

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://lists.webjunction.org/currentcites/>)

Catalogues/Cataloguing

Russell, Jill. **EThOS: from Project to Service** *Ariadne* 59 (April 2009) <http://www.Ariadne.ac.uk/issue59/russell/> – The EThOS (Electronic Thesis Online Service) (<http://ethos.bl.uk/Home.do>) is designed to open up access to UK doctoral theses by making them available online. It is hosted by the British Library, and is currently in beta version. This article discusses the background to the project, including the main drivers, such as the demand for free, full-text access to research, and the desire to disseminate research findings as widely as possible as part of the Open Access initiative. The barriers to be overcome include issues around Intellectual Property Rights and the disclosure of content, and operational and technical issues for the submitting Higher Education Institutions and the BL. The service now provides a central point of access for existing digitised items and simultaneously a requesting faculty for these not yet digitised. Those items that are electronic are supplied immediately, but there is a backlog for those items requested but not yet digitised. Via EThOS, the BL and the HEIs feel they have improved the visibility of doctoral research and its online availability, and that the service can only improve. [DT]

Viegner, T. **Switzerland builds next-generation metacatalogue.** *Research Information* August/September 2009, 18-20 – A project to bring together the OPACS and libraries in Switzerland to enable users to access relevant information is described. The aim of the project was to develop a search platform that could cope with four languages, five metadata standards, 13 OPACS, and four federated search platforms from over 800 libraries. The issues that the project faced, as well as the solutions that have been implemented are reviewed. The first version of the platform is due for release this year. [GC]

Digitisation Projects/Preservation

Ashenfelder, Michael. "[21st Century Shipping: File Transfer at the Library of Congress](http://www.dlib.org/dlib/july09/ashenfelder/07ashenfelder.html)" *D-Lib Magazine* 15(7/8)(July/August 2009) (<http://www.dlib.org/dlib/july09/ashenfelder/07ashenfelder.html>) – "Between 2008 and 2009 the Library of Congress added approximately 100 TB of data to its digital collections," Ashenfelder states, "transferred from universities, publishers, Web archivists and other organizations." Much of this, he writes, was transferred over the Internet rather than being shipped on hard drives. This is hardly surprising, but the accompanying details in this article are interesting. Among the techniques they use are a file transfer utility that can start and manage multiple downloading threads and a simple packaging protocol called, aptly enough, "[BagIt](#)". This may all seem rather mundane stuff, but it is upon just such mundane procedures, carried out on a regular basis, that today's digital libraries rest. [RT]*

Tanner, Simon, Trevor Muñoz, and Pich Hemy Ros. "[Measuring Mass Text Digitization Quality and Usefulness: Lessons Learned from Assessing the OCR Accuracy of the British Library's 19th Century Online Newspaper Archive](http://www.dlib.org/dlib/july09/munoz/07munoz.html)" *D-Lib Magazine* 15(7/8)(July/August 2009) (<http://www.dlib.org/dlib/july09/munoz/07munoz.html>) – Given the importance of OCR in mass digitization projects, it is surprising that more attention has not been paid to it. How can we tell if the OCR used in projects is useful, or which OCR engine would work the best with a particular type of text? This article proposes a methodology for measuring OCR effectiveness on multiple levels, but with special attention paid to what would matter to users: namely, the ability of the OCR engine to transcribe accurately proper names and places. It then tests that methodology against several newspaper databases. The results are surprising and somewhat discouraging. Only 63% of proper names were correctly identified in the 19th-century newspapers; the figure drops to below 50% for 17th- and 18th-century papers. This might be acceptable in projects that make images and uncorrected OCR freely available, but seems substandard for expensive commercial projects such as the British Library's newspaper offerings. And even the users of free sites might unknowingly assume too great an accuracy in the underlying text. Let's hope that the authors receive further funding to characterize the appropriateness of different OCR engines for different projects, and commercial image databases start providing figures on the accuracy of their OCR using this methodology. [PH]*

