

avoid any potential legal problems by concentrating initially on materials that are already out of copyright, and plans to digitize up to 150,000 books over the next year. They are in discussions with publishers to find ways to include other content without infringing copyright, which may involve users paying for content. OCA has the support of a number of leading libraries.

Internet

E-audio and Libraries

Susan Miles
(S.Miles@kingston.ac.uk)

Following on from my column in the last issue examining the possibilities of podcasting in libraries, this one will look at the related area of e-audio and libraries. E-audio encompasses audio files, usually book readings, delivered in electronic format, often as MP3 files. Readers may be familiar with this concept via the free downloads offered by *The Times* newspaper over the summer. Essentially this is another evolutionary step for 'books on tape'.

In the UK, only two public library services have experimented with e-audio – Richmond upon Thames, and Blackburn with Darwen. In what originally started as individual project ideas, both public library services pooled some of their NOF People's Network Excellence Funding grants in 2003 and approached Audible Inc. with a proposal for a joint purchase/subscription to purchase a collection of Audible titles. The services have since developed in slightly different ways.

Blackburn and Darwen's project also included the loan of e-books and the creation of an internal listening post within their library to support music from

local bands. Now, some two years later, while feedback has been positive, the lack of further funding and the effects of natural wastage on their collections of players means that the service is gradually tapering off.

In Richmond upon Thames, the situation seems more positive. The e-audio books service is offered within their 24/7 Internet library service and has a steady usage with a core of regular users taking out titles via the library-owned MP3 players. Interestingly, a couple of their regular users are visually impaired older users who really value the service and do not find the MP3 players too small or fiddly to operate, while commuters form another group of regular users. Peter Hey at Richmond acknowledges that because they started this service early on, service providers didn't really cater for libraries with library members wishing to do downloads onto their own MP3 devices.

In 2005, the landscape is has changed and providers are looking to be able to offer this service. NetLibrary offers a range of e-Audiobook collections for different types of libraries, and allows downloads onto library users' PCs or portable devices, for instance MP3 players or some types of phones. A licence is downloaded with the title, allowing three weeks of listening time, and once the licence has expired, the file can no longer be listened to but remains on the device.

In a very timely fashion, the use of iPods in public libraries became a hot topic at the Internet Librarian 2005 Conference held last week in Monterey, California. Ken Weil and Joe Latini from the South Huntingdon Public Library, Long Island, New York discussed their e-audio service, which started with downloading audio books to iPods or lending iPod shuffles for borrowers without their own

iPods, and is now moving into loaning music titles in the same way¹. Jenny Levine in her Shifted Librarian blog summarises the paper here². They have 20 iPod Shuffles and about 45 book titles. Since they are purchasing the titles through iTunes, they do not buy more copies of the digital version than they already hold in print format. When they ran a workshop about the subject at the beginning of October, they had 35 people attend. While take-up is slow, apparently their users really like it once they've tried it. One of the benefits they have identified is that it can be cheaper to buy the digital format than other audio formats, with the cost savings going towards purchasing the iPods.

This is a different scale of enterprise in comparison to Richmond's 900+ titles, but shows that a service like this can be successfully run.

E-audio has a different place in the e-resources arena. While there is a range of subscription based e-audio services, it is attracting the interest of people who are using Creative Commons³ licenses

to create audio readings of books. For example, LiteralSystems⁴ are "striving to create literary and poetic audio books under a creative commons license for your personal enjoyment". Their aim is to provide audio books that are of high quality and free without any membership or hidden hooks. Their current offering is a chapter a day of an unedited version of *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*. LibriVox⁵ was founded by Hugh McGuire, who is interested in the "free movement" in its many guises, and wants all books in the public domain to be available, free, in audio format, on the Internet. There is a pool of 65 volunteers, of whom 27 have completed a recorded chapter, with four books having been completed. Although this is a fairly new undertaking, it is already attracting attention as it is now part of the Open Library, which was launched last week (more of which in a future column!).

