) (http://www.firstmonday.org/issues/issue9_12/ball/). - Ball has written a succinct but thorough overview of the historical underpinnings of "scholarly communication," where we are now, and where we are going. She approaches this high profile topic with an eye to the competing cultures of book publishing and the library profession. Both have much to learn from each other, she argues, and both have much to gain. Publishers maintain dramatically high standards for final products, and they are powerhouses for design, marketing and selection strategies. Librarians currently hold a clear edge in grasping the importance of information standards, "fair use" as a social good, and the power of the library's imprimatur. Ball is looking for the common ground between the two, but she also points out that the fault line between publishers and librarians is copyright compliance. She argues that the two camps should develop common goals in educating and influencing university administrations and faculties -- and that at the present moment, both groups have an opportunity to be heard and understood. This is an excellent article not only for its historical analysis, but also because it does a superb job of defining the motivations that drive publishers and librarians. This leaves the reader with an overview that is a fertile ground for brainstorming. – [*TH]

Dudman, Jane A global adaptation *Information World Review*, Issue 210, February 2005. Pages 16 - 17 Interview with Richard Charkin, CEO of Macmillan Publishing, talking about the company's strategy. Macmillan's business overseas is now much larger than in the UK. Charkin talks about the challenges of the Internet, the company's use of technology and the challenge of copyright. – [LR]

Entlich, Richard. "One Last Spin: Floppy Disks Head Toward Retirement" RLG *DigiNews* 8(6) (15 December 2004) (http://www.rlg.org/en/page.php?Page_ID=20492&Printable=1&Article_ID=1692). - This informative piece summarizes the history of the floppy disk in its various incarnations, as well as highlighting why the format has endured as long as it has. The reasons why data that exists only on floppy disks is endangered are outlined, as are strategies for rescuing the data. It's clear that floppy disks are on their way out, we just don't know exactly how fast. But as this piece makes clear, we would be wise to start getting the data off those disks as soon as we can, since it will only get more costly and/or more difficult the longer we wait. – [*RT]

Flood, Gary Tame the mountain *Information World Review,* Issue, Issue 210, February 2005. Pages18-19 Article giving tips on email management and some technical solutions. – [LR]

Greenfield, Adam. "All watched over by machines of loving grace: Some ethical guidelines for user experience in ubiquitous-computing settings " *Boxes and Arrows* (23 November 2004) (http://tinyurl.com/6s87p). - What if we had computers embedded in every little gizmo in our waking lives and their design was no better than the average voice mail system and their privacy guidelines looked like they were put together by a telemarketer? It'd be hell. These two concerns, design and privacy, are the focus of this article on Ubiquitous Computing or "ubicomp" by Adam Greenfield. In it, Greenfield paints a nightmare world of ubiquitous interruptions and widgets so unusable that they spin out-of-control at the slightest slip of the finger. Greenfield goes on to propose a number of "baseline standards" for how systems ought to work from the standpoint of systems and interface designers. Several of the comments following the article are also worth reading, particularly the heartfelt one by Chris Fahey on Opt-in v. Opt-out. – [*LRK]

Hiller , Steve. "Measure by Measure: Assessing the Viability of the Physical Library" *Bottom Line* 17(4) (2004): 126-131. - It's never been part of my job to close a branch library, or to open one for that matter. Part of (surviving) the process however must surely consist in establishing criteria that are acceptable to most, if not all, whether the eventual decision is thumbs up or thumbs down. In this article, we get a little background on the evolution of how they make these decisions at the University of Washington in Seattle. The criteria they use has undergone an evolution even in the past few years as the implications of remote access and changing user study habits become clearer. The author describes four broad categories such as "use" and "facility quality" that they use to evaluate branch library viability. These categories in their turn are broken down into five different measures. Given this metric, the surviving branch libraries, in the words of the author, "will be those that are still dependent on print collections and that provide space that supports student work in a collaborative teaching and learning environment." – [*LRK]