E-Publishing

Pochoda, Phil. "[University Press 2.0](http://umichpress.typepad.com/university_of_michigan_pr/2009/05/university-press-20-by-phil-pochoda.html)" *The University of Michigan Press Blog* (27 May 2009) (http://umichpress.typepad.com/university_of_michigan_pr/2009/05/university-press-20-by-phil-pochoda.html) – University presses, for a variety of reasons, have been particularly challenged during this time of transition to digital publishing. Financially fragile even before

the larger economic downturn, many university presses are now facing serious budgets cuts that may threaten their very survival – and in turn have a large impact on publishing opportunities for many professors. (See "[Could a Press End Up on Chopping Block?](#)" published in *Inside Higher Ed* earlier this year.) At the University of Michigan, the Press was recently restructured from an independent unit to a department that reports to the dean of the University Library, with a new emphasis on the production of digital monographs rather than print. In this essay Michigan Press director Phil Pochoda discusses the transition to digital publishing and the current challenges of university presses, focusing not just on economics, but also on cultural issues, in particular the tension between traditional book-centred humanities research and emerging digital scholarly practices. Pochoda then offers some thoughts on the direction presses need to head to remain viable in the digital age while preserving the integrity of scholarship: "The hallmark of UP 2.0 will be the creation of far-flung, interactive, digital, disciplinary-based communities, mediated by the digital book." [BR]*

Baker, Nicholson. "[A New Page: Kindle vs. the Book](#)" *The New Yorker* (3 August 2009) (http://www.newyorker.com/reporting/2009/08/03/090803fa_fact_baker) – Nicholson Baker is back! (In case you don't recall the name, Baker caused quite a bit of controversy with *Double Fold: Libraries and the Assault on Paper*, when he accused libraries of neglecting cultural heritage by discarding materials, newspapers in particular, once they had been microfilmed). In this entertaining essay, Baker shares his early experiences with a Kindle. As one would expect, Baker does not find reading from a Kindle to be as good an experience as reading from a paper book. He criticizes the Kindle's "dark gray on paler greenish gray" palette and includes a litany of important literary titles that are not available in Topaz, the proprietary encoding format used by Amazon. But, interestingly, in the last few paragraphs of this essay, Baker admits to experiencing that wonderful state when we are fully immersed in a story and "Poof, the Kindle disappeared, just as Jeff Bezos had promised it would." [SG]*

Whitworth, Brian, and Rob Friedman. "[Reinventing Academic Publishing Online: Part 1: Rigor, Relevance and Practice](#)" *First Monday* 14(8) (3 August 2009) (<http://www.uic.edu/htbin/cgiwrap/bin/ojs/index.php/fm/article/view/2609/2248>) – The first part of what will be a two part examination of academic publishing. This theory-based article focuses on why the innovations of the digital age are largely absent from academic publishing. The authors portray the current knowledge exchange system as a feudal one that is "run by the few for the few." Whitworth and Friedman hypothesize that digital technology will trigger an upheaval in academic publishing that will push the knowledge exchange system into more democratic structure that will foster more cross-disciplinary research. Not an easy read, but well worth the effort. [SG]*

Education

Tapscott, Don. "[The Impending Demise of the University](http://www.edge.org/3rd_culture/tapscott09/tapscott09_index.html)" *Edge: The Third Culture* 288(4 June 2009) (http://www.edge.org/3rd_culture/tapscott09/tapscott09_index.html) – In this essay, Don Tapscott, author of *Grown Up Digital* questions how large research universities can survive in a world of digital natives. He suggests that traditional "broadcast learning" wherein the professor transmits knowledge to the student, the receiver, in a one-way, linear fashion is reaching a breaking point. The digital native students will demand a learning pedagogy that is interactive, collaborative and contextualized. "Universities should be places to learn, not to teach." We often hear the argument that universities, which dominate the list of oldest institutions, will be around long into the future. But Tapscott's essay serves to remind us all that a glorious past does not equal a glorious future. [SG]*

General

Brynko, Barbara. **A Midyear Report on the State of the Industry**, *Information Today* 26 (6) (June 2009): 1,52,54 – A summary of recent research on the information industry from the US. Key messages seem to be that advertising revenues are down quite severely but the situation for many content providers is not as bad as expected by some analysts. Anthea Stratigos from consultants, Outsell Inc., is cited several times and makes the point that information vendors needs to use good customer service as a differentiator in this tough market. Other areas of growth are information aggregators, where the vast amounts of free content available offers opportunities for companies able to aggregate it to offer value-added services to customers. [MdS]

