

## 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

Crawford, Walt. **Open Access Perspective Part I: Pioneer Journals: The Arc of Enthusiasm, Five Years Later** [Cites & Insights: Crawford at Large](http://citesandinsights.info/v6i12a.htm) 6(12)(2006) (<http://citesandinsights.info/v6i12a.htm>). – In this article, Walt Crawford follows up on an earlier study about the long-term survival of free e-journals (see "[Getting Past the Arc of Enthusiasm](#)" and "[Feedback and Following Up: Getting Past the Arc of Enthusiasm](#)".) Five years have passed since his last examination of this topic, and some free e-journals have bitten the dust or have stopped being freely available; however, he was able to identify 40 free e-journals that "began no later than 1995 and have content as recently as 2004" (including [New Horizons in Adult Education and Human Resource Development](#), which started in 1987). In [part two](#) of this article, Crawford conducts a preliminary investigation of 189 more e-journals, which were identified using the Directory of Open Access Journals. – [\*[CB](#)]

Peterson, Elaine. **Librarian Publishing Preferences and Open-Access Electronic Journals** [E-JASL: The Electronic Journal of Academic and Special Librarianship](http://southernlibrarianship.icaap.org/content/v07n02/peterson_e01.htm) 7(2)(2006) ([http://southernlibrarianship.icaap.org/content/v07n02/peterson\\_e01.htm](http://southernlibrarianship.icaap.org/content/v07n02/peterson_e01.htm)). – The sample for this study was 100 authors who had published papers "within the last year in an established library journal still available in print format." There was a 60% response rate. What Peterson found with her six-question survey was that, while 80% of authors had considered publishing in an open-access journal, and 42% had actually done so, only 48% said the following statement was false: "Usually I do not publish in free electronic journals because they are viewed by myself or by my institution as 'lesser' than established journals titles." Moreover, when asked to "rate each of these items when selecting a journal to publish your article," only 7% said that "Free/Open-Access on the Internet" was very important and only 28% said it was important. In her conclusion, Peterson notes: "The written comments indicate that OA titles are not yet on a par with their paper/electronic subscription-based counterparts. OA editors need to ensure that their journals are peer reviewed, indexed, and of general high quality. Permanence in and of itself can also lend credibility to the title. It also appears that librarians think that even if the journal is indexed and peer reviewed, the editors can do a better job of marketing the title so that more librarians are aware of this new venue for publishing." – [\*[CB](#)]

## General

Bertot, John Carlo, Paul T. Jaeger, and Lesley A. Langa, et. al. **Drafted: I Want You to Deliver E-Government** [Library Journal](http://www.libraryjournal.com/article/CA6359866.html) (15 August 2006) (<http://www.libraryjournal.com/article/CA6359866.html>). – This article touched more than a couple of my personal hot buttons, the main one being that public libraries are being more or less forced into providing more and more services at the same time financial support for public institutions of all types is on the wane. Federal, state and even local governments are putting more and more of their information and services online. Citizens without home computers and/or Internet access have few places to turn. One of these places is the local public library, which – as the article points out – is "often the only place for public Internet access with trained staff." How many of us can honestly say we work in libraries where staffing is adequate? The powers-that-be seem to be just fine with adding yet more computers ... but adding sufficient staff to maintain them and/or help customers use them is another issue entirely. The problem is obvious. Among other scenarios, this article describes how, earlier this year, senior citizens signing up for the Medicare prescription drug plan "were encouraged to seek information and register online." As a result, public library staffers not only had to assist these folks in using the Internet, but they also had to become familiar with the ins and outs of this particular government program. Hurricane Katrina, in the areas affected, resulted in an influx of people who needed to use library computers to register for FEMA benefits. I've tried to help several people in my library sign up for federal financial aid for college online, or file their income taxes. Privacy issues aside, this stuff is time-consuming, and while I am tied up extensively with one customer, several others are being inconvenienced. Those who control the purse strings need to realize that putting more computers in more public libraries is only part of the e-government initiative. There also must be enough trained library staffers to support this initiative. – [\*SK]

