

## Current Awareness

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This column contains summaries of articles (print and electronic) about information access and retrieval, electronic publishing, preservation and virtual libraries etc. including, with permission, abstracts identified with an \* next to the author initials, drawn from Current Cites, the monthly publication distributed electronically by a team of Librarians and Library Staff and edited by Roy Tennant:

< <http://lists.webjunction.org/currentcites/> >

If you are interested in providing reviews for the Column, please contact Jane Grogan for further details.

## Education

Hirschheim, Rudy. The Internet-Based Education Bandwagon: Look before you Leap. [Communications of the ACM](#) 48(7)(July 2005): 97-101. – Fascinating questions are raised in this article about what exactly we're getting when we shift from a traditional classroom environment to web-based instruction. Are we providing a better product or are we merely tailoring it to fit the medium, and is that necessarily a good thing? The author warns against a "more standardized, minimalist product targeted for a mass market". He goes on, "the new delivery mode is pushing change, and universities must consider if they are happy with the direction being taken." The best outcome is "a judicious mixture of Internet and lecture content". – [\*[LRK](#)]

## Electronic Publishing

Dueze, Mark. [Towards Professional Participatory Storytelling in Journalism and Advertising](#). [First Monday](#) 10(7)(4 July 2005) ([http://www.firstmonday.org/issues/issue10\\_7/deuze/](http://www.firstmonday.org/issues/issue10_7/deuze/)). – Dueze surveys the potential of the Web – the "graphic interface" of the Internet – to change how stories are presented, perceived and can be modified. Media professionals in particular are faced with "fascinating opportunities as well as vexing dilemmas." The same might be said of the majority of us, as we face the Web, yet Dueze's analysis of the meaning of narrative, visual display of story, and the relationship between 'connectivity' and 'content' is insightful. It can be boiled down to the new ascendance of participation in the narrative experience, which blurs the line between community (or social interaction) and the Web as a pipeline or utility. The challenges of

being distinctive in the new media are 'supercharging' the dialogue about how to use the Web, which has been an ongoing theme in all media professions' witness Jay Rosen, Dean of Journalism at NYU's remark on Blogs: "The system was, 'here's our news, take it or leave it;' now, sovereignty over the story is shifting." (New York Times, April 1, 2004, p. E3). Dueze presents the history of media, broadening the exploration with recent examples of hybrid forms of storytelling. He pulls theoretical analysis back to the real-world challenges facing media professionals, who now have to grapple with ideas like "co-creation" with customers, Blogs that rebut the press, etc. This is one of those articles where media analysis meets cultural studies, and the result is worth reading for anyone who manages digital media and conversations. – [\*TH]

Scholarly Publishing & Academic Resources Coalition. [Sponsorships for Nonprofit Scholarly & Scientific Journals: A Guide to Defining & Negotiating Successful Sponsorships](#) Washington, DC: SPARC, July 2005. ([http://www.arl.org/sparc/resources/Sponsorship\\_Guide.pdf](http://www.arl.org/sparc/resources/Sponsorship_Guide.pdf)). – SPARC has long tried to help libraries, universities, professional societies, and others open access to scholarly research and publication. From pieces like "Getting Your Journal Indexed" to this latest publication, SPARC has tried to advise and assist those starting open access journals and other types of open access publications. Sections of this 59-page PDF include Evaluating the Potential for Journal Sponsorships, Planning the Journal's Sponsorship Program, Negotiating Sponsorships, and Sources Cited & Further Reading. For someone new to creating a financially viable open access journal, publications like this are invaluable. – [\*RT]

## General

Dietz, Roland, and Carl Grant. [The Dis-Integrating World of Library Automation](#). [Library Journal](#) (15 June 2005)(<http://libraryjournal.com/article/CA606392.html> ). – Dietz and Grant are by no means the first to advocate busting apart the integrated library system into interoperable components. Andrew Pace (in his [February 1, 2004 Library Journal cover article](#)) has certainly said as much, as have others. But what makes this piece so ground-breaking is that it is written by two leaders of library systems companies. In other words, these are the very folks with the power to put what they say into play. Sceptics may say they want to see them "put their money where their mouth is," but if so Dietz and Grant can point to the [Vendor Initiative for Enabling Web Services \(VIEWS\)](#) as evidence that they are serious. – [\*RT]

