

Current Awareness

Column editor: Clare Sinclair

This column contains summaries of articles (print and electronic) on current topics, including: e-publishing, information access and retrieval, electronic publishing, preservation and virtual libraries.

E-Publishing

"[Read All About It](#)" *The Economist: Technology Quarterly* (12 December 2009): 13-14. (http://www.economist.com/search/displaystory.cfm?story_id=15048695) – Between Amazon putting the holiday hard sell on their Kindle family of e-book readers, and Barnes and Noble attempting to launch their entry into this space (the "Nook"), you're probably just about as fed up with e-book reader hype as I am. But just when you thought you had had enough, here comes an article that runs through most, if not all, of the current and near-term future technologies for e-book screen displays. Most are jaw-droppingly bizarre, from tiny balls full of charged black and white particles to tiny groups of three mirrors. "One way or another," asserts *The Economist*, "inexpensive colour e-readers with video are on their way." So which of these strange technologies will power tomorrow's displays? It's anyone's guess, and those who guess right will make a bundle. – [RT](#)*

Pennerberg, Adam. "[Forget E-Books: The Future of the Book Is Far More Interesting](#)" *Fast Company* (23 December 2009) (http://www.fastcompany.com/blog/adam-pennerberg/pennerberg-post/say-so-long-book-we-know-it?partner=homepage_newsletter) –

The tag line of this piece serves as the thumbnail summary of it: "Coming soon... It's the end of the book as we know it, and you'll be just fine. But it won't be replaced by the e-book, which is, at best, a stopgap measure." In other words, the post is mostly a rehash of what has long been the visionary replacement of the book—a digital mashup of virtually any type of digital resource (e.g., video) or service (e.g., annotation)—thereby characterising today's "e-book in name but not substance" as a stopgap measure similar to the early days of film, where cameras were simply pointed at stage plays. But the author uses some useful metaphors to make his case, and the comments the post has begun to accumulate are thoughtful and worth your time. – [RT](#)*

General

Brynko, Barbara. “**Industry forecast: weathering turbulent times**”, *Information Today*, 26 (11) (December 2009): 1, 40-42, 46 – A collection of short thought-pieces on where we might be going in 2010 from some of the information industry’s big thinkers. Anthea Stratigos from the US consultancy *Outsell Inc.*, argues that it is increasingly becoming survival of the fittest for information providers, and that being a major brand in this sector is no longer a guarantee of success. John Blossom of Shore Communications sees a future for companies that can make a success of content integration and visualisation services allowing enterprise users to combine data sources to add value. – MS

Schiller, Kurt. “**Augmented reality comes to market**”, *Information Today*, 26 (11) (December 2009): 1, 45-46 – Augmented Reality (AR) is something we are going to hear a lot more about over the next few years. From being something akin to science fiction it is rapidly becoming a reality with AR functionality on many new smart phones. This article explains how different companies including information providers are using AR to enhance their services. What is AR? At a simple level, image pointing your camera phone at a building and the phone’s screen telling you what you are looking at, who the architect was and what other buildings nearby that they have built. – MS

Baumann, Michael. “**The innovators: making the Internet easy, local and efficient**”, *Information Today*, 26 (11) (December 2009): 1, 44 – A short review of three new services available to Web users. The first is Fishound, a good example of a hyper-local Web service. Hyper-local services are, along with AR (see above), going to be an area of growth for the Web over the coming years as the combination of location-aware devices and increasing demand for more relevant and useful information amongst users leads to new and innovative services. The second review is of Connotate, which offers some interesting potential for productivity savings for organisations managing large amounts of content. Finally, the article discusses Safari Books—an ebook service for IT professionals which adds collaborative features to the ebook proposition. – MS

Information Retrieval/Repositories

Jeffery, K. Asserson, A. **Institutional Repositories and Current Research Information Systems** *New Review of Information Networking* 14:2 (2008): 71-83 – An investigation of the relationship between the Open Access publication repository, the research dataset and software repository, and the Current Research Information System (CRIS). The authors outline a future scenario in which the CRIS, underpinned by the CERIF (Common-European Research Information Format) might change the whole business model and workflows of scholarly publication. – ATB

Sefton, Peter. **"Re-Discovering Repository Architecture: Adding Discovery as a Key Service"**. *New Review of Information Networking* 14(2) (2008): 84-101 – This article, based on case studies drawn from the Australian information repository (IR) experience, proposes an alternative distributed architecture for IR systems, including a 'smart' indexer component which would permit superior focus on service provision. – NW

Wolpers, M. Memmel, M. Klerkx, J. Parra, G. Vandeputte, B. Duval, E. Schirru, R. Niemann, K. **"Bridging Repositories to form the MACE Experience"**. *New Review of Information Networking* 14(2) (2008): 102-116 – The Metadata for Architectural Contents in Europe project seeks to harvest and connect data from a diverse range of architectural repositories around Europe. MACE has created interfaces and utilised conceptual tools (ontologies, glossaries and standards) to enable a spectrum of users to find, tag, acquire, use and discuss contents of many architectural repositories, some of which previously had limited accessibility. – ATB

Darby, R.M. Jones, C.M. Gilbert, L.D. Lambert, S.C. **"Increasing the productivity of interactions between subject and institutional repositories"**. *New Review of Information Networking* 14(2) (2008): 117-135 - The authors summarize the conclusions and recommendations of The Subject and Institutional Repositories Interactions Study (SIRIS) undertaken by them for JISC in 2008. Scenarios considering future requirements (drivers) for repository interaction are considered along with associated enablers. – NW

