

## Current Awareness

**Column editor: Gina Cybulska**

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, edited by Roy Tennant (<http://sunsite.berkeley.edu/CurrentCites>).

If you are interested in providing reviews for the column, please contact UKeiG administration for further details.

## Catalogues/cataloguing

Stvilia, Besiki, and Corinne Jorgensen. "**User-generated Collection Level Metadata in an Online Photo-sharing System**" [Library & Information Science Research](#) (13 January 2009) (<http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/journal/07408188>) – In this pre-press article, the researchers examined metadata provided by users of the photo-sharing website Flickr. Their goal was to see what they could learn about how users classify content, and if any of that knowledge could potentially be applied to our own systems. The researchers examined 3,000 photos from 879 individual users, 300 photoset (album) descriptions, and discussions from 200 group photo pools. Overall, the team found that Flickr users focused primarily on identifying people, places and activities in their photos. They also found many users who did not use tags at all on their photos, and instead relied on photoset descriptions to provide metadata. For those who did use tags, they were used both individually (to identify a particular friend) and collectively (to identify a public event or place, for example). This data was mapped against a previous photo sorting and identification study, and the authors provide a brief analysis. In addition, they also briefly compared Flickr's group categories and the guidelines for posting within those groups to a handful of current metadata frameworks. Continuation of the research should yield some interesting, more concrete, recommendations. [AC]\*

ARL Digital Repository Issues Task Force. **The Research Library's Role in Digital Repository Services: Final Report of the ARL Digital Repository Issues Task Force** Washington, DC: Association of Research Libraries, January 2009. (<http://www.arl.org/bm~doc/repository-services-report.pdf>) – In this report, the Association of Research Libraries Digital Repository Issues Task Force takes an in-depth look at institutional repositories (IRs) and the roles that research libraries should play in them. It's a big-picture analysis that focuses on major IR issues, and it includes a horizon analysis

that envisions what the IR environment will look like in 2015. It suggests a half-dozen areas of focus for research libraries' IR efforts, and concludes with a call to action that recommends five major actions for them to take regarding IRs. In conclusion, the report states: "Some may wonder if libraries can afford to develop repository services, especially in a time when research institutions face shrinking resource bases. The Task Force members believe that neither research libraries, nor the institutions they serve, can afford to do without repository services. Such services have a powerful potential to enable key work and enhance the effectiveness of a wide range of functions across research institutions. Researchers and scholars with access to a spectrum of repository services will possess a substantial advantage in conducting cutting edge research, delivering high quality teaching, and contributing valuable services to society." [CB]\*

Kennan, Mary Anne, and Danny A. Kingsley. "The State of the Nation: A Snapshot of Australian Institutional Repositories" *First Monday* 14(2)(2 February 2009)

(<http://firstmonday.org/htbin/cgiwrap/bin/ojs/index.php/fm/article/view/2282/2092>) – The development of institutional repositories in Australia has been stimulated by government policy and funding that supports open access and the dissemination of research. This paper provides a snapshot of what this policy has produced. In 2003 the Australian government provided funding for the development of research information infrastructure, which stimulated several testing and implementation projects. One of the projects investigated the feasibility of using open source software. Most of the universities surveyed for this paper have, or soon will have, institutional repositories with open access to the public. Despite this wide take-up, funding for the projects is not secure. The existence of institutional mandates (requiring researchers to deposit published works in the repository) is not widespread, but likely to grow. Libraries and library staff play a very clear role in developing and managing repositories within their institutions, with some sharing the load with information technology departments. [WC]\*

de Groat, Greta. **Future Directions in Metadata Remediation for Metadata Aggregators** Washington, DC: Digital Library Federation, February 2009.

(<http://www.diglib.org/pubs/df110.pdf>) – This is an interesting report for anyone who has labored in the orchard of metadata aggregation (as I have). de Groat reviews various aspects of the following metadata elements: topical subjects, genre, names, geographic information, dates, title information, type of resource, addressable raw object, rights, and identifiers. For each of these, she identifies one or more desired services (for example, a desired service for genre is "Ability to accurately and consistently search by genre when appropriate"). For each of those desired services she looks at metadata support, existing tools, desired tools, provides comments and occasionally a bibliography. A glossary and appendices are included. Highly recommended for any metadata wranglers. [RT]\*