Hill, Michael. [Libraries Offering Audiobook Downloads](#). [Associated Press \(via Yahoo! News\)](#) (26 August 2005) ([http://news.yahoo.com/news?tmpl=story&u=/ap/libraries\\_book\\_download](http://news.yahoo.com/news?tmpl=story&u=/ap/libraries_book_download)

s ). – I work in a [military library](#) and audio books are wildly popular with my customers, who are often on the move and lack the time to read dead tree literature. And though we don't offer these yet at my library, what could be more convenient than downloadable audio books – available for checkout 7/24/365? Basically, all the customer has to do is go to a library-specific website, browse the virtual stacks and download something that looks good. After three weeks or whatever standard loan period has been established, the downloaded files expire – e.g., go dead and can no longer be played. The downloadable audio books space for libraries is dominated by [OverDrive](#) and OCLC's [NetLibrary](#). People can listen to the books on their computers or on portable media players. One huge fly in the ointment is that these library download services are geared toward Windows users, meaning the files are not compatible with Apple's operating system or the iPod – which holds the lion's share of the portable media player market. While iPod users can still listen to audio books purchased from [Audible.com](#) or the [iTunes store](#), they will not be able to take advantage of the free service offered by their libraries – although some libraries are buying and loaning out compatible media players to their customers. – [[\\*SK](#)]

Marmion, Dan, Eric Flower, and D. Scott Brandt, et. al. Celebrating 25 Years of CIL Magazine. [Computers in Libraries](#) 25(7)(July/August 2005): 10-15. – Trip down memory lane for a number of contributors to *Computers in Libraries* in celebration of the magazine's 25th anniversary. Originally called *Small Computers in Libraries*, the magazine happily shook off the "Small" bit in 1989. Included along with the reminiscences are a number of magazine covers down through the ages, demonstrating not only how far our technology has come but our graphic skills as well! Lovely. – [[\\*LRK](#)]

Nisonger, E., Thomas & Davis, Charles H. The Perception of Library and Information Science Journals by LIS Education Deans and ARL Library Directors: A Replication of the Kohl-Davis Study. *College & Research Libraries* Vol 66 (4) July 2005: 341–377.

This article reports on the perceptions of the relative prestige of seventy-one Library and Information Science journals by the Deans of American Library Association, accredited Library & Information Schools, and Directors of American Research Libraries. Specifically, they were asked how important each journal is for promotion or tenure at their institution and, in the case of those institutions which offer neither, the general prestige of the journals. The methodology replicates, modifies and extends that used in the Kohl-Davis Study of 1985. The findings of the 2003 study suggest that there is continuity in the perception of LIS journals by Deans and Directors in the twenty-year period between 1985 and 2005. Tables are provided with ranked listings of the journals for 1985 and 2005.

For the majority of readers this study provides a current, hierarchical ranking of LIS journals and an additional perspective on the relative merits of LIS journals other than that provided by citation data which can be found in the Institute for Scientific Information's Journal Citation Reports. The authors draw attention to the fact that perception of a journal's prestige is only one piece of information which should be used in conjunction with other various criteria, including citation reports. – [AS]

Parker, Kimberly, and Daniel Dollar. E-Terminology: Why Do I Need to Know What You Mean? [portal: Libraries and the Academy](#) 5(3)(July 2005): 421-426. – When historians finally record this stage in our digital research culture, I do hope they go beyond such simplistic statements as, 'and then it all became available online'. The authors here point out how complicated and confusing access to subscription-based resources can be. "As digital resources librarians," they observe, "we live in a world of platforms, gateways, packages, and aggregations." Their proposed solution, developing "precisely defined terminology", sounds a bit iffy, but they rightly stress the need for librarians to help make sense of this mishmash, "distilling", as they put it, "the important aspects of these definitions for readers". – [[\\*LRK](#)]