Kilkki, Kalevi. "Sensible Principles for New Networks and Services" *First Monday* 10(1)(3 January 2005) (http://www.firstmonday.org/issues/issue10_1/kilkki/). - The author reviews the development and history of network design over the years since it really hit big, and offers three relatively simple -- but very powerful -- suggestions on how to approach design for the long-term. When you get to the conclusion and read them, you might well say, "Knock me over with a feather" --because they sound like common sense solutions than anyone would think of. In fact, we have learned that network environments, which use many complex technologies that increasingly depend upon one another in cascading relationships, have a tendency to lead designers away from common sense solutions by nature of their very complexity. Kilkki analyzes the reasons for past design failures as a preface to his three-point plan. First he argues that the analysis of customer needs must focus on practical uses that stand a good chance of becoming everyday routines. Second, a new technology or product should be based on well-defined, carefully selected core principles. Third, the real experiences of users must be taken into account continuously, not just at the outset and the nadir of a product lifespan. Obvious stuff, right? Well, the Internet is littered with well-intentioned "bloatware" that fails one or all three of these design principles, so this article is good reading indeed. – [*TH]

McCartin, Shona and Reid, David. D-I-Y Interloans: from dream to reality *Electronic Library* 22(6) 2004 509-517 This paper describes a pilot project that allowed end-users at Lincoln University Library, Canterbury, New Zealand, to initiate their own inter-library loans using the local implementation of VDX (Voyager). Initially the implementation of VDX within New Zealand had excluded the end-user request interface. Trends and growth patterns in interlending, how the end-users coped, customer reactions, and benefits for the library staff are described, and an indication is given of future trends. While it may be of interest to interlending specialists, this article does not convey a particularly clear picture of the issues, and is actually quite difficult to follow for someone not versed in the details of VDX. – [CME]

Seffah, Ahmed, and Eduard Metzker. "The Obstacles and Myths of Usability and Software Engineering. " *Communications of the ACM* 47(12) (December 2004): 71-. - Usability and User-Centered Design (UCD) permeate so much of what we do on the web. It sometimes comes as a shock to find out that the world of programming may be marching to an entirely different beat. In fact, as this article seems to suggest, there is a considerable disconnect between the worlds of interface designers and programmers. The article speaks to both groups, assigning blame in a most even-handed and perceptive way. It also suggests sensible ways of bridging the gap. These include rationalizing UCD methods as well as making these methods a standard part of programming/computer science curricula. – [*LRK]

Town, Stephen. "View E-measures: a Comprehensive Waste of Time?" *Vine* 34(4): 190-195. - This is the kind of article I love reading. In Vine's special issue devoted to "Library evaluation in practice", the author argues that maintaining stats on the use of e-resources ("e-measures" as he calls them) is a "waste of time". Once past this self-consciously provocative statement, the author makes clear that the numbers only have meaning when their context is fully understood. "Counting," he declares, "is still no substitute for listening." In this respect, he has praise for methods like LibQUAL+ which make satisfaction and experience measures a vital part of overall evaluation. "What we decide to measure in the library e-environment," he warns, "will result in adaptation of our behaviour to maximise the chosen measures. In so doing it will help define what future libraries are and what they do, and demonstrate their priorities." – [*LRK]

VRD 2004 Online Proceedings Syracuse, NY: Virtual Reference Desk Project, November 2004. (http://www.vrd2004.org/proceedings/). - These are about three dozen of the presentations given at the 2004 Virtual Reference Desk Conference in Cincinnati, OH, November 8-9, 2004. Divided into sections on Management, General, Evaluation and Standards, Technology, Resources, Research and Policy, and Vendor Demonstrations, they are mostly MS PowerPoint slides converted to an HTML presentation. Unfortunately, choices made during this conversion provide unreasonably small screen sizes, which renders screenshots of

browser windows (a frequent component of virtual reference presentations) virtually unreadable. Such a decision is inexplicable in the age of broadband, but complaining is unlikely to change anything. Meanwhile, there is a good deal of information that can be extracted from the other slides and there is probably no better way to feel the pulse of virtual reference in libraries today. – [*RT]

INFORMATION ACCESS/RETRIEVAL

Chillingworth, Mark Shaken not stirred *Information World Review*, Issue 210 February 2005. Pages 13-14 Interview with Mike Lynch, CEO of Autonomy. He discusses his strategy to foil Google and their plans to move into enterprise search. – [LR]