## Digitisation projects/preservation

Hadro, Josh. "The LJ Academic Newswire Newsmaker Interview: Brad Wheeler on the Hathi Trust" [LJ Academic Newswire](http://www.libraryjournal.com/article/CA6626869.html) (9 January 2009) (<http://www.libraryjournal.com/article/CA6626869.html>) – One of the more important recent developments in libraries is the creation of the [Hathi Trust](#) by the University of Michigan, Indiana University, and a number of other large research institutions to hold the files digitised by the Google Books project at those various institutions. Since you're talking about millions of digitised books, with all the resulting page images and OCR'd text, the technical challenges are substantial. In this interview, Wheeler reveals some of the technology and techniques behind the Hathi Trust and how they are planning to put up a public interface to this archive. This is definitely an initiative to watch, and this piece gives a look under the hood for those of us interested in the technical infrastructure that supports it. [Full disclosure: I blog for *LJ* and work for OCLC, which is collaborating with the Hathi Trust] [\[RT\]](#)\*

Darnton, Robert. "Google and the Future of Books" [New York Review of Books](http://www.nybooks.com/articles/22281) 56(2)(12 February 2009). (<http://www.nybooks.com/articles/22281>) – This erudite essayist takes on Google's impact on books, libraries, learning, and society, especially in light of its recent agreement with publishers. "After lengthy negotiations, the plaintiffs and Google agreed on a settlement, which will have a profound effect on the way books reach readers for the foreseeable future. What will that future be?," he ponders, and then immediately answers: "No one knows, because the settlement is so complex that it is difficult to perceive the legal and economic contours in the new lay of the land." Darnton holds out much for us to ponder as well, but he is also as bereft of solutions as we are: "Whether or not I have understood the settlement correctly, its terms are locked together so tightly that they cannot be pried apart. At this point, neither Google, nor the authors, nor the publishers, nor the district court is likely to modify the settlement substantially. Yet this is also a tipping point in the development of what we call the information society. If we get the balance wrong at this moment, private interests may outweigh the public good for the foreseeable future, and the Enlightenment dream may be as elusive as ever." [\[RT\]](#)\*

## E-publishing

Nick, Nicholas, Nigel Ward, and Kerry Blinco. "A Policy Checklist for Enabling Persistence of Identifiers" [D-Lib Magazine](http://www.dlib.org/dlib/january09/nicholas/01nicholas.html) 15(1/2)(January/February 2009) (<http://www.dlib.org/dlib/january09/nicholas/01nicholas.html>) – These authors from the Australian Persistent Identifier Linking Infrastructure (PILIN) project (funded 2006-2008) report on a policy checklist that was a partial outcome of their work "to strengthen

Australia's ability to use global persistent identifier infrastructure, particularly in the repository domain." They correctly proclaim that "policy is far more important in guaranteeing persistence of identifiers than technology," an assertion also made by others in previous publications. Toward the end of establishing policies to ensure identifiers are persistent they have developed a checklist that organizations can use to work through what needs to happen. They also adhere to a point John Kunze has made in the past (as cited in the article) that organizations should declare their intentions regarding identifier persistence. Having good intentions is one thing, but a solid statement of responsibility is another. [RT]\*

## Education

Houghton, John, Bruce Rasmussen, and Peter Sheehan, et al. **Economic Implications of Alternative Scholarly Publishing Models: Exploring the Costs and Benefits**

London: JISC, 2009.

(<http://www.jisc.ac.uk/media/documents/publications/rpconomicoapublishing.pdf>) – This important report examines the costs and benefits of traditional subscription publishing, open access publishing, and self-archiving for UK higher education. It finds that: "open access publishing for journal articles [i.e., Gold OA] might bring system savings of around £215 million per annum nationally in the UK (at 2007 prices and levels of publishing activity), of which around £165 million would accrue in higher education [...] a repositories and overlay services model may well produce greater cost savings than open-access publishing--with our estimates suggesting system savings of perhaps £260 million nationally, of which around £205 might accrue in higher education." [CB]\*

King, Michael. "Open Education: A New Paradigm" *University Business* 12(1)(January 2009): 13-14. (<http://www.universitybusiness.com/viewarticle.aspx?articleid=1192>) – While news of layoffs and headcount reductions are a daily reality, between 2010 and 2025 close to 80 million "baby boomers" will retire. By 2025, "only 20% of workers will possess the skills required by the jobs created today" according to the article's author, and this will create a crisis in education. If these projections hold true, we will see several demands placed on the educational system that will stretch the limits of our current models. The strains created will include the demand for increased delivery capacity to reach people in non-traditional education settings, declining workforce populations in many developed countries which will decrease the potentially population of teachers, and dealing with the ramifications of current poor educational system performance. To address these issues, the author proposes that we have to provide more open access to education. Some of the ways that institutions can do this include providing more transparency in the data individual institutions provide, and making institutional processes more transparent to assure quality and the ability to measure outcomes effectively, Finally, institutions in the future will have to foster an open culture of collaboration that

encourages reuse and sharing of materials across institutions. The author suggests that open-source solutions and cloud computing are two of the major factors that will contribute to the fostering of a more open culture. [FC]\*

