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.

Electronic Publishing

Wyatt, Edward **The Bottom Line on E-Textbooks** The New York Times (23 April 2006) (http://www.nytimes.com/2006/04/23/education/edlife/innovate.html/partner/rssnyt?_r=1&oref=slogin) – Why have e-textbooks not "taken off" as an alternative to dead tree volumes? Certainly, they are more portable. They are easily browseable, searchable, and now highlightable. And e-book publishers apparently have eliminated the most egregious complaints – e.g., that the digital books "expire" after the academic year. Most publishers have done away with expiration dates. Granted, there are still limitations. An e-textbook can only be transferred to another computer registered to the same user...and students like to share. Also, there is usually a limit of 100 pages that can be printed out in a week. But there may be a simple economic reason behind the lagging popularity of e-textbooks. Although they are usually 40% cheaper to purchase than a new dead.tree version (and 20% cheaper than a used copy), e-textbooks cannot be resold. The article points out that roughly half of dead.tree textbooks are sold back to bookstores or to other students; typically, the original purchaser can thus recoup half of the original purchase price – [*SK]

General

Byrd, Jackie, Gary Charbonneau, and Michael Charbonneau, et. al. **A White Paper on the Future of Cataloging at Indiana University** Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Libraries, 15 January 2006 (http://www.iub.edu/~libtserv/pub/Future_of_Cataloging_White_Paper.pdf) – This is a report by a group "charged to identify current trends that will have a direct impact on cataloging operations and to define possible new roles for the online catalog and cataloging staff at Indiana University." Their one general conclusion after nine months of work is that "The need for cataloging expertise within the I.U. Libraries will not be diminished in the coming years. Rather, catalogers of the future will work in the evolving environment of publishing, scholarly communication, and information technology in new expanded roles. Catalogers will need to be key players in addressing the many challenges facing the libraries and the overall management and organization of

information at Indiana University." The report also identifies five strategic directions. The report is an interesting read, and taken with the explosion of related reports (e.g., Calhoun's report to the Library of Congress cited in this issue, the UC Bibliographic Services TF Report), adds yet another perspective to the kinds of changes we must foster to create better library services in a vastly changed environment – [*RT]

College Students' Perceptions of Libraries and Information Resources Dublin, OH: OCLC (http://www.oclc.org/reports/perceptionscollege.htm) – This "companion piece" to OCLC's recent report Perceptions of Libraries and Information Resources focuses on the college student slice of OCLC's survey of library users and their perceptions. As such, they can go into much more detail about their findings, and they do. One caution – if you download the PDF either read it on-screen or print to a color printer, since some of the graphs become hard to interpret in grayscale. Highly recommended for academic library staff – [*RT]

Dempsey, Lorcan. "**Libraries and the Long Tail: Some Thoughts about Libraries in a Network Age**" D-Lib Magazine 12(4) (April 2006) (http://www.dlib.org/dlib/april06/dempsey/04dempsey.html) – You would probably have to live under a rock to have not heard about "the long tail," but if your back is holding up a stone I will leave it to Dempsey's piece to explain it to you. After discussing the general concept of the long tail, Dempsey looks closely at libraries and the implications of this concept to what we do every day. There is a great deal to ponder here, and those of us involved with getting users to stuff would do well to ponder it carefully. Dempsey makes some specific recommendations, but perhaps the most significant assertion is that "We need new services that operate at the network level, above the level of individual libraries." Although one could point to Dempsey's place of employment as a prime example of this, what he is suggesting would go far beyond our present sharing of cataloging records and ILL infrastructure and get at the heart of aggregating supply and demand. Apologies for an outworn cliché, but this is just the kind of "out of the box" thinking we need right now – [*RT]

Marks, Paul **Cities race to reap the rewards of wireless net for all** New Scientist, 25 March 2006, p28 – City-wide Wi-Fi hotspots are planned for many US cities, funded by City councils determined to bridge the digital divide. Here in the UK the City of London is also investing in Wi-Fi access within its streets and open spaces for all workers, residents and business visitors. As expected the major telecoms are non-too pleased at this threat to their wired broadband services, while independent analysts identify the lack interoperability standards as a major technological hurdle, which could, in some cases, impact long-term support. However, with coverage expected to increase massively in the next 5 years the social benefits could be immense – [LF]