ALA Office for Research and Statistics, . "[Public Libraries and E-Government Services](http://www.ala.org/ala/aboutala/offices/ors/plftas/IssuesBrief-Egov.pdf)" *ALA Office for Research and Statistics* (June 2009) (<http://www.ala.org/ala/aboutala/offices/ors/plftas/IssuesBrief-Egov.pdf>) – E-government has become more and more prevalent over the past few years. Many programs and services are available to citizens only after navigating an online application. This fact hit home with Missouri public libraries earlier this year: the Department of Revenue decided to save money by not sending MO tax forms to public libraries. This change in procedures led to long conversations with our customers on how they could find forms online or file electronically. As part of their Public Library Funding & Technology Access Study, the ALA Office for Research and Statistics just published an issue brief titled "Public Libraries and E-Government Services." Public libraries are hubs for Internet connectivity and computer access, which in turn makes them hubs for users of E-government services. There are challenges to be faced as public libraries move forward with assisting customers: financial constraints due to a poor economy; users who are not familiar with computers or the Internet; staff who are either overworked or don't have the skills to navigate E-government; and the inconsistency of services and Web site usability across E-Government services. Hopefully collaboration

between government agencies and public libraries will make the process more efficient for all parties involved. [KC]*

Corn, Michael A. [Strategic Outsourcing and Cloud Computing: Reality Is a Sober Adversary \(Research Bulletin, Issue 12\)](#) Boulder, CO: EDUCAUSE Center for Applied Research, 16 June 2009.

(<http://www.educause.edu/Resources/StrategicOutsourcingandCloudCo/173358>) – "Be very afraid." That's the warning of this ECAR Research Bulletin for those thinking about outsourcing IT services. Emerging cloud-based services are attractive because of their quick access and usability, but Michael Corn, Chief Privacy and Security Officer at the University of Illinois, thinks we might be embracing these services too quickly. While recognizing that higher education institutions must find ways to make use of these services for data storage and sharing, project management, and communication, Corn argues that institutions need to take a cautious and strategic approach to outsourcing, thinking about long-term effects rather than viewing outsourcing as the solution to individual services. Corn outlines several parameters that are crucial to consider, including vendor trust, governance, and agility, and provides examples of specific questions that institutions should ask (Do we have a documented strategy for outsourcing? What is the maturity of the commercial market for this service? What is the broader impact on the local IT environment?). Drawing a connection to the debate over centralized vs. decentralized IT, Corn reminds us that "effective outsourcing requires its own particular expertise; an expertise that controls for the loss of the flexibility and functional insight that in-house solutions offer." [BR]*

Sartain, Julie. "[Used IT Gear: How to Get Good Stuff Cheap and Avoid the Lemons](#)" *Computerworld* 43(22)(June 22, 2009): 28-31.

(<http://www.computerworld.com/action/article.do?command=viewArticleBasic&articleId=339633>) – As budgets in most libraries continue to shrink, being more creative in purchasing technology is becoming an imperative. Something that has not traditionally been on most purchasing radars is used computer equipment. As a general guide, this article is peppered with tips on getting the best value out of used hardware. However, similar to the cautions one must exercise when purchasing a used car, there are many factors to consider before making a used computer purchase. For example, purchasing used equipment can factor nicely into a "Green IT" plan; however, you also have to consider that older equipment is generally less energy-efficient, which may outweigh the benefits of reuse. A quick read, this article may spur some creative purchasing in your library that will actually allow you to do more by paying less. [FC]*

Alexander, Bryan. "[Apprehending the Future: Emerging Technologies, from Science Fiction to Campus Reality](#)" *EDUCAUSE Review* 44(3)(May/June 2009)

(<http://www.educause.edu/EDUCAUSE+Review/EDUCAUSEReviewMagazineVolume44/ApprehendingtheFutureEmergingT/171774>) – This survey article identifies a range of

techniques often used to try to predict the future. Included are environmental scans, the Delphi Method, prediction markets, scenarios, and crowd sourcing. But, Alexander readily admits, "Futurological methods are still, at best, partial works in progress. No method has yet succeeded in accurately predicting the future ... Perhaps the gravest challenge to any approach for apprehending the future is what Nassim Nicholas Taleb has memorably dubbed 'The Black Swan.' Taleb uses the phrase to refer to unlikely events, either unperceived in the present or determined to be statistically improbable – until they occur and have enormous effects." To counter this, Alexander cites J. Scott Armstrong, who suggested nine high-level best practices for predicting the future: "1) Match the forecasting method to the situation, 2) Use domain knowledge, 3) Structure the problem, 4) Model experts' forecasts, 5) Represent the problem realistically, 6) Use causal models when you have good information, 7) Use simple quantitative methods, 8) Be conservative when uncertain, and 9) Combine forecasts." [RT]*