Brown, Malcolm. "The NetGens 2.0: Clouds on the Horizon" *EDUCAUSE Review* 44(1)(January/February 2009): 66-67.  
(<http://connect.educause.edu/Library/EDUCAUSE+Review/TheNetGens20CloudsontheHo/47939>) – "NetGens 1.0" to "NetGens 2.0" is how the author describes the shift in technical requirements of today's college undergrads. In the space of four years, they've gone from an environment where getting a laptop was a big deal to one where pretty much everyone is born with a laptop. Reports indicate that today's 18-29 year olds are the most connected group in history; they're also interacting online the most. The author naturally wonders how these habits will affect IT requirements in higher ed. [LRK]\*

Head, Alison J., and Michael B. Eisenberg. **Finding Context: What Today's College Students Say about Conducting Research in the Digital Age** (February 2009). ([http://www.projectinfolit.org/pdfs/PIL\\_ProgressReport\\_2\\_2009.pdf](http://www.projectinfolit.org/pdfs/PIL_ProgressReport_2_2009.pdf)) – This preliminary report from the Project Information Literacy <http://www.projectinfolit.org/> at the Information School, University of Washington, is the result of student discussion groups held on 7 U.S. campuses. The message is that research is more, not less, difficult in the digital age and that students are struggling to place their research needs within proper contexts. Plenty of implications for libraries here that deserve our careful thought. The Project Information Literacy project is continuing with a focus on "early adult" research processes and the impact of the design of online resources on them, so keep an eye on the project's website. [SG]\*

Meert, Deborah L., & Given, Lisa M. "Measuring Quality in Chat Reference Consortia: A Comparative Analysis of Responses to Users' Queries". *College & Research Libraries* Vol 70 (1) January 2009: 71-83 – This article describes a fascinating and timely research project which measures the quality of service of 24/7 online reference provided by a consortium to patrons of the University of Alberta (UofA), Alberta, Canada. This consortium consists of para-professional and professional reference staff from the UofA and reference librarians from college and university libraries across N. America, as well as staff at 24/7 Reference. The research question asked is: Do UofA and non-UofA chat reference staff answer UofA patrons' questions using processes and measures of quality similar to those set by UofA reference management for in-house reference? The answer is that 94% of the time the UofA staff meet these standards, and that the non-UofA staff (consortial partners) do so 84% of the time.

The research findings should alleviate many fears about the success of virtual reference, particularly in a consortial setting where the people providing the service may have different levels of familiarity and/or knowledge of the institution and its resources. The authors draw attention to the fact that the greatest difference in results between the UofA staff and the non-UofA staff involves knowledge of or access to information about library

procedures, policies, standards and records rather than the more complex requests for academic information or requests for instruction. As a result of this research, a web-page with information about library policies, procedures and standards has been provided which should allow answers to these enquiries to be provided with more ease.

The research is rigorous and uses a quantitative methodology with a sample of 478 transcripts from a population of 2983 transcripts. The questions are broken into four categories: library user information; request for instruction; request for academic information; miscellaneous or non-library questions. The methodology is clear, and could be used by anyone who wishes to repeat the research or who is simply intrigued as to the standards which have been set for in-house reference or the categories and questions which are coming through virtual reference. This article represents a thought-provoking and thorough piece of research. [AMHS]

## General

Clark, Larra, and Denise Davis. **The State of Funding for Library Technology in Today's Economy** Chicago, Illinois: ALA TechSource, 2008.

(<http://www.techsource.ala.org/ltr/the-state-of-library-technology-funding.html>) – This timely report – really a selection of mini-reports – provides both insight and advice at a crucial time for libraries (and everything else). The bulk of the report corroborates what those in the field are experiencing or intuit: expenditures are shifting; libraries are relying more heavily on soft money such as fees, donations, and grants; technology budgets are pinched; nobody has enough bandwidth. Then in chapter 7, "Doing More with Less," library technologist Jason Griffey offers tips for stretching those IT dollars, while in chapter 8 John Carlo Bertot taps his years of wisdom to write about increasing broadband capacity for libraries. At 44 pages this is a slim volume, but as Spencer Tracy once said about Katherine Hepburn, "what's there is 'cherce.'" Read it, share it with staff, hand it to trustees and government officials. [KGS]\*

Vaughn-Nichols, Steve. "**Hands-on Linux: New versions of Ubuntu, Fedora and openSUSE Push the Envelope**" *Computerworld* online only (December 28, 2008)

(<http://www.computerworld.com/action/article.do?command=printArticleBasic&taxonomyName=Operating+Systems&articleId=9124087&taxonomyId=89>) – Many libraries have considered using Linux on the desktop but few have been bold enough to make the move. In this article, Vaughn-Nichols updates us on the latest versions of three of the most popular distributions of Linux: Fedora, openSUSE, and Ubuntu. For anyone looking for some quick talking points on why Linux is better than either Windows or Mac OS, this article will prove valuable. In addition to the author's tips on how each of these distributions fared during a side-by-side installation comparison, he provides information on the positives and negatives of the additional components in each packaged distributions. Of particular note are the short video demonstrations of each of the distributions that are

embedded within the article, so you can see what the author is talking about rather than just reading about it. [FC]\*