"[Tenth Anniversary Issue](#)" [D-Lib Magazine](#) 11(7/8)(July/August 2005) (<http://www.dlib.org/dlib/july05/07contents.html> ). – This anniversary issue celebrates ten years of publication. From its [first issue](#), D-Lib Magazine has been a key resource for those interested in digital library technologies and techniques. One of the strengths of the magazine has been its ability to attract important, useful articles from both the computer science and library science communities, and therefore serve as a common meeting ground where we can collaborate to further our common goals. As an example, even the first issue mixed an article on metadata from a librarian (Stu Weibel from OCLC) with an article on digital library architectures from a computer scientist (Bill Arms from Cornell). The anniversary issue appropriately includes pieces from those two contributors as well as a number of other leading lights from both disciplines. Current Cites salutes the D-Lib Magazine anniversary, in particular since pieces from that source are cited frequently in our own publication. May D-Lib Magazine have many, many good years ahead. – [[\\*RT](#)]

Topping, Darren, and Geraint Evans. Public libraries in Belfast and the Troubles, 1969-1994. [Library Management](#) 26(6)(2005): 373-385. – Most of us are familiar with the stresses and stains that normally face an urban library system but what about a system in the midst of a prolonged civil conflict? In Belfast, during the "Troubles", libraries were repeatedly damaged as a consequence (often indirect) of bombings, people were shot at, one library was fire-bombed. The "Troubles" affected service hours, staffing levels and even collection development. The article relates

that librarians "had to walk an extremely cautious line in terms of remaining valid within the community and remaining neutral." Often this wasn't possible. – [[\\*LRK](#)]

### Information Access/Retrieval

Cohen, Laura B.. "Finding Scholarly Content on the Web: From Google Scholar to RSS Feeds" [Choice: Current Reviews for Academic Libraries](#) 42(Web IX)(September 2005): 7-17. – After a hiatus, Laura Cohen is back in the Choice special Web issue with another nicely organized overview of current web technology useful for academic research. Bombarded as we are with news of recent innovations, it is hard to see the forest for the trees sometimes, and this article takes the step back for you. In her discussion of search engines, concept clustering, scholarly content in the deep web, blogs and RSS feeds, she always does a thorough job of describing what behaviours to expect from the tools and what particular use they can be put to in an academic setting. Librarians in other types of libraries should read it, too – while the sample searches and subjects are appropriate for the intended readership, the knowledge to be gained about web technology is good for all. For further exploration, Cohen appends a complete list of sources cited. – [[\\*JR](#)]

Morrison, Heather. [Dramatic Growth of Open Access: Revised Update. The Imaginary Journal of Poetic Economics](#) (20 August 2005) (<http://poeticeconomics.blogspot.com/2005/08/dramatic-growth-of-open-access-revised.html> ). – This posting uses various metrics to estimate the growth of open access (OA) materials, such as [Directory of Open Access Journals](#) entries, [OAlster](#) records, the number of [free back issues from Highwire Press](#), and the number of [BioMedCentral titles](#). One of the most striking statistics is the dramatic increase in the number of OAlster records: there were 3.7 million records in November 2004 and 5.7 million records in August 2005. Two million metadata records for digital works added in nine months! Of course, that number excludes works that are not in OAI-PMH-compliant archives or repositories, such as personal Websites, so it is only a partial measure of self-archiving and other non-journal-publishing OA activities. OA journals listed in the DOAJ increased from about 1,400 in 2/05 to 1,683 in 8/05; the number of journals published by BioMedCentral jumped from about 100 to 139 in the same period. Clearly, OA is continuing to gain ground at an impressive clip, especially on the self-archiving side of the equation. – [[\\*CB](#)]

Quint, Barbara. [OCLC Pilots Traditional Libraries into Web Services. NewsBreaks](#) (5 July 2005)(<http://www.infotoday.com/newsbreaks/nb050705-2.shtml>). – We all know that many of our users are using Google for what they formerly used their local library to accomplish. And if they fail in Google, they may not

think to fall back on us. So what to do? The best thing may be to meet them where they are – in Google. But how? It clearly takes a big play, which no single library is really equipped to do. Enter OCLC. Their [Open WorldCat program](#) makes it possible for Google and Yahoo users to discover library materials in their search results. But as Barbara Quint reports in this article, OCLC sees that as merely the wedge into a wide array of library-based services. Having noted that some of the inquiries they were getting from users were reference questions and others were requests to buy the book, OCLC is now moving to serve those needs and still others as well. The end result for us is likely seeing some of the users we lost with the advent of Google being redirected back to us from Google when appropriate. Wouldn't that be nice. – [\*RT]