Chudnov, Daniel, and Jeremy Frumkin. Service Autodiscovery for Rapid Information Movement (10 December 2004) (http://curtis.med.yale.edu/dchud/writings/sa4rim.html). - This paper explores issues relating to capturing resource citations and links, routing them to various locations, and using them with link resolvers and other services such as "gather, create, share" tools. And that's just for starters. They quickly move into discovery autodiscovery -- first link autodiscovery, then metadata autodiscovery, and finally service autodiscovery. There is a lot to absorb in this paper, but it's well worth spending the time to absorb it. They are doing no less than rethinking how we both offer our services as well as consume the services of others, based on a brave new world chock-full of new and powerful web-based applications and services. I can think of no better example of the kind of imaginative thinking we nee d to make effective use of our opportunities and challenges. – [*RT]

Douyère, Magaly, Soualmia, Lina F., Névéol, Aurélie, Rogozan, Alexandrina, Dahamna, Badisse, Leroy, Jean-Philippe, Thirion, Benoît, and Darmoni, Stefan J. "Enhancing the MeSH thesaurus to retrieve French online health resources in a quality-controlled gateway" *Health Information and Libraries Journal* 21 (4): 253-261. Describes how the MeSH thesaurus was expanded to enable it to be adapted for use in the CISMeF, the Catalogue and Index of Health Resources in French. Work included addition of two new concepts to deal with Internet resources: resource types (similar to the publication types) and metaterms (generally a medical specialty or a biological science). Illustrates a typical query expansion process, and discusses some of the possible navigation features required. - [CJU]

Fallows, Deborah. "Search Engine Users" *Pew Internet & American Life Project* (23 January 2005) (http://www.pewinternet.org/pdfs/PIP_Searchengine_users.pdf). - This latest study in the Pew Internet & American Life Project asked people about their search engine attitudes and habits. There is no shortage of contradictions in the findings. Among other things, the study found that just one in six search engine users could tell the difference between unbiased search results and "sponsored" search results. In general, users also had little understanding of how search engines work. Nonetheless, some 92 percent of search engine users expressed confidence in their searching abilities. And -- almost half of the respondents said they would actually stop using search engines if these sites were not clear about how the paid results were displayed. Go figure. Interestingly, some two-thirds of those surveyed said "they could walk away from search engines without upsetting their lives very much." Whereupon they would "return to the traditional ways of finding information." Hmmm... Use the library, perhaps? Call a friend or relative? Approach a colleague in the office break room? Or maybe they would just blow it off altogether. The study found that 33% of searchers "would not bother looking up most or even all of the information they search for if they lacked access to internet search engines." – [*SK]

Ferguson, Charles H.. "What's Next for Google" *Technology Review* 108(1)(January 2005): 38-46. - We've heard so much about it lately, the question is more like what isn't next for Google. I'm sure they're hoping that butting heads with Microsoft isn't. However, Charles Ferguson argues that both giants' current development of uber-search systems for search & retrieval from all sources of digital information (the public web, the "dark" web, your intranet, your hard drive, and on) makes a collision highly likely. Part explanation of the technology, part analysis and advice about business strategy, the article resonates with the experience of someone who's walked with the giants and avoided getting stomped: Ferguson co-founded Vermeer Technologies, which released the FrontPage website development application and immediately faced competing technology from Netscape and Microsoft. (He sold to Microsoft for a nice big number.) Those of us who care about control of vital markets will find this quite interesting; those who don't can still use this preview of the tools in our future. Information providers, prepare to adjust yet again. – [*JR]

Hahn, Karla L., & Schmidt Kari Web Communications and Collections Outreach to Faculty. *College & Research Libraries* Vol 66 (1) January 2005: 28 – 37. This article describes a qualitative survey of the websites of Scholarly Publishing and Academic Resources Coalition (SPARC) libraries to discover how often they are using the Web to communicate about collection changes and scholarly communication issues with their faculty and researchers. The methodology involves an unobtrusive survey analysing the content of one-hundred and forty-nine research and college libraries' websites in the United States and Canada. As the study population are all full members of SPARC it is assumed that they have an active interest in educating faculty and researchers about the crisis in scholarly communication and the impact this has upon the local collection. Findings are disappointing and indicate that web pages are infrequently used to present information on scholarly information or the specifics of collection management projects. Instead static information such as general collection overviews, request forms and lists of collection contacts tend to be provided. Eight libraries are identified as models of good practice with webpages that discuss collection changes in detail, as well as scholarly communication issues. - [AMHS]