Buderi, Robert **Searching for the next big hit** *New Scientist*, 2 September 2006, pp24-25. – Interview with Usama Fayyad, Yahoo's senior V.P. of Research, on the establishment of three research labs to develop "the new sciences of the Internet". Ideas under investigation include greater interaction via gadgets such as mobile phones, television and even cars, as well as the phenomena of online communities. With so much user-generated data at their disposal, the boffins at Yahoo have plenty to keep them busy. – [LF]

Huff-Hannon, Joseph. **Librarians at the Gates** [The Nation](http://www.thenation.com/doc/20060828/librarians/) (22 August 2006) (<http://www.thenation.com/doc/20060828/librarians/>). – I think it's safe to say that most people do not think of librarians as heroes. We do not save the lives of endangered citizens like fire fighters or police do, so it's easy to overlook librarians when one is asked to name a heroic profession. But librarians are among the staunchest defenders of our constitutionally guaranteed freedoms, and this article is giving us our due. The lead paragraph states that "Courage, like beauty, is in the eye of the beholder. And in an era of increasing controls on the gathering and dissemination of information, many Americans are unaware of the courageous stands librarians take every day." Huff-Hannon follows his introductory remarks with a number of vignettes illustrating the struggle individual librarians take on every day to ensure our rights and freedoms as U.S. citizens. – [\*RT]

Huwe, Terence K. **From Librarian to Digital Communicator** [Online](#) 30(5)(September/October 2006): 21-26. – "Digital Communicator" may not become the

trademark name, but what Terry Huwe describes here are librarians putting themselves at the forefront of emerging online information technologies and by doing this, making themselves indispensable to their institutions in ways that then open up opportunities for the delivery of more traditional library services. The technologies range from ListServes to Wikis, Blogs and Podcasts. Some prove successful, and some not. Huwe suggests having a "damage control strategy" for those that don't. The net result is an operation that "mainstreams" itself into the digital community. – [\*[LRK](#)]

### Information Access

Anderson, Janna Quitney, and Lee Rainie. **The Future of the Internet II** Washington, DC: Pew Internet and American Life Project, 24 September 2006. ([http://www.pewinternet.org/pdfs/PIP\\_Future\\_of\\_Internet\\_2006.pdf](http://www.pewinternet.org/pdfs/PIP_Future_of_Internet_2006.pdf)). – As the Summary of Findings in this 104-page report states, "Hundreds of Internet leaders, activists, builders and commentators were asked about the effect of the Internet on social, political and economic life in the year 2020. The views of the 742 respondents who completed this survey were varied; there is general agreement about how technology might evolve, but there is less agreement among these respondents about the impact of this evolution." Although the sample was not random and therefore cannot be considered representative, a majority of those who chose to respond felt that "Building the capacity of the network and passing along technological knowledge to those not currently online" should be the top priority. The Pew Internet Project created seven possible future scenarios to which the respondents could react, and numerous quotes from the respondents relating to these scenarios are included. – [\*[RT](#)]

### Information Retrieval

Cheney, Debora, Jeffrey Knapp, and Robert Alan, et. al. **Convergence in the Library's News Room: Enhancing News Collections and Services in Academic Libraries College and Research Libraries** 67(2)(September 2006): 395-417. (<http://www.ala.org/ala/acrl/acrlpubs/crljournal/backissues/2006a/septembera/crlsept6.htm>). – How digital are we? Consider this indicator: current events information. At one extreme, some consider it the type of content perfectly suited for delivery to a computer and won't access it any other way. At the other extreme some consider it untrustworthy and ephemeral unless it's arranged in columns on newsprint. Articles like this one can make librarians periodically (no pun intended) re-examine that range of user behaviors and spend some useful moments thinking about access, collections, archiving and community space versus personal needs. This case study concerns the reorganization of the Penn State library's news resources. It was a given that there would be some kind of space for news, but nothing else was written in stone. Media, hardware, layout and archiving were all up for discussion, and after the research was done and focus groups were consulted, the result is a solution that increased the use of news collections and appears to allow for future flexibility in response to technological advances and shifts in user expectations. And not least, the undergrad who comes to appreciate it may just be convinced that there's more to current events than that infamous Facebook newsfeed. – [\*[JR](#)]