Both these organisations are also associated with Project Gutenberg⁶,

¹ *South Huntingdon Public Library Online* [Online] (2005) Available from: <http://shpl.suffolk.lib.ny.us/> [Accessed 30 October 2005]

² Levine, J. (24 October 2005) 'Digital content – circulating audio ebooks on iPod shuffles'. *The Shifted Librarian* [Online]. Available from: http://www.theshiftedlibrarian.com/archives/2005/10/24/2005102403_digital_content_circulating_audio_ebooks_on_ipod_shuffles.html [Accessed 30 October 2005]

³ "Its primary tool is the use of a range of copyright licences, freely available for public use, which allow creators to fine-tune control over their work,

so enabling as wide a distribution as possible." *Creative Commons UK*. [Homepage] [Online] (2005) Available from: <http://creativecommons.org.uk> [Accessed 30 October 2005]

⁴ *LiteralSystems – creative-commons audiobooks*. [Homepage] [Online] (2005) Available from: <http://literalsystems.com> [Accessed 30 October 2005]

⁵ *LibriVox – acoustical liberation of books in the public domain*. [Homepage] [Online] (2005) Available from: <http://librivox.org> [Accessed 30 October 2005]

⁶ *Project Gutenberg – Audio eBooks*. [Homepage] [Online] (2005)

either using their texts or providing e-audio files back into their audio books project. Some of the Project Gutenberg audio files are computer-generated, but the main effort is currently focussed on e-Books read by people. For instance, Sherlock Holmes novels have been provided by audiobooksforfree.com⁷, a British-based organisation. If you're looking for something different to listen to on your MP3 player, all these sites may be worth a visit!

And finally, Virgin Atlantic is producing podcasts of travel guides, thus combining these two themes; there are guides to New York, Cuba, Johannesburg and Shanghai, with more promised. Subscribing to the podcast feed will ensure that you get future releases.⁸

Acknowledgements:

Many thanks to Peter Hey at Richmond Libraries and to Ian Sutton at Blackburn with Darwen Library & Information Services for their help in providing background information on their e-audio services.

Available from:
<http://www.gutenberg.org/audio/>
[Accessed 30 October 2005]

⁷ *Audio Books For Free*. [Homepage] [Online] (2005) Available from: <http://www.audiobooksforfree.com> [Accessed 30 October 2005]

⁸ *Word in your ear*. [Homepage of Virgin Atlantics podcasts] [Online] (2005) Available from: <http://virginatlantic.loudish.com> [Accessed 30 October 2005]

Intranets

Martin White, Intranet Focus Ltd
(Martin.white@intranetfocus.com)

In early November, I took part in the inaugural CMF2005 <http://cmf2005.dk/> event in Aarhus, Denmark. This conference, which covered content management, web strategy and intranets, was devised and managed by Janus Boye <http://www.boyeit.dk/home>, who will be speaking at the Online Information Conference this year. The event attracted over 130 delegates from across Scandinavia and Finland, with some delegates coming from Iceland and the Faroe Islands, and even a few from the UK. The conference was a great success, and the 2006 event is already in the diary for 7–9 November 2006 <http://cmf2006.dk/>. I was running a pre-conference workshop on intranets, and let the attendees decide the subjects to cover. As a result, much of the morning was spent on what the elements should be of an intranet strategy. None of the attendees had a written intranet strategy, and this is a not uncommon occurrence in the workshops I run, no matter what the country. I find it very surprising that an organization can have policies and strategies for just about anything but not for information/intranet issues. Among the other topics that we discussed were the use of personas and scenarios to develop information architecture, and how to increase intranet use.

In the UK, the Intranet Benchmark Forum <http://www.ibforum.co.uk/> has held two very successful events. One was IBF Live, which was a two-day conference with a strong emphasis on sharing of experience, and the second was the launch of IBF Global, which (as you might gather) is specifically tailored for the needs of organizations with multinational, and often multilingual,