Shaker, Lee "**In Google We Trust: Information Integrity in the Digital Age**" First Monday 11(4)(3 April 2006) (http://www.firstmonday.org/issues/issue11_4/shaker/) – Shaker chips away at the Google "mystique" by tracking how the New York Times reported on the company over a two year period. It turns out that Google's historic initial public offering and the trajectory of its stock price has as much to do with how favorably the company is regarded as its innovative search capabilities. He is essentially arguing that in the realm of mythmaking, money still talks. While one might be reluctant to discard the idea that Google's technological strategy also creates value and "myth," this article offers a great jumping-off point for thinking about information security and "trust" in the

digital era. Moreover, he argues, if all it takes is fiscal successful to build customer loyalty and respect, then society has not yet begun to get to the heart of the matter when it comes to "information integrity." Google-watchers will enjoy this read, and the rest of us will appreciate the analysis of the relationship between success in the stock market, the power of marketing and "brand loyalty", and the public's perception of quality and trustworthiness – [*TH]

Stunden, Annie. "**The Toughest IT Challenge**" EDUCAUSE Review 41(3) (May/June 2006): 32-42. (http://www.educause.edu/apps/er/erm06/erm0631.asp) – Talk about defensive! This head of IT at the University of Wisconsin suggests (perhaps slightly tongue-in-cheek) that as you approach the launch of a new information systems project "you should put your resume on the street." The urge to jump ship comes from what the authors describes as "post-implementation pain". The author then goes on to discuss all the hazards of implementing a major project from haggling over the budget to squabbles over who will manage the IT staff. The perspective here is pure IT and it's easy to imagine complaints from the other side. Nevertheless, the author suggests the secret of success early on and that comes in partnership and mutual respect from all sides – [*LRK]

Information Access

Aftergood, Steven. "**ISOO Reports Nine Percent Drop in Classification**" Secrecy News (26 May 2006)
(http://www.fas.org/blog/secrecy/2006/05/isoo_reports_nine_percent_drop.html) – The Information Security Oversight Office, which is part of the National Archives and Records Administration, reports "a nine percent drop in overall classification activity," according to its 2005 Annual Report to the President (PDF; 1.7 MB). While ISOO Director William Leonard called this "a positive step," in light of "three years of rising numbers," Aftergood – who is director of the Federation of American Scientists Project on Government Secrecy – cautions that this does not necessarily mean more government openness. "While the data reported by ISOO each year serve as a useful benchmark," he says, "the ISOO methodology for collecting and reporting data is rudimentary and not very illuminating. For example, the annual report provides no way to assess overclassification (PDF; 267 KB)." Aftergood does note: "In an extraordinary act of public outreach, the Information Security Oversight Office will hold a free public workshop on June 30 on the use of mandatory declassification review as a tool for researchers. ISOO is also offering interested members of the public a DVD recording of an October 2005 Symposium on classification policy that was held to mark the 10th anniversary of executive order 12958." – [*SK]

Bachula, Gary R. "**Testimony ... on Net Neutrality**" EDUCAUSE Resouce Center on Net Neutrality (7 February 2006)
(http://www.educause.edu/LibraryDetailPage/666?ID=EPO0611) – Excellent testimony by Gary R. Bachula, vice President of Internet2, on Net Neutrality given before the Senate Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation. 'Net Neutrality' ensures that all content on the web is treated equally by "network operators" (generally the telephone companies or 'Telco's'). Recently the Telco's are trying to get Congress to loosen the reins a bit and allow them to implement "preferential" treatment of content from one

source over content from another. Bachula puts the question in terms of traffic on a city street: "We know that when an ambulance or fire truck comes down a congested highway, everybody else has to pull over and stop. For emergencies, and for public safety, that is accepted, but what if UPS trucks had the same preference? Giving a preference to the packets of some potentially degrades the transport for everyone else." Using the example of his own Internet2, he argues that increasing overall bandwidth is far more cost-effective and friendly to innovation than setting up complicated and artificial service- and cost-structures – [*LRK]

McCullagh, Declan, and Anne Broache. "**House Panel Votes for Net Neutrality**" CNET News.com (25 May 2006) (http://news.com.com/2100-1028_3-6077007.html?part=rss&tag=6077007&subj=news) – Could there actually be good news regarding the Net neutrality fight? Well, yes and no. The House Judiciary Committee has approved the Internet Freedom and Nondiscrimination Act of 2006, but, according to this article, it was approved because Committee members "were worried that a competing proposal already approved by a different committee last month would diminish their own influence in the future." C'est la guerre. There are at least 6 bills dealing with the Net neutrality issue being considered in Congress (see "Net Neutrality Field in Congress Gets Crowded"), with a wide range of approaches to the issue. Libraries have a lot at stake in the Net neutrality battle, which is why ALA and ARL joined the SavetheInternet.com Coalition. To find out why it's so important, check out "Talking Points on the Importance of 'Net Neutrality,'" "The Net Neutrality Debate: The Basics," "Strong Copyright + DRM + Weak Net Neutrality = Digital Dystopia?," and Why Consumers Demand Internet Freedom--Net Neutrality: Fact vs. Fiction – [*CB]