Cascio, Jamais. "[Get Smarter](#)" *The Atlantic* (July/August 2009) (<http://www.theatlantic.com/doc/200907/intelligence/>) – This is a thoughtful piece on the various ways in which humans are getting smarter. Cascio touches on evolution, technological aids, and drugs as potential avenues. Lest you imagine that the author is one who believes in the "hive mind" aspect of the Internet and the eventuality of it becoming smart enough to think (Google "singularity" if you must), he specifically discounts this. "My own suspicion," he states, "is that a stand-alone artificial mind will be more a tool of narrow utility than something especially apocalyptic. I don't think the theory of an explosively self-improving AI is convincing – it's based on too many assumptions about behavior and the nature of the mind." As a futurist (he is an affiliate at the Institute of the Future and a senior fellow at the Institute for Ethics and Emerging Technologies), he is considerably less starry-eyed (or perhaps googly-eyed?) than many of that calling. And that helps to make this down-to-earth and yet up-to-date assessment of our future all that more compelling and believable. [RT]*

Dougherty, William C. "[Managing Technology During Times of Economic Downturns: Challenges and Opportunities](#)" *Journal of Academic Librarianship* 35(4)(July 2009): 373-376. (<http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.acalib.2009.04.007>) – The big story for a while now has been the economy; so it's only natural to start running into articles on how to cut costs in IT. In this article we have a number of suggestions including looking at this as an "opportunity to shake up the status quo". While that might sound off-putting at first, the author continues, "These are the times to summon the courage to suggest eliminating ineffective systems, services or processes, and making changes that may not have been considered previously. Practices that may have been sacrosanct can be reviewed and even questioned during times such as these." If there is any benefit to be derived, this in fact may be the way. [LRK]*

Capps, Robert. "[The Good Enough Revolution: When Cheap and Simple Is Just Fine](#)" *Wired* (17)(September 2009) (<http://www.wired.com/gadgets/miscellaneous/magazine/17->

[09/ff_goodenough?currentPage=all](#)) – I've long written about the concept of "good enough" and how many library users are satisfied in their information search long before librarians (see, for example, <http://www.libraryjournal.com/article/CA185367.html>). So this piece in Wired was not news to me, but I appreciated the examples provided and was surprised by how Kaiser was applying these principles to medical care. In explaining why services and products can be successful while being of lower quality than others, Capps cites the Pareto principle, "also known as the 80/20 rule. And it happens to be a recurring theme in Good Enough products. You can think of it this way: 20 percent of the effort, features, or investment often delivers 80 percent of the value to consumers. That means you can drastically simplify a product or service in order to make it more accessible and still keep 80 percent of what users want – making it Good Enough." There are lessons for all of our institutions in here, and for the services we aim to provide, but don't misunderstand. Capps is not advocating dumbing-down or reducing the quality of services necessarily. It's more nuanced than that. Kaiser is not seeking to lower the quality of medical care, it is seeking to appropriately manage care. When 80% of patient needs can be served by a doctor in an inexpensive office setting, this allows for the remaining 20% to be concentrated at a regional hospital, thereby cutting costs. Those of us in cultural heritage institutions should think carefully about how we can apply these principles to our own services. [RT]*

EDUCAUSE. "[7 Things You Should Know about Cloud Computing](#)" Boulder, CO:

EDUCAUSE, 3 August 2009.

(<http://www.educause.edu/Resources/7ThingsYouShouldKnowAboutCloud/176856>) –

"Cloud computing" is the buzzword du jour, but what is it really? This succinct overview says: "In its broadest usage, the term cloud computing refers to the delivery of scalable IT resources over the Internet, as opposed to hosting and operating those resources locally, such as on a college or university network. Those resources can include applications and services, as well as the infrastructure on which they operate. By deploying IT infrastructure and services over the network, an organization can purchase these resources on an as-needed basis and avoid the capital costs of software and hardware." This two-page overview quickly gives you the basics without requiring a Ph.D. in computer science to understand it.