Sihvonen, Anne and Vakkari, Pertti. "Subject knowledge improves interactive query expansion assisted by a thesaurus" *Journal of Documentation* 60 (6) (2004): 673-690. Compared the searches conducted by experts (15 undergraduate education students) and novices (15 other undergraduates). The search condition was realistic to the extent that the students were using these in their coursework assignments. Two tasks (one easy, one difficult) were selected, and students were supported in their searches by suggestions from the ERIC thesaurus. Students were asked to think aloud in the sessions and their comments recorded. In addition, search logs were analysed. Searching patterns varied, with experts using more of their own terms, as well as thesaurus terms in the expansion terms. One significant difference was the greater use of 'broader terms' by the experts. The experts performed better than the novices on the difficult task, and experts could use the thesaurus to improve search effectiveness, unlike the novices. Concludes that familiarity with the topic area is necessary to benefit from using a thesaurus. - [CJU]

METADATA

Bittern, Diana. Where's my link? Why linking is still not perfect. *Managing Information*, 11 (10) (December 2004): 46-48. Many institutions invest significant resources into purchasing electronic full text resources and then spend more to purchase and implement link resolution systems that promise to connect end users directly from a bibliographic citation to the full text of the article. This paper looks at some of the realities of linking and the steps being taken by vendors to overcome anomalies in matching citations from bibliographic databases to the full text. Linking is essentially about matching the metadata to the article, but there is no standard for the presentation of metadata. The most common metadata matching information is IVIP or ISSN, Volume, Issue, Page. This is considered preferable to other metadata elements, such as title and author, because it reduces the possibility of variations. Even so, there are still myriad variations, such as combined issues and supplements, to contend with. Even the ISSN, considered the unique identifier for a serial, can be problematic. Some publishers have different ISSNs for the print and electronic versions of the same journal, some do not. Software providers have begun to develop the means for linking across versions, but it is far from ideal. The CrossRef project was set up by publishers to promote cited reference linking by compiling a database of persistent identifiers with relevant metadata. In theory it may be "the silver bullet," but in practice it can suffer from incomplete data, data inconsistencies and variations in technical capabilities among the member publishers. - [LR]

Descriptive Metadata Guidelines for RLG Cultural Materials Menlo Park, CA: Research Libraries Group, January 2005.(http://www.rlg.org/en/page.php?Page_ID=214). - Although this document comes out of RLG's need to describe metadata requirements for participants in such RLG projects as Trove.net and RLG Cultural Materials, they can inform and be used by a wide range of projects that depend on good metadata. The sixty-seven page documents begins with defining terminology, then moves on to guidelines for data fields and structure, data content and values, data formats, and core descriptive fields. It would be unwise to assume that the section on data conversion for RLG Cultural Materials can be skipped if your institution is not a contributor, as this section is a fascinating look at the kinds of metadata transformations that are required to create a sensible union catalog. This document is chock-full of excellent advice, useful examples, and hard-won metadata wisdom. It should be required reading for anyone working with metadata. – [*RT]

Godby, Carol Jean, Jeffrey A. Young, and Eric Childress. "A Repository of Metadata Crosswalks" *D-Lib Magazine* 10(12) (December 2004) (http://www.dlib.org/dlib/december04/godby/12godby.html). - Librarians must increasingly deal with metadata in a wide variety of formats. "Dealing" with such formats will, in many cases, mean transforming the data from one format to another. The main mechanism for doing this is a metadata "crosswalk" or a specification as to how one format can be translated into another. Since such a

procedure will hopefully be done with software rather than humans, it is necessary to specify a machine-parseable mechanism to handle crosswalking. This article specifies one such piece, and a pivotal one, if we are to enable computers to seamlessly move metadata around. Not surprisingly this work is being done by OCLC Research, an office that clearly both "gets it" and has the technical wherewithal to do something about it. We would be wise to pay attention. – [*RT]

Haas, Stephanie C.. "X Marks the Spot: The Role of Geographic Location in Metadata Schemas and Digital Collections" *RLG DigiNews* 8(6) (15 December 2004) (http://www.rlg.org/en/page.php?Page_ID=20492#article1). - This is a good introductory/overview article on geographic location information for digital objects. Starting with how MARC and LCSH deal with this information, Haas moves on to more recent and sophisticated examples of geospatial data in modern computer systems. Examples of such systems include the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration library catalog, the Alexandria Digital Library, and the Electronic Cultural Atlas Initiative. The sources cited can serve as a start for further investigation. – [*RT]