Sternstein, Aliya. "**Bill Demands Free Public Access to Science Reports**" Federal Computer Week 20(15)(15 May 2006): 56. (http://www.fcw.com/article94357-05-15-06-Print) – It only makes sense, right? Taxpayers should have free access to the science research that they've paid for. Well, that access would be guaranteed if a bill introduced by Sens. John Coryn (R-TX) and Joe Lieberman (D-CT) – the Federal Research Public Access Act of 2006 – makes it into law. Says the article, "It mandates that agencies with annual research budgets of more than $100 million to implement a public access policy granting swift access to research supported by those agencies." Basically. this means that articles reporting on publicly funded research must be made freely available online six months after publication in a scholarly journal. Some 11 agencies are covered: the departments of Agriculture, Commerce, Defense, Education, Energy, Health and Human Services, Homeland Security and Transportation; the Environmental Protection Agency; NASA; and the National Science Foundation. The article notes that "some publishers believe the six-month provision will disrupt their business models, and they remain skeptical that legislation is needed." The Association of American Publishers (AAP), which opposes the bill, "is urging that an independent study be conducted to measure the bill's potential impact on scientific quality, the peer-review process, and the financial standing of journals..." – [*SK]

Information Retrieval

Bills, David B., Stephanie Holliman, and Laura Lowe, et. al."**The New Mobile Scholar and the Effective Use of Information and Communication Technology**" First Monday

11(4)(3 April 2006)(http://www.firstmonday.org/issues/issue11_4/bills/) – This rather large group of authors takes a closer look at how mobile information and communication technologies (ICT) can improve the lot of social scientists – freeing them to move about with ready access to large datasets. Since data is the name of the game in the social sciences, they make a good point. But they find that a substantial percentage of social scientists lack the full array of skills needed to take maximum advantage of the access technologies at their disposal. Moreover, interoperatbility is also a steep barrier to the formation of effective work habits. They argue that in order to reach the full potential of ICT applications in the social sciences, a seamless web of interoperability is vital, something a "holy grail" for a lot of developers these days. In the present situation researchers find that they get bogged down in connectivity hassles. It's worth mentioning that many academics who perform lots of field work have created their personal "workarounds" to bypass the interoperability challenge (e.g., anthropologists and other who go to remote sites). But the authors are correct when they discover greater obstacles for social scientists. Still, social science research would receive a large boost if practitioners can become "mobile scholars" – another point in the case for lifelong learning habits with respect to technology – [*TH]

Calhoun, Karen. **The Changing Nature of the Catalog and Its Integration with Other Discovery** Washington, DC: Library of Congress, 17 March 2006 (http://www.loc.gov/catdir/calhoun-report-final.pdf) – In this report commissioned by the Library of Congress, Calhoun reviews the library catalog and its changing role amidst a new mix of finding tools and technologies. In preparing the report, Calhoun performed a literature review (largely focusing on the last five years) that informed the crafting of six questions that were used in interviews with selected individuals (full disclosure: I was one). The report identifies a number of options that Calhoun classifies in one of three categories of activities: lead, expand, and extend. A two-year phased approach to "revitalizing the research library catalog" is described. This report has caused some controversy – particularly from the cataloging community which finds the de-emphasis on traditional library practice to be objectionable. But whatever position you may care to take, you would do well to read and consider the possibilities and implications of this report and other recent reports like it, such as the University of California Bibliographic Services Task Force Report and the White Paper on the Future of Cataloging at Indiana University (cited in this issue) – [*RT]

Miller, Paul. "**Coming Together around Library 2.0 : A Focus for Discussion and a Call to Arms**" D-Lib Magazine 12 (4)(April 2006) (http://www.dlib.org/dlib/april06/miller/04miller.html) – Well, it was inevitable. First we had Web 2.0; now we have Library 2.0. The author defines this using a quote from a colleague as "an attitude, not a technology". This attitude encourages sharing of information and better integration not simply with other systems but with the "workflows" of our users. The author uses library holdings showing up on Amazon as an example but really the approach can be extended to any number of other Web 2.0 software and platforms. The author goes on to identify a trend that "moves beyond the reengineering of applications deployed within a single institution, or offered by a single vendor, and allows us to move towards a network-based platform of subsystems encapsulating the functionality required by anyone wishing to construct the next generation of applications." Getting there, the author concludes, will require "dramatic change" – [*LRK]