Chudnov, Daniel. **COinS for the Link Trail** [netConnect](http://www.libraryjournal.com/article/CA6344742.html) (Summer 2006) (<http://www.libraryjournal.com/article/CA6344742.html>). – Content Objects in Spans (COinS) is a way to expose OpenURLs in Web pages that does not presuppose a

specific OpenURL resolver address. Put another way, it's a way to enable those who come across your content to use their own OpenURL resolver to get to the copy licensed on their behalf. Although at the moment to do anything useful with these a JavaScript program must be installed in one's browser, we may not be far from the day when Web browsers can natively use COinS to create valid and useable links. Chudnov, who has been involved with the COinS effort from the beginning, explains all this and more, much better than I can. The bottom line: if you are using OpenURLs you should know about COinS, if not be using them in places where they make sense. The more widely COinS are adopted (and OCLC's WorldCat already does), the better off we will eventually be. Or, more accurately, the better off our users will be. – [\*RT]

Chudnov, Dan, Peter Binkley, and Jeremy Frumkin, et. al. **Introducing unAPI** *Ariadne* (48)(July 2006) (<http://www.ariadne.ac.uk/issue48/chudnov-et-al/>). – This article introduces a standard for enabling "a universal method to copy any resource of interest" one finds on the web. Dubbed [unAPI](#), this work by an ad-hoc group of library developers seeks to develop "a standard way to identify individual objects on Web pages; a standard way to discover a path to an API for retrieving objects; a standard API to retrieve object copies in all available formats." This is good and useful work, and is already being implemented in some systems. – [\*RT]

Feeley, Jim. **Video Everywhere** *PC World* 24(9)(September 2006): 104-114. (<http://www.pcworld.com/article/id,126161-page,1/article.html>). – Let that phrase "video everywhere" resonate for awhile ... what does it call to mind? Bad TV? Surveillance? Tsunami in your lap? Feeley's article pulls together the many ways that access to video has proliferated, and reading it provides a strong whiff of cultural shift. There's a hunger for reality out there and digital video is feeding it: the assumption that eyewitness video of an event can be found on the Web is increasingly true. The August 26th *Economist* has a special report on the newspaper industry, which notes that the shift to Web publishing has increased pressure on journalists to show and not just tell. And entertainment content is being offered for many new and interesting devices (of course the same crappy show that wouldn't keep you glued to the Naugahyde at home will be so much better on a tiny screen during your bus ride). Any information professional should read this because your customers are bound to ask you about video in new and surprising ways before too long. And you'll be relieved to know that Feeley doesn't indulge in a lot of amateur sociology like I do, he just lays out the current scene and keeps the focus on the systems that make it happen. – [\*JR]

Gardiner, D, McMenemy, D. and Chowdhury, G. (2006) **A snapshot of information use patterns of academics in British universities** *Online Information Review* (4) pp. 341-359. – This article focuses on the use made of the Internet and search engines by academics in the disciplines of computer and information sciences, business/management, and English literature. Attention was also paid to their use and attitude towards print resources and it considers the problems faced in accessing and using electronic information. The authors set the scene by reviewing previous related research projects, concluding that choice of print or electronic resources is down to individual characteristics such as "level of perceived ICT skills", and "area of study". Additional influencing factors identified included, "acceptance of ICT", "enthusiasm of the benefits of electronic resources", "desktop access", and "users' confidence and perceived level of ICT skills".