Van de Sompel, Herbert, Michael L. Nelson, and Carl Lagoze, et. al. "Resource Harvesting within the OAI-PMH Framework" *D-Lib Magazine* 10(12) (December 2004) (http://www.dlib.org/dlib/december04/vandesompel/12vandesompel.html). - The Open Archives Initiative - Protocol for Metadata Harvesting (OAI-PMH) is a well-established protocol for retrieving piles of metadata from compliant content repositories. One of the most well-known harvesters is OAIster, which has gathered records for nearly 5 million digital objects from OAI-compliant repositories. This article, by those directly involved with the development of the protocol, looks at how service providers (those who gather metadata from data providers) can use the protocol to fetch the actual objects described by those metadata records. After reviewing possibilities relating to protocol extensions, they discard those options in favor of specifying a metadata format that can better accommodate resource harvesting than the protocol-required simple Dublin Core format. Since the protocol already specifies that any metadata format can be surfaced in addition to simple Dublin Core, no protocol extension is necessary to enable content harvesting. The authors advocate the use of the MPEG-DIDL format, although they acknowledge that the METS format could be used for this purpose as well. – [*RT]

PRESERVATION

Foster, Nancy Fried, and Susan Gibbons. Understanding Faculty to Improve Content Recruitment for Institutional Repositories *D-Lib Magazine* 11(1)(January 2005) (http://www.dlib.org/dlib/january05/foster/01foster.html). - I've become a fan of the University of Rochester. Well, not the university itself, really, but the library, where they really seem to get it. This article is no exception, as through studying faculty and what is important to them they determine how they can best influence faculty adoption rates of institutional repositories (IRs). What they find is that "It is essential that anything in an IR be absolutely safe and secure. Beyond that, the single most important criterion of an IR's value to our faculty members is that other people find, use, and cite the work that they put into it. Even the most enthusiastic supporters of IRs will soon lose interest if this criterion is not met." The authors then go on to describe how they added another component to their DSpace code to provide personalized views of IR content. However, the key take away here is how they learned to better pitch the IR to faculty -- a lesson that I'm guessing a number of IR projects still need to learn. – [*RT]

Holley, Rose. Developing a digitisation framework for your organisation *Electronic Library* 22(6) 2004 518-522 This paper discusses the elements of a framework for digitisation activities at the University of Auckland Library, how it was developed, and what has been learned from the work. The style is very compressed – the text seems to consist largely of bullet points – with extensive references to other documents. Despite this, it is an exceptionally clearly-written and useful paper, and would serve as an excellent introduction to digitisation issues for anyone embarking on digital projects. The author starts out by giving a brief account of the global and local New Zealand pictures, then progresses to a detailed account of her work and an outline of proposed future developments. She concludes with a short section on 'developing a digitisation framework for your organisation'. – [CME]

Kenney, Brian. "Googlizers vs. Resistors" *Library Journal* (15 December 2004) (http://www.libraryjournal.com/article/CA485756). - This article is a summary transcript of a debate-like discussion held at the Pennsylvania Library Association Annual Conference in October. Although it predated the announcement by Google that they were preparing to digitize the full collections of selected major research libraries, there was nonetheless enough fodder for a spirited discussion of issues. I doubt anyone will be "converted" from a given perspective to another from reading this piece, but that is not its purpose. If the piece causes us to think about our services in relation to the services of web sites like Google, and consider carefully our appropriate role, then it will have been well worth the reading. – [*RT]

Quint, Barbara. "Google's Library Project: Questions, Questions, Questions" *Information Today NewsBreaks and the Weekly News Digest* (27 December 2004)(http://www.infotoday.com/newsbreaks/nb041227-2.shtml). - Here's an article that you may have missed in the post-Christmas afterglow. Barbara Quint asks a number of questions about Google's gargantuan cooperative digitization project with selected research libraries, and she gets answers from diverse individuals. Some of the most interesting responses are to the question: "What impact could this project have on current digitization projects?" The manager of a digital library project that provides access to over 10 million images says that his and all other digitization projects have suddenly become "small-scale." A research library consortium spokesperson "predicted that the new project could table or even kill current digitization projects at libraries, while the librarians waited to see if their planned projects were necessary or, assuming their content was unique, if Google might someday digitize that content for free." (An unexplored issue is the impact of the Google project on funding agencies' interest in future digitization projects by non-participating libraries.) Can you say paradigm shift? John Berry thinks it's one. If you're feeling a bit queasy from that shift, don't forget that the Internet Archive and ten libraries from around the globe announced shortly after the Google revelation that they would digitize over one million books. – [*CB]