[CB]*

Information Access

Harnad, Stevan. **Waking OA's "Slumbering Giant": The University's Mandate to Mandate Open Access.** *New Review of Information Networking* 14(1) (2008): 69-79 – Stevan Harnad, the open access activist, turns detective to solve 'The mystery of the Slumbering Giant' – why is open access to peer reviewed journal articles progressing so slowly? Harnad begins his investigation with a useful description of the facts of the case by outlining the principles and practice of open access. Harnad then visits the scene of the crime and finds only fraction of

peer reviewed journal articles available for open access. It's not long before he has the suspects together in the virtual drawing room where he weaves his case before the watching audience ... who dunnit? As the tension builds, most of the publishing industry is cleared and there are two suspects remaining, but surely not... [ATB]

Sykes, Jean. **Managing the UK's Research Data: Towards a UK Research Data Service.** *New Review of Information Networking* 14(1) (2008): 21-36 – A useful account of a project aimed at exploring the feasibility of implementing a UK-wide approach to the management of research data written by the chair of the project management group. The article outlines the history behind the formation of the UKRDS (UK Research Data Service) in response to recognition that the effective handling of research data is a crucial component of the UK's e-infrastructure for research and innovation. The paper details the challenges that faced the project, explains the methodology used in the initial investigation and reports on the key findings including suggestions for the optimum way forward. A comparison is drawn between the approach in the UK and several other countries such as Canada, Germany and the United States. It is reassuring to hear that although we are at present lacking the coordinated approach to research management of some other nations we do have significant infrastructure and services in place to support research that can be utilized by UKRDS as the project progresses. The project continues with a Pathfinder phase, and it would be interesting to have an update on this at some point. [NW]

[M-Libraries: Information Use on the Move](#) Cambridge, UK: Arcadia Programme, Cambridge University Library, 29 May 2009. (http://arcadiaproject.lib.cam.ac.uk/docs/M-Libraries_report.pdf) – What do students do with their cellphones and how should libraries support these devices? Those are the questions addressed in this report that surveyed cellphone use at two universities in the UK. The study found that most students use their phones for calling, texting, and taking photos, while less than a quarter use them to routinely access the Internet. Reason enough, the author concludes, to hold off on developing content such as websites and ebooks specifically for the devices. The author then goes over a number of potential services such as mobile-friendly OPACs and library alerts through SMS that she feels are more promising. While it's hard to say at what level of adoption, mobile-specific or smartphone-specific content and services should be developed, perhaps the author's best point is simply to make sure that what we already have online, is also accessible to these newer devices. [LRK]*

Bailey, Charles W., Jr. *[A Look Back at Twenty Years as an Internet Open Access Publisher](http://digital-scholarship.org/)* [http://digital-scholarship.org/](http://digital-scholarship.org/cwb/twentyyears.htm) *Digital Scholarship*, June 2009. (<http://digital-scholarship.org/cwb/twentyyears.htm>) – Charles W. Bailey, Jr. started the PACS-L discussion list for librarians back before most of us knew about discussion lists at all. It was a seminal event in bringing librarians to the Internet, and it was a defining experience for me, a new librarian eager to learn about computer networks. The list then spawned a journal, and

helped ignite Bailey's ongoing professional interest in open-access publishing. This interest was embodied in a number of well-regarded publications including the Scholarly Electronic Publishing Bibliography and the Open Access Bibliography: Liberating Scholarly Literature with E-Prints and Open Access Journals (PDF). Bailey's bibliographic reminiscence, then, is much more than explicating a personal journey — it's a record of much of the open-access scholarly publishing movement over the last couple decades. Any of us who have been involved in such activities may wish to look back with Charles, and think about how far we've come. Also, Charles has contributed regularly and well to this particular open-access publication for over eight years. [RT]

Dehmlow, Mark. "[The Ten Commandments of Interacting with Nontechnical People](#)" *Information Technology and Libraries* 28(2)(June 2009): 53-54. (<http://www.ala.org/ala/mgrps/divs/lita/ital/282009/2802jun/dehmlow.cfm>) – Like the author, I too have worked "in between" the tech and non-tech worlds – able to communicate with denizens of both but not fully of either. Perhaps that is why this short piece resonates so much with me. "Ironically," Dehmlow points out, "it turns out the most critical pieces to successfully implementing technology solutions and bridging the digital divide in libraries has been categorically nontechnical in nature; it all comes down to collegiality, clear communication, and a commitment to collaboration." Amen. He then goes on to enumerate his "ten commandments" for working with those who are not technically inclined. I suppose another reason I like this piece so much is that it reminds me very much of a recent piece I wrote, "Talking Tech: Explaining Technical Topics to a Non-Technical Audience". Knowing Mark personally, I'm flattered to think we agree so much on advice that can be so important to the success of managing technical change. [RT]*

