

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/>)

Digitisation projects/preservation

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Google having basically solved the problem of digitizing our print heritage, attention will soon shift to digitizing unpublished materials.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*

E-publishing

Herring, Mark. "[Reviews in History: E-Books Special](#)" *Reviews in History* (792-795)(September 2009) (<http://www.history.ac.uk/reviews/paper/herringm1.html>) –While ostensibly long reviews of four electronic resources, Mark Herring offers in reality an assessment of the current state and likely future of electronic monographs and sources in the humanities. His reviews of the Gutenberg-e project and ACLS's Humanities-e Books are particularly thoughtful (though the former would have been aided by reference to the Waters and Meisel report). Anyone interested in the role of electronic monographs and e-book readers in the humanities would do well to consider Herring's concerns. – PH*

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, 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*

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, which 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

Head, Alison, Joan Lippincott, and John Law (Moderator). "[Returning the Researcher to the Library](#)" *Library Journal* (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*

General

"The iSchools, Education for Librarianship, and the Voice of Doom and Gloom"

Journal of Academic Librarianship 35(5)(September 2009): 405-409.

(<http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.acalib.2009.07.001>) –Editorial on the anxiety (I think I'd call that) of library schools trading in their name of 'library' for the bright new shiny name of 'information', and in the process losing track of their original mission. The author doesn't see this anxiety as justified. He has a look at degrees that the various schools give out and enrollment figures and concludes that the majority still support a library-based curriculum. His 'bottom line'? That "library and information studies education does not appear to be broken, that opportunities to broaden and extend the field are decidedly more beneficial than harmful, and that the future appears to be quite secure". – 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 Comput-**

ing<http://lists.webjunction.org/currentcites/2009/cc09.20.8.html> 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 retrieval

Waller, Vivienne. "[The Relationship Between Public Libraries and Google: Too Much Information](#)" *First Monday* 14(9)(7 September 2009)

(<http://firstmonday.org/htbin/cgiwrap/bin/ojs/index.php/fm/article/view/2477/2279>) – Waller uses personal relationship terms to characterize the relationship between libraries and Google. She posits that this relationship began as a "romance", then "cracks appeared", "we want different things", and finally coming to the need to "negotiate" a new relationship. If you can get beyond the analogy and the fact that characterizing this as a relationship is like me saying I have a "relationship" with Rachel Maddow, there are some things to ponder here. Many will come as no surprise (Waller cites such well-known issues as sponsored search results, filtering in China, etc.), but it doesn't hurt for librarians to consider all of these as a piece, and consider our role within an information environment that is increasingly dominated by commercial companies that do not share our mission and goals – despite a mission statement by one of them that appears on the face of it to co-opt our role. – RT*

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*

Legal issues

Creative Commons. [Defining "Noncommercial"](http://lists.webjunction.org/currentcites/2009/cc09.20.9.html) <http://lists.webjunction.org/currentcites/2009/cc09.20.9.html> San Francisco, CA: Creative Commons Corporation, September 2009.

(http://wiki.creativecommons.org/Defining_Noncommercial).

Creative Commons licenses have been a godsend to creators who wish to allow some uses of their works. CC licenses can only work, however, if creators and users are in agreement as to extent of the licensing terms. This study investigates what creators and users mean by "noncommercial," a limitation that is found in two-thirds of CC licenses. The surprising results are that while there is some level of general agreement about the meaning of the term, "there is more uncertainty than clarity around whether specific uses of online content are commercial or noncommercial." While the report seems to be quite comfortable with this ambiguity, I have to wonder whether confusion over fundamental terms in licenses won't eventually hinder CC's core mission of facilitating the legal reuse of content. – PH*

Samuelson, Pamela. "[The Audacity of the Google Book Search Settlement](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/pamela-samuelson/the-audacity-of-the-googl_b_255490.html)" *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*

Security

Soltani, Ashkan, Shannon Canty, and Quentin Mayo, *et. al.* "[Flash Cookies and Privacy](http://ssrn.com/abstract=1446862)" *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*

Web/intranet design

King, David Lee. "**Building the Digital Branch: Guidelines to Transform Your Website**" [*Library Technology Reports* 46\(6\)\(August/September 2009\)](#) – As my library ponders its options for a new look and feel for our website, I was pleased to get the current copy of *Library Technology Reports* written by David Lee King. "Building the Digital Branch: Guidelines to Transform Your Website" takes us through the planning, implementation, and assessment phases of creating a new home for our libraries on the Internet. Topics include the explaining the differences between a digital branch and a website; staffing your digital branch; choosing a content management system; creating a style guide; and keeping things fresh. A must read for anyone involved in library website design, content, or maintenance. – KC*

Nichols, Jane, Alison M. Bobal, and Susan McEvoy. "[**Using a Permanent Usability Team to Advance User-Centered Design in Libraries**](#)" [*Electronic Journal of Academic and Special Librarianship* 10\(2\) \(Summer 2009\)](#) (http://southernlibrarianship.icaap.org/content/v10n02/nichols_i01.html) – Best practices for designing or redesigning a website indicate that we should always do some usability testing, and many larger libraries run a variety of tests throughout the process. But how many have considered making usability testing a regular function? Oregon State University has had a usability team since 2006, when it was formed to conduct testing on a new metasearch system. Since then, the team has tested several different interfaces (ranging from chat boxes to digital libraries) using a variety of methods. The team uses a model where every member works on every project, but levels of participation vary. The team consists of staff throughout the library. Only two members – the Web coordinator and a programmer – are considered permanent; others rotate on and off, some spending a year or two on the team, and others joining to work on a particular project. This makeup helps to ensure both continuity and consistency, but also affords a way for the group to more easily facilitate communication for any given project by pulling aboard a member of that department. OSU has found that this model has caused an awareness of usability to permeate the culture at the library, to the point where usability testing is conducted when almost any new service – "Web or otherwise" – is introduced. Overall, this appears to be a successful model, though it may not be feasible for smaller libraries to create a permanent team. – AC*

*Contributors to Current Cites:

Charles W. Bailey, Jr., Keri Cascio, Alison Cody, Susan Gibbons, Peter Hirtle, Leo Robert Klein, Karen G. Schneider, Roy Tennant

Contributors:

Andrew Brown, Gina Cybulska, Virginia Havergal, Martin de Saulles, Ann Smith, Donald Tait, Matt Treadwell, Nina Whitcombe

Call for abstracts editor

ELucidate needs a volunteer editor for this current awareness column. Starting in January 2010, the post holder will need to liaise with the editor of *ELucidate* and all of the abstractors to identify relevant abstracts and edit the content for inclusion in each edition of the magazine.

If you are interested in the role, please email me at g.cybulska@yahoo.co.uk .