*The Electronic Library* volume 23 issue 3: special issue ICT in Nigerian libraries

This special issue of TEL is devoted to ICT in Nigerian libraries. As David Raitt remarks in his introductory article, the developments documented in the articles reflect belated but significant improvements in the telecommunications infrastructure within the country, and steadily increasing use of ICT, following reforms under a civilian administration. Among the topics covered are: “Web sources, resources and strategies for legal research”, “Enhancing provision of scientific and technical information in Nigerian libraries”, “Enhancing women's productivity in the library and information sector in Nigeria” and “Evaluation of automated services in Nigerian universities”. The authors are generally acutely aware of the problems of under-funding of library services, and of poor research facilities and technical infrastructure; however, one gains a sense from these articles of real engagement with the problems and commitment to change.. This journal issue will be of interest to professionals with an interest in information access within developing countries. – [CE]

### Legal Issues

Mills, Elinor. [In Canada: Cache a Page, Go to Jail?. CNET News.com](#) (19 July 2005)([http://news.com.com/In+Canada+Cache+a+page%2C+go+to+jail/2100-1028\\_3-5793659.html?tag=cd.top](http://news.com.com/In+Canada+Cache+a+page%2C+go+to+jail/2100-1028_3-5793659.html?tag=cd.top)). – Is it the beginning of the end for search engines? In Canada, a bill under consideration (Bill C-60) appears to make the storage and provision of crawled Web pages illegal. According to copyright attorney Howard Knopf: "The way it reads, arguably what they're saying is that the very act of making a reproduction by way of caching is illegal." Search engines could face a legal environment where they could be much more easily sued unless Web pages were removed whenever copyright holders requested it. Of course, this potential law has generated quite a buzz. A [posting on Traffick](#) takes a

calmer view and provides a link to an analysis of the situation by Eric Goldman. It's worth a look. – [\*[CB](#)]

Testing the Barriers to Digital Libraries: A Study Seeking Copyright Permission to Digitize Published Works. [New Library World](#) 106(7)(2005): 332-342. – Interesting look at what it takes to get permission to digitize a printed work. Librarians at Carnegie Mellon took a random sampling of titles off the shelf, still under copyright, and then proceeded to ask publishers if they could digitize the material. About a quarter said yes. Academic and non-profit institutions were likelier to give their consent. Overall the authors list their results as "disappointing", emphasizing that such an exercise can be extremely complex and lengthy. On the plus side, the effort helped define "best candidates" and this in turn helped improve outcomes. – [\*[LRK](#)]

### Preservation

Talbot, David. [The Fading Memory of the State](#). [Technology Review](#) (July 2005) ([http://www.technologyreview.com/articles/05/07/issue/feature\\_memory.asp](http://www.technologyreview.com/articles/05/07/issue/feature_memory.asp)). – The [National Archives and Records Administration](#) (NARA) has a big problem. Because "(e)lectronic records rot much faster than paper ones," NARA has quickly got to develop a way of saving the "tsunami" of contemporary digital government records. "It is confronting thousands of incompatible data formats cooked up by the computer industry over the past several decades, not to mention the limited lifespan of electronic storage media themselves." The Declaration of Independence, the Constitution and other core documents, "written on durable calfskin parchment," live in sealed glass cases, immersed in protective argon gas. NARA has hired two contractors, Harris Corporation and Lockheed Martin, to come up with a similar durable means of storage for digital records. A secondary issue is that many electronic records are simply not being retained in the first place. Organizations in the private sector are, of course, facing similar crises, but the sheer size and scope of NARA's situation is a problem of unimaginable complexity. And because the agency has no good system for absorbing more data, a staggering backlog of electronic records hangs in limbo at countless federal agencies. This article talks about research efforts and potential solutions to NARA's situation. – [\*[SK](#)]

### Web Design

Aula, Ann, and Mika Kaaki. [Less is More in Web Search Interfaces for Older Adults](#). [First Monday](#) 10(7)(4 July 2005) ([http://www.firstmonday.org/issues/issue10\\_7/aula/](http://www.firstmonday.org/issues/issue10_7/aula/)). – The authors have been studying how older Web users face obstacles in using the Internet, and now they have designed an elderly-friendly search tool called Etsin.