SECURITY

Electronic Privacy Information Center. "2004 Privacy Year in Review" *EPIC Alert* (11 January 2005) (http://www.epic.org/alert/EPIC_Alert_yir2004.html). - The Electronic Privacy Information Center has compiled the "Top Ten Privacy Stories of 2004". Read 'em and weep: Foreign Opposition to USA PATRIOT Act; Google Datamines Private Email; Expansion of US-VISIT ("entry-exit border control system"); Death of Airline Passenger Profiling...Maybe; U.S. Medical Records Go Overseas (outsourcing); Data Disclosures--Mission Creep Continues (the IRS, the Census Bureau...); States Pull Out of Mini-Total Information Awareness Project; ID Theft a Growing Problem; Laws Stiffen Penalties; Prevent More Stringent ID Requirements for Voters; California Continues Privacy Reforms. These are important issues, and a paragraph-long discussion of each one provides a basic level of understanding. EPIC also identifies privacy issues to keep an eye on in the coming year, such as national ID cards; renewal of the USA PATRIOT Act; an attack on privacy rules by the telemarketing industry (involving the Do Not Call List); Google's potential for tracking what you read via its new library book digitization project; VoIP privacy issues; "Smart Barcodes, RFID, and Products that Spy"; Internet privacy (some things never change); outsourcing (your personal data now going offshore); centralized voter registration databases (technical expertise is lagging); and the WHOIS directory (which "still lacks basic privacy safeguards"). – [*SK]

O'Harrow, Robert Jr.. "ChoicePoint Finds Wealth in Information" *Washington Post* (via MSNBC) (20 January 2005)(http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/6846357/). - Since 1997, ChoicePoint has morphed into "an all-purpose commercial source of personal information about Americans, with billions of details about their homes, cars, relatives, criminal records and other aspects of their lives." Not only is it awash in corporate and government clients, but it is rapidly becoming "a private intelligence service for national security and law enforcement tasks" -- acquiring companies that make sophisticated data mining tools along the way. Note: "ChoicePoint and other private companies increasingly occupy a special place in homeland security and crime-fighting efforts, in part because they can compile information and use it in ways government officials sometimes cannot because of privacy and information laws." The associate director of the Electronic Privacy Information Center said ChoicePoint is assisting in the creation of "a Scarlet Letter society," since it's virtually impossible now for anyone to shake off even minor past transgressions like bounced checks. ChoicePoint is not the only company in this business. "An entire industry has mushroomed during the past decade because of extraordinary increases in computing power, the expansion of telecommunications networks and the ability of companies like ChoicePoint to gather and make sense of public records, criminal histories and other electronic details that people now routinely leave behind." Read about their role in everything from national security to pre-employment screening at big box retailers. – [*SK]

WEB DESIGN

Hammond, Tony, Timo Hanay, and Ben Lund. "The Role of RSS in Science Publishing: Syndication and Annotation on the Web" *D-Lib Magazine*   10(12) (December 2004) (http://www.dlib.org/dlib/december04/hammond/12hammond.html). - "RSS is the very antithesis of the website," the authors -- from the Nature Publishing Group -- point out here, indicating that it functions more as a syndication/annotation tool. They offer an explanation of RSS technology and development, and indicate that it is catching on fast in the world of scientific publishing because it "presents a very simple XML structure for packaging news titles and links, and delivering them down to user desktops and handhelds." RSS, according to the authors, "allows us to bundle rich descriptive metadata" along with the standard newsfeed items. This alone would make RSS attractive to science publishers. It also serves as an excellent delivery vehicle for tables of content alerting services. From a purely scientific standpoint, RSS can be used "transmit complete scientific data sets." The authors discuss Urchin, an open source RSS Aggregator developed by the Nature Publishing Group. "NPG uses Urchin to provide keyword-filtered RSS feeds for its staff, and to populate a science, technology and publishing news portal." The article contains extensive notes and a bibliography. – [*SK]

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