Quint, Barbara. "**Windows Live Academic Search: The Details**" NewsBreaks & the Weekly News Digest (17 April 2006) (http://www.infotoday.com/newsbreaks/nb060417-2.shtml) – There's a new scholarly search engine in town: Windows Live Academic Search (beta version), and, in this article, Quint delves into its specifics (see "Microsoft Offers Alternative to Google Scholar: Windows Live Academic Search" for a quick overview). Microsoft sought the advice of librarians, information school faculty, publishers, and others during the development of Windows Live Academic Search, and it shows. Search results appear on the left-hand side of the screen, and an optional "preview pane" on the right-hand side can display a selected work's fielded abstract, BibTex formatted abstract, or EndNote formatted abstract. Search results can be sorted by relevance, date (oldest), date (newest), author, journal, and conference. A slider bar above the search results can expand or contract the amount of information that's shown for each hit. Another slider bar to the right of the search results can be used to easily scroll through them. And, of course, there are a number of other features. For now, the beta search engine is limited to about six million records for Computer Science, Electrical Engineering, and Physics journals and conferences. It includes e-prints (see my "A Simple Search Hit Comparison for Google Scholar, OAIster, and Windows Live Academic Search" DigitalKoans posting for a preliminary assessment of its coverage). As you would expect, the release of Windows Live Academic Search created quite a buzz in the blogosphere, and, shortly after its release, Google announced enhancements to Google Scholar – [*CB]

Knowledge Management

Breeding, Marshall. **Web Services and the Service-Oriented Architecture** Chicago, IL: ALA TechSource, 2006.(http://www.techsource.ala.org/ltr/web-services-and-the-service-oriented-architecture.html) – The advent of XML and protocols such as the Simple Object Access Protocol (SOAP) which uses it are transforming the way our computer systems work. Rather than being self-contained "silo" systems, our computer applications increasingly interact with other applications. This "service-oriented architecture" offers new opportunities to increase efficiency and effectiveness. Breeding's LTR on the topic thus comes at good time, when we all should know more about Web Services and what it has to offer our organizations. Thankfully, ALA nabbed someone with impeccable credentials and the ability to explain complex topics simply and clearly. Breeding uses the well-known Amazon and Google Web services as examples, even including code listings (a minor quibble is that the code should be downloadable from somewhere, for those that want to try this out). At the end of this 49-page publication is a summary of library automation vendor support for Web services within their applications. From this survey it is clear that Web services is not in your future – it is here now. If you feel behind it is because you are, and this fine LTR is just what the doctored ordered as your cure – [*RT]

Mathews, Brian S.. "**Do You Facebook**?" College & Research Libraries News 67(5)(May 2006): 306-307. (http://www.ala.org/ala/acrl/acrlpubs/crlnews/backissues2006/may06/may06.htm) – Social networking. On the minus side, it seems like there's a new product every 15 minutes. It's hard to find out, let alone master, the online service de jour. On the plus side, each new product is potentially a new way for libraries to reach out to their patrons. In this case, it's Facebook, an online social network targeting people, students mainly, who attend

academic institutions. Our intrepid author has subject responsibility at Georgia Tech for the School of Mechanical Engineering. He decided to look up how many of the School's students subscribed to Facebook. Out of 1,700 students, 1,300 (or 75%) subscribed! He then blasted them with an email saying who he was and giving out targeted information about the library. The initial level of response was modest. This is the Engineering School after all and their use of traditional library services is probably a lot less than other subject areas. Nevertheless, he got a number of responses including requests to link up as "friends" by several of the recipients. This innovative use of Facebook then becomes an opportunity for outreach and communication built around promoting library services. It's a great example of adapting to our users' technology rather than requiring them to adapt to ours. If that isn't Web 2.0, I don't know what is – [*LRK]

Legal Issues

Vogele, Colette, Mia Garlick, and The Berkman Center Clinical Program in Cyberlaw. **Podcasting Legal Guide: Rules for the Revolution** San Francisco: Creative Commons, 2006.(http://mirrors.creativecommons.org/Podcasting_Legal Guide.pdf) – You've got all the neat gadgets you need to podcast and lined up your distribution service. Ready to rock and roll, right? Wrong. Why? Because, as Lawrence Lessig says in this work's introduction: "Federal law regulates creativity. That regulation is insanely complex. Indeed, the law is more complex today than at any point in our history. It seems the more the lawyers work on the law, the less useable the law becomes." As a podcaster, you are a multimedia publisher. This involves some legal complexities that go beyond textual blogging, which are explained in the first 27 pages of this work. The rest of it is a handy guide to podcasting itself, resources related to podcasting, and relevant legal resources. This work belongs on your virtual bookshelf with the EFF: Legal Guide for Bloggers – [*CB]