Head, Alison, Joan Lippincott, and John Law (Moderator). "[Returning the Researcher to the Library](#)" (June 2009) (<http://www.libraryjournal.com/webcastsDetail/2140374033.html>) – A lively webcast focused on "creative thinking about academic libraries," featuring the insights and evidence from two leading researchers, Joan Lippincott Associate Executive Director of the Coalition for Networked Information, and Alison Head, who leads the cutting-edge Project Information Literacy (PIL). Listen to Lippincott discuss the known behavior of "screenagers" and other user groups while Head shares PIL's research findings that what users want for their research needs are the "3 F's" – full-text, findable, and free. Head also discusses user expectations, alluding to the gulf between what services libraries provide and what students expect, as well as user behavior, such as "presearch" in tools such as Wikipedia (not that any of us would ever do that). As for reading traditional print books and asking questions of traditional in-situ librarians – to this group, both information behaviors are so last-century. Use this webcast as a roadmap for rethinking academic services from the bottom up. Moderated by John Law of Serial Solutions (note that the webcast does begin with a three-minute "infomercial" for Summon, a product by Serial Solutions). Includes a bibliography. [KGS]*

Shieber, Stuart M. "[Equity for Open-Access Journal Publishing](#)" *PLOS Biology* 7(8)(August 2009): 1-3.

(<http://www.plosbiology.org/article/info:doi/10.1371/journal.pbio.1000165>) – A connection between the current debate about health care and scholarly publishing would not occur to most people, but Shieber, the Director of the Office for Scholarly Communication at Harvard University, argues that both of them are examples of "moral hazard." Consumers who are insulated from the true costs of a product tend to overconsume. Shieber argues that one way to improve scholarly publishing is to make authors more aware of its costs by encouraging journals to shift from a subscription model to an open-access model supported by payments from authors. In this opinion piece, Shieber proposes an open-access compact in which universities, which currently fund much of the subscription model, commit to underwriting the cost of open-access journals through the payment of publishing fees. He sketches out some of the implementation issues that would need to be addressed to make this happen. Who knows if Shieber's suggested solution will work, but his opening is an excellent brief summary of some of the current problems in scholarly communications and publishing. [PH]*

Information Management

Pool, R. **Listening to researchers is crucial to information planning.** *Research Information*, June/July 2009, 16-18 – GE Healthcare's information service is reviewed in this article. The Knowledge Centre's manager, Tracey Evans, discusses the key factors in ensuring the success of the service for its users. Marketing the Centre, seamless information delivery and meeting the expectations of the company's staff helps ensure that the Centre remains the focal point in medical research. Tracey discusses how she meets financial pressures that are currently faced by all information services. The primary reason for success is having good business skills, being able to see the bigger picture and being able to collaborate on projects. All of the success factors mentioned here are applicable to any library or information centre. [GC]

Information Retrieval

McClure, Marji. **Perfect Search makes quick impact,** *Information Today*, 26 (7) (July/August 2009): 10 – A profile of new entrant into the search market, Perfect Search. Interesting point is made that the key team comprises of search veterans with decades of experience but more detail on what differentiates the company's offering from competitors such as Autonomy and Google would have been helpful. [MdS]

Yoffe, Emily. "[Seeking: How the Brain Hard-Wires Us To love Google, Twitter, and Texting. And Why That's Dangerous](#)" *Slate* (12 August 2009)

(<http://www.slate.com/id/2224932>) – People familiar with my work (Hi Mom!) have heard my over-used saying "Only librarians like to search, everyone else prefers to *find*". Although librarians almost invariably laugh at what appears to be a wry truth, *Slate* is here to tell you that I'm wrong. We **all** prefer to search. At least, there are some research findings that seem to indicate that we are "hard-wired" to seek. "The juice that fuels the seeking system," states Yoffe, "is the neurotransmitter dopamine." That's right, the same neurotransmitter stimulated by such substances as cocaine and amphetamines. This doesn't necessarily mean that students needing to do research for a paper will perform online searches until they fall into a stupor (after all, at some point the mating instinct kicks in), but it does point out that any simplistic statement such as my favorite chestnut tends to hide the true complexity of human motivations. A good thing to keep in mind as we seek new ways to engage our users in useful (and healthy) seeking behavior. [RT]*