They conducted usability studies to compare their search tool with Google – the search engine of choice for most casual Web users. They found that their own product was easier for the elderly to use than Google, mainly due to a very simple design interface. User experience is improved by decreasing the number of features to choose from, they argue, helping elderly searchers feel more in control of the online experience. Unsurprisingly, they further argue that consulting with elderly users (via focus groups, etc) is a critical step in interface design. Even though this seems an obvious requirement, there's an implication here that even now, designers can forget this crucial step. They also find that visual icons have higher value among the elderly as visual cues – and that novice users benefit the most from an emphasis on iconography. – [\*TH]

Hands, Joss. [E-Deliberation and Local Governance: The Role of Computer Mediated Communication in Local Democratic Participation in the United Kingdom](#). [First Monday](#) 10(7)(4 July 2005) ([http://www.firstmonday.org/issues/issue10\\_7/hands/](http://www.firstmonday.org/issues/issue10_7/hands/)). – Hands evaluates how local government Web sites in the United Kingdom are actually operating during a period when 'e-government' is being pushed more and more. The Web sites are designed to encourage and facilitate democratic deliberation, and are accumulating a great deal of information on how users view government Web sites. He poses the question, "To what end, and on whose terms, are citizens being encouraged to engage local government via computer-mediated communication?" To find out what the user traffic tells us, he examines 469 local government Web sites, reviewing the contextual evidence. He finds that while interaction is being encouraged, it remains limited and leans toward individualistic expressions rather than a communal dialogue where many people share common interests and discussion streams. – [\*TH]

Singer, David, and Sara Moulton Reger. [The Many Facets of Complexity](#). [IBM Think Research](#) (2005) ([http://www.research.ibm.com/thinkresearch/pages/2004/20041130\\_think\\_shtml](http://www.research.ibm.com/thinkresearch/pages/2004/20041130_think_shtml)). – No one sets out to make a poorly designed website. One of the inevitable culprits often is unnecessary complexity. The Research Team at IBM looks at complexity from an organizational standpoint, identifying problems and offering possible solutions. Part of a much larger and generally excellent series of reports and articles on Systems Development from the good people at IBM. – [\*LRK]

## Weblogs

Crawford, Walt. [Investigating the Biblioblogosphere](#). [Cites & Insights: Crawford at Large](#) 5(10)(2005): 2-13. (<http://cites.boisestate.edu/v5i10b.htm>). – In this article, Crawford ranks top library Weblogs (blogs) on various criteria (see the [Wikipedia entry for](#)



[blogosphere](#) to help decipher the article's title). Over 200 blogs were winnowed down to 60 finalists using a weighted "reach" formula that took into account Bloglines readership data and AlltheWeb, Google, and MSN "link:" search data (see the analysis [spreadsheet](#)). Blogs were then analyzed on a variety of criteria (e.g., starting date, frequency of posts, total and average length of posts, and number of comments) for specific periods in 2005 (see the [expanded spreadsheet](#)). Blogs were then grouped by "reach" into three groups. Needless to say, this study provoked considerable comment, especially by library bloggers (blogging is one of the most personal forms of publication and ego investment is likely to be high). One of the most interesting follow-up postings was "[Library Blogs and Google PageRank](#)" by Michael Lorenzen, whose analysis suggests a different rank order for library blogs, although some blogs, such as the ResearchBuzz, remained top blogs in the biblioblogosphere. – [[\\*CB](#)]

Gardner, Susannah. [Time to Check: Are You Using the Right Blogging Tool?. Online Journalism Review](#) (14 July 2005) (<http://www.ojr.org/ojr/stories/050714gardner/>). – Blog we must, but how? And what's a trackback, anyway? Try this handy analysis of major blogging software, complete with a blogging terminology guide. Not to be missed is the link to the detailed "Blog software comparison chart." Before you know it you'll be moblogging and using bookmarklets. – [[\\*CB](#)]

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