Using a web-based questionnaire, mailing lists were used to request participation from academics. Unfortunately this resulted in low response rate of 97 respondents. Despite this low response, the research does offer some interesting findings, and will be of interest to subject librarians who support these academic areas. For example, a large percentage of respondents were found never to use their library OPAC! Perhaps not unexpectedly a large percentage used search engines, although this research does not identify why, and with what success. Printed resources are still popular, but in the main, these were their own textbooks and not books borrowed from the library. Although the findings suggest that academics are still using the library, frequency of use is not that encouraging with only 50% reported as using the library at least monthly. More encouraging is the use made of electronic journals, with only 4% claiming never having used them. These examples are just a very small sample of the findings of the research, and readers are encouraged to seek out the article to get the fuller picture, particularly in relation to the differences found between the three disciplines studied. Interesting and informative despite the small number of respondents. – [SM]

### Legal Issues

Bowers, Stacey L. **Privacy and Library Records** [Journal of Academic Librarianship](#) 32(4)(July 2006): 377-383. – Good overview of privacy in libraries in urgent need of a short update. The author covers a lot of ground beginning with specific federal protections (there are none) to examples of state law. The author also discusses the FISA Act as well as the Patriot Act, though the information precedes the revelations of one and the revision of the other. The author concludes with the following words of advice from the 1988 New York Library Association guidelines that "the best protection comes from limiting the amount of confidential information collected and minimizing the time it is maintained in library data bases." – [[\\*LRK](#)]

Fisher, William W. , and William McGeeveran. **The Digital Learning Challenge: Obstacles to Educational Uses of Copyrighted Material in the Digital Age** [Social Science Research Network](#) (2006) ([http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract\\_id=923465](http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=923465)). – This report from the Berkman Center for Internet and Society at the Harvard Law School takes an in-depth look at the impact of copyright laws, copyright clearance procedures, DRM technologies, and overly cautious gatekeepers (e.g., universities) on digital learning. It uses four case studies as a starting point for this investigation (e.g., "The need of film studies professors to bypass encryption on DVDs—likely in violation of federal law—in order to show selected film clips to their students"). The authors provide an extensive discussion of potential reforms that may remove the many obstacles to digital learning put in place by these above factors. The authors conclude: "Without question, digital technology provides new opportunities for rich reuses of content in many educational contexts, from the traditional classroom to the cutting-edge openness of Wikipedia. That progress will continue. But significant obstacles also confront educational uses of content. The law itself is often unclear or unfavorable. Pervasive use of DRM and the permissions maze created by the present licensing regime further impede such uses. And educators and intermediaries have too often responded to these problems with inertia or fear rather than action." – [[\\*CB](#)]

## Metadata

Goldsmith, Beth, and Frances Knudson. **Repository Librarian and the Next Crusade: The Search for a Common Standard for Digital Repository Metadata** [D-Lib Magazine](#) 12(9)(September 2006)

(<http://www.dlib.org/dlib/september06/goldsmith/09goldsmith.html>). – Charged with selecting a metadata standard to use in their multi-million record digital repository, the authors studied the abilities of MARCXML, Dublin Core, PRISM, ONIX, and MODS to meet their requirements for granularity, transparency, and extensibility. This paper describes their comparison of these formats, states their selection ("Having, with something akin to disbelief, selected MARCXML..."), describes their principles of use, and evaluates their experiences over the two years the repository has been in operation. Their final observation is that "MARCXML has proven itself to be robust and capable in meeting all requirements without breaking the standard while remaining flexible and transparent to downstream use." This is an excellent paper that anyone interested in metadata issues should read. – [\*RT]

## Preservation

Sale, Arthur. **The Acquisition of Open Access Research Articles** [University of Tasmania EPrints Repository](#) (2006)