Knowledge Management/Social Networking

Davis Kho, Nancy. **Ten things you need to know about Twitter**, *Information Today* 26 (6) (June 2009): 1,14 – A useful primer on what Twitter is, how to use it, who uses and what they use it for. Article makes the point that although many people still use Twitter to tell people what they had for breakfast, it does also have practical uses for organisations. [MdS]

Legal Issues

Dryden, Jean. "[Copyright Issues in the Selection of Archival Material for Internet Access](#)" *Archival Science* 8(2)(June 2008): 123-147. (<http://www.springerlink.com/index/d68378548316j886.pdf>) – With Google having basically solved the problem of digitizing our print heritage, attention will soon shift to digitizing unpublished materials. Dryden's pioneering study examines how Canadian archival repositories address copyright issues in their projects. The bad news is that repositories may be more restrictive than is necessary when selecting material for digitization. The good news is that most repositories do not really understand copyright and so do things beyond what their default practices would condone. In addition, very few institutions have been challenged by copyright owners. The study suggests that digitization projects should become much more comfortable with risk assessment when planning an archival digitization project. [PH]*

Samuelson, Pamela. "[The Audacity of the Google Book Search Settlement](#)" *The Huffington Post* (10 August 2009) (http://www.huffingtonpost.com/pamela-samuelson/the-audacity-of-the-googl_b_255490.html) – As the official September 4, 2009 deadline has approached for filing an objection to the Google Book Search Copyright Class Action

Settlement, there has been a frenzy of commentary about it. Pamela Samuelson's post is a good place to start to understand the controversy and how it could affect about 22 million authors who have published books in the U.S. since 1923. Also see her follow-up post, "Why Is the Antitrust Division Investigating the Google Book Search Settlement?" [\[CB\]](#)*

Web/Intranet Design

Chudnov, Dan. "The Illusion of Stability" [Computers in Libraries](#) 29(6)(June 2009): 31-33 – This column looks at strategies for making sure your online infrastructure is solid. Chudnov covers a number of strategies, including how to test software as it is being developed by writing and using unit tests, using "continuous build" tools such as Hudson, using a version control system such as Bazaar, and monitoring your servers and processes using applications such as Nagios. He also highlights an application introduced at the 2009 Code4Lib Conference by Brown University called the library dashboard, which is designed not just to monitor systems but also usage of library services such as checkouts. Overall, an excellent column on a vital topic written in a very accessible way, even for those who do not write software. [\[RT\]](#)*

Jansen, Bernard J., Mimi Zhang, and Carsten D. Schultz. "[Brand and its Effect on User Perception of Search Engine Performance](#)" [Journal of the American Society for Information Science & Technology](#) 60(8)(August 2009): 1572-1595. (<http://www3.interscience.wiley.com/journal/122327002/abstract>) – In this study, the authors investigated whether or not the branding of a search engine has any impact on the user's perception of how the engine performs. Study participants were presented with four different results pages for four different queries (medical, entertainment, travel and housing questions). Each results page showed the same links (curated by the researchers ahead of time) in the same order and using the same formatting (the default Google format). The top and bottom of the page was replaced with branding for Google, Yahoo!, or MSN's search engine, as well as that of an in-house search engine (AI2RS), called No Name for the purposes of the study. The researchers ultimately found that searchers placed quite a lot of trust in the ranking algorithms of the search engines with which they were familiar: on those search engines, users tended to click on more search results, but overall those results were of a lower quality. On those with which users were less familiar, they appeared to become more discriminating about which links they selected, and those links were of a higher quality. The researchers noted that users also felt more confident using their preferred search engines, and were concerned with the performance of those with which they were unfamiliar. The study brings up some interesting points for instruction librarians to consider, as it seems to indicate that it may be possible to force users to be more critical of search results simply by requiring them to use an unfamiliar or unbranded search engine. [\[AC\]](#)*

Soltani, Ashkan, Shannon Canty, and Quentin Mayo, *et. al.* "[Flash Cookies and Privacy](#)" *SSRN* (10 August 2009) (<http://ssrn.com/abstract=1446862>) – Librarians have traditionally guarded the rights of users to read anonymously. But as more and more library services shift to commercial information providers, reader confidentiality may be disappearing. This pilot study looks at the use of "Flash cookies" on major websites and discovers that they are common, immune to most of the privacy protections built into browsers, and seemingly often used to track user behavior. It made me wonder if any of the resources that our library has licensed are using this persistent bit of code – and what those companies might be doing with the data. [\[PH\]](#)*

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