## Information access

Dempsey, Lorcan. "Always On: Libraries in a World of Permanent Connectivity" *First Monday* 14(1)(January 2009) (<http://firstmonday.org/htbin/cgiwrap/bin/ojs/index.php/fm/article/view/2291/2070>) – Mobile communication has had a tremendous influence on libraries. The socialization and personalization of services has meant that "branding" the library to make it more visible and available to users is key. Rethinking how to promote collections, working collaboratively with other information organizations, and providing local expertise in computing and networks are only some of the effects that libraries are dealing with in this new environment. Dempsey provides an in-depth look at how this generational phenomenon changes the way libraries do business. When communication is always available and through multiple connection points with various levels of content presentation and thoroughness, and the library's current model of content delivery is the desktop or laptop computer, how does this have an impact on the way that we build applications? Dempsey discusses how syndication, synchronization, and feed-based integration affect libraries in five main ways: services, switching, sourcing, socializing and personalizing, and expectations. He then provides examples of how libraries are currently integrating mobile communication, focusing on themes such as space, alerting, reference/enquiry, people presence, and collections. In the end, Dempsey's article provides a concise presentation of mobile communication as it currently exists, and some directions for libraries to pursue in this new user environment. [BE]\*

## Information retrieval

McClure, Randall, and Kellian Clink . "How Do You Know That? An Investigation of Student Research Practices in the Digital Age" *Portal: Libraries in the Academy* 9(1)(January 2009): 115-132. ([http://muse.jhu.edu/login?uri=/journals/portal\\_libraries\\_and\\_the\\_academy/v009/9.1.mcclure.html](http://muse.jhu.edu/login?uri=/journals/portal_libraries_and_the_academy/v009/9.1.mcclure.html)) – Fruitful collaborative effort between a freshman composition professor and an academic librarian that looks at the online research habits of undergraduates. Criteria for assessing student work consisted of the familiar three horsemen of information literacy: timeliness, authority and bias. Not surprisingly, the authors found that students need to work more on developing skills for judging authority and bias. Particularly interesting are the comments from teachers and students on the process. This is one of several interesting articles in the January issue of Portal. The issue is worth the visit just to have a look at Project MUSE's spiffy new website. [LRK]\*

## Security

**Top Web 2.0 Security Threats** [Secure Enterprise 2.0 Forum](http://www.secure-enterprise20.org/files/Top%20Web%20%20%20Security%20Threats.pdf) (17 February 2009) (<http://www.secure-enterprise20.org/files/Top%20Web%20%20%20Security%20Threats.pdf>) – This report highlights several security vulnerabilities created by Web 2.0 applications. These include more familiar threats such as phishing, insecure authentication procedures, and insufficient measures taken to prevent automatic account creation/link spamming. Two of the more interesting flaws included were information leakage and information integrity, neither of which is a technical flaw. Instead, they are risks created by the fact that more and more of us are doing things online. "Information leakage" refers to the accidental exposure of sensitive corporate information: the number of employees over time, or turnover at the managerial level. The report notes that by simply surfing sites like LinkedIn, competitors can easily aggregate information to put together a corporate profile. "Information integrity" refers to the spread of misinformation, either intentional or accidental. Erroneous information posted to Wikipedia is perhaps the first example that comes to mind, but in the corporate world this could include bad information posted to a company intranet, or a slow growth of online misinformation that sets off rumors about a company within its industry. While the report is aimed at IT professionals exploring Web 2.0 technologies for enterprise use, the flaws and vulnerabilities pointed out do not disappear when these technologies are used in educational settings, and are worth considering – particularly for special libraries. (It should be noted that the report does not offer solutions to these flaws, but simply points them out and offers some basic information and examples.) [AC]\*

## Web/intranet design

Matthews, Brian. "Web Design Matters: Ten Essentials For Any Library Site" [Library Journal](http://www.libraryjournal.com/article/CA6634712.html) (15 February 2009) (<http://www.libraryjournal.com/article/CA6634712.html>) – As the subtitle promises, Matthews lays out ten essentials for good library website design. They are, in summary form, 1) Promotion, 2) Segmentation, 3) Visual Cues, 4) Inspiring Photos, 5) Search Boxes, 6) Mobile-Friendly Pages, 7) Feedback, 8) Redundancy, 9) Analytics, 10) An Easy Way to Ask for Help. See the article for details on what these mean, and most usefully, links to example sites that epitomize these techniques. [Disclosure: I blog for LJ] [RT]\*



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Gina