von Lohmann, Fred. "**The Season of Bad Laws, Part 2: Criminal Copyright Infringement, Drug War Style**" DeepLinks (25 April 2006) (http://www.eff.org/deeplinks/archives/004586.php) – A draft copyright bill making the rounds in Congress is causing concern. Under the bill, an attempt to infringe copyright would be a criminal offense as would conspiracy to commit infringement. Law enforcement officials would have the "same criminal and civil forfeiture powers used in drug prosecutions," and wiretapping would be permitted in criminal infringement investigations. Prison terms would be significantly increased for criminal infringement. Works would no longer have to be registered prior to a criminal infringement investigation. Fred von Lohmann says about the bill: "Before they throw people in jail for copyright infringement (especially where the infringement does not involve a commercial motive), the feds should have to prove their case, just like copyright owners in civil cases. They should have to prove, among other things, that infringement took place, that it took place within the applicable statute of limitations, and that the work was properly registered." Also of interest, a short article about the new PERFORM Act (The Season of Bad Laws, Part 3: Banning MP3 Streaming), which "would effectively require music webcasters to use DRM-laden streaming formats." – [*CB]

Metadata

Moffatt, Malcolm. **'Marketing' with Metadata – How Metadata Can Increase Exposure and Visibility of Online Content"** Edinburgh: Heriot-Watt University, 8 March 2006.(http://www.icbl.hw.ac.uk/perx/advocacy/exposingmetadata.htm) – This is an easy-to-understand explanation of metadata and the various ways in which metadata can be exposed to increase traffic to your web site. After briefly explaining terms, the paper makes the case for exposing metadata and uses examples of how doing so has increased exposure for a number of specific web sites. Simple explanations on how to expose metadata via harvesting, distributed searching, and syndication (i.e., RSS) are covered – [*RT]

Preservation

Mass Digitization: Implications for Information Policy Washington, DC: U.S. National Commission on Libraries and Information Science (NCLIS), 9 May 2006.(http://www.nclis.gov/digitization/MassDigitizationSymposium-Report.pdf) – The U.S. National Commission on Libraries and Information Science (NCLIS) sponsored the symposium "Scholarship and Libraries in Transition: A Dialogue about the Impacts of Mass Digitization Projects" in March 2006 at the University of Michigan. This 24-page report identifies nine major issues that arose from that symposium and summarizes key points under each: copyright, quality, the role of libraries, ownership and preservation, standardization and interoperability, the role of publishers and booksellers, business models, information literacy, and assessment – [*RT]

Security

"**University of Texas at Austin Investigates Computer Breach**" Associated Press (via FindLaw) (23 April 2006) (http://news.findlaw.com/ap/o/51/04-24-2006/24ef0006946f6d0c.html) – Stories like this are becoming all too common in the media these days. This one involves roughly 200,000 records at the university's business school which may have been illegally accessed. Apparently, this is the school's second major breach within three years. Meanwhile, in a survey released earlier this month, it was revealed that just 65 of the 236 institutions of higher learning surveyed offered privacy notices prominently linked from their home pages – this despite the fact that nearly every school collects personal data, conducts e-commerce and otherwise engages in practices that present potential privacy risks. Does your library prominently post a privacy policy? (This particular story resonated with this writer because she was similarly victimized just this week, when a laptop belonging to her employer's health insurance provider containing personal data on 35,000+ employees was stolen from the automobile of one of the insurer's employees.) – [*SK]

Web Design

Buckley, Rob **The best Firefox extensions for developers**. .Net issue150, June 2006: 86-89 – These are geared to developers but Linkchecker, Clear Cache Button and Mozilla Accessibility Extension may be of interest to the general user of Firefox. The author rates the best 15 extensions that are developer friendly – [JW]

Hall, Christian. **How to make your site accessible**. .Net issue 151, July 2006: 84-89 – PAS 78 : Guide to Good Practice in Commissioning Accessible Websites is a set of guidelines for planning the development of accessible sites. These guidelines give principles of good practice to obtain quality accessible sites from the commissioning to testing stages. They provide a framework to achieve accessible sites. PAS 78 is endorsed by the Disability Rights Commission (DRC) and available from the BSI (British Standards Institution). There are approximately 6.8 million disabled people/customers in the U.K. The vision for the web was of access for all. This somehow got lost in the speed of development of the web and lack of enforceable guidelines and rules. PAS 78 puts the planning and the vision back. This article clarifies what is meant by accessibility – [JW]

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