(<http://eprints.comp.utas.edu.au:81/archive/00000375/>). – In this e-print, Sale examines what happened when the Department of Electronics and Computer Science at the University of Southampton, the Queensland University of Technology, and the School of Computing at the University of Tasmania mandated the deposit of article e-prints. Based on an analysis of the deposit data at these academic units, Sale concludes: "What can be estimated is that a university-wide mandatory deposit policy takes at least three years to be (say) 80% effective, if it is the authors themselves who provide their documents. If the repository managers adopt a proactive policy of actively uploading missing documents on behalf of the authors, as at CERN <http://public.web.cern.ch/> then the apparent transition will be faster, but the rise of self-archiving might be slowed due to lack of direct author incentive and involvement. Repository managerial promotion and assistance, such as that undertaken by the Library in QUT, matters very significantly under a mandatory policy, although under voluntary policies it seems to be largely a waste of money." – [\*CB]

## Web Design

**2006 August RLG Members Forum: More, Better, Faster, Cheaper** Mountain View, CA: Research Libraries Group, August 2006.

([http://www.rlg.org/en/page.php?Page\\_ID=20968](http://www.rlg.org/en/page.php?Page_ID=20968)). – This two-day forum was organized around the focus of "How does one develop practical, effective, descriptive practices that consider audience, economy, and functionality, and strike the right balance among the three?" At this website are a mix of MP3s of the talks, PowerPoint slides, and other materials – mostly in Adobe Acrobat format. A couple of the topics covered include folksonomies and the future of MARC. Those interested in metadata issues (both MARC and beyond – way beyond) will be most delighted with this collection of presentations, but there are useful presentations on other topics as well. Highly recommended, especially since the provision of MP3s provides a richer interaction than just the slides and handouts alone. – [\*RT]

Tractinsky, Noam, Avivit Cokhavia, and Moti Kirschenbaum, et. al. **Evaluating the Consistency of Immediate Aesthetic Perceptions of Web Pages** [International Journal of Human-Computer Studies](#) 64(11)(November 2006): 1071-1083. – A thing of beauty may be a joy forever but evaluating how it might affect perception of Web pages is something like the "final frontier" of Web design. The article discusses a series of studies on people's ability to rate the aesthetic qualities of Web pages. The research finds that people are consistent in their own judgment but that this determination tends to differ from one individual to another. That said, the authors also look at "design characteristics" that might affect perception across a broad scale. This is interesting work in an area that's generally considered extremely hard to unravel. – [\*[LRK](#)]

### Wikis And Blogs

Srinagesh, Soumya. **Perspective: Teen's warning on the gospel of Wikipedia** [CNET News.com](#). (11 August 2006)([http://news.com.com/2010-1038\\_3-6104446.html?part=rss&tag=6104446&subj=news](http://news.com.com/2010-1038_3-6104446.html?part=rss&tag=6104446&subj=news)). – "As the deadline loomed, I knew there was no way I would be able to sort through thousands of Google search results or go to the library to research while simultaneously performing other vital homework completion functions like talking online, reading celebrity gossip and downloading music. So I did what any desperate, procrastinating student would do – I logged on to Wikipedia, pulled up the entries on Renaissance literature and filled in the gaps in my paper until I had a presentable product." Ladies and gentleman, welcome to what passes for college work these days. The author of this piece is obviously not dull normal; she is a CNET intern who will be entering Wellsley College in the fall. And she is acutely aware of the "pitfalls" of Wikipedia, e.g., the democratic nature of its editing process. Nevertheless, the site looms as an omnipresent temptation for the lazy/procrastinating student. "Unlike search engines, Wikipedia searches do not bombard you with thousands of sites that have little or no relation to the subject you are researching. Unlike traditional textbooks, Wikipedia articles do not require a trip to the library, but are available from the comfort of your home or dorm." And this is what we are up against, folks. – [\*[SK](#)]

### Contributors to Current Cites \*

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