Legal Issues

Suber, Peter. **"Knowledge as a Public Good"** *SPARC Open Access Newsletter* (139)(2009)(<http://www.earlham.edu/~peters/fos/newsletter/11-02-09.htm#publicgood>) – A key argument for open access is that knowledge is a "public good." But what is a public good? Suber identifies two primary features of a public good: (1) it is "non-rivalrous," and (2) it is "non-excludable." A good is non-rivalrous when users can consume it "without depleting it or becoming 'rivals'." A good is "non-excludable" when "consumption is available to all, and attempts to prevent consumption are generally ineffective." Suber then argues that knowledge inherently has these characteristics, and that scholarly digital texts that embody knowledge could have them: "With the right equipment we can all have copies of the same digital text without having to take turns, block one another, multiply our costs, or deplete our resources ... For the first time in the history of writing, we can record our non-rivalrous knowledge without turning it into a rivalrous material object." However, copyright law and copyright-holder access restrictions limit the promise of digital texts as public goods, unless there is copyright-holder consent to make them freely available. Retention of copyright and self-archiving by scholarly authors as well as funder and institutional open- access mandates help achieve this promise.

A restructuring of scholarly publishing to a model where publishers provide open-access based remuneration that covers their costs, plus a reasonable profit margin, also helps achieve this promise: "As the PLoS [Public Library of Science] analogy of publishers as midwives always suggested, the idea is to stop the midwife from keeping the baby, not to avoid paying for services rendered." – [CB](#)*

Social Networking

Jansen, Bernard J., Mimi Zhang, and Kate Sobel, *et. al.* "[Twitter Power: Tweets as Electronic Word of Mouth](#)" *Journal of the American Society for Information Science and Technology* 60(11)(November 2009): 2169-2188.

(<http://www3.interscience.wiley.com/journal/117946195/grouphome/home.html>) – Many libraries have jumped into social networking, using a variety of platforms to reach out to their patrons with news and information. Some have already started using the micro-blogging service Twitter, while others are still contemplating its usefulness. In this article, the authors look at how corporations can use Twitter as an extension of their branding activities. The authors used a variety of methods to analyze tweets from 50 brands over a three-month period. They found that on a weekly basis, most tweets about the brands were positive (60%) and about a quarter were negative sentiments. However, looking at the data for the entire time period, the researchers found that more than 80% of tweets mentioning these brands did not contain a sentiment. They were tweets that asked for or offered information, or mentioned the brand in passing. To examine this phenomenon more closely, the authors looked specifically at Starbucks' Twitter activity, and found that there was very little conversation between the Starbucks account and those of their followers (usually fewer than four tweets). While this demonstrates that Twitter may not be a medium for close management of customer relationships, it is a way for a company (or library) to find out how patrons are feeling about the library, and to reach out to those who post questions, complaints or compliments. – [AC](#)*

Virtual Libraries

Pace, Andrew. "[21st Century Library Systems](#)" *Journal of Library Administration* 49(6)(August 2009): 641-650

(<http://www.informaworld.com/smpp/content~db=all~content=a915763651>) – If you are embarking on the search for a new library management system, electronic resource management system, federated search tool or anything else in the library technology family, be sure to wave this paper under the nose of your non-techie library manager, and/or your non-library IT manager. It will provide a good introduction to where computerised library systems have come from over the last several decades, the current state of affairs (both in libraries and the general IT world) and some thoughts about the future. Be prepared to follow

up with some other readings and information about some of the things Pace touches on, like Cloud Computing and software-as-a-service (SaaS). – [WC](#)

Wyld, David C. "[Moving to the Cloud: An Introduction to Cloud Computing in Government](http://lists.webjunction.org/currentcites/2009/cc09.20.11.html)" <http://lists.webjunction.org/currentcites/2009/cc09.20.11.html> Washington, DC: IBM Center for The Business of Government, 2009. (<http://www.businessofgovernment.org/pdfs/WyldCloudReport.pdf>) – The concept of "cloud computing" has been much in the news lately and yet it is easily misunderstood. This report, although aimed at a government audience, can serve as useful introduction to this concept. The first 15 pages or so are all that would be needed to get up to speed on what cloud computing is, and why it might be an important development for virtually any organization. Those wishing to go deeper can read about the ten "major challenges" facing government implementation of cloud computing, and the author's assessment of the future of cloud computing in government, including ten specific predictions. A tip for those printing this – unless you want to study the references, only print the first 60 and skip the final 20. – [RT](#)*

Web/Intranet Design

Griggs, Kim, Laurie M. Bridges, and Hannah Gascho Rempel. "[Library/mobile: Tips on Designing and Developing Mobile Web Sites](http://journal.code4lib.org/articles/2055)" *The Code4Lib Journal* (8)(21 September 2009) (<http://journal.code4lib.org/articles/2055>) – The opening section of this paper gives more than enough evidence as to why libraries of all types need to develop mobile phone applications and interfaces to library services. Some libraries are already taking great steps in this direction, and these initiatives are highlighted. It goes on to outline three important considerations when developing mobile applications, and makes the distinction that mobile developers need to move beyond shrinking content to fit small screens, and instead use the mobile experience as a new way to connect with patrons. The bulk of the article outlines the efforts of the Oregon State University Library to develop mobile applications. It covers some coding that helps to detect whether a person is using a mobile device to connect to an application, and if so, points their device to the appropriate mobile application. The list of ten design recommendations for designing for small screens is very useful, as is the explanation of their testing and validating processes. – [WC](#)*

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Contributors to Current Cites:

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

Other contributors:

Andrew Brown, Virginia Havergal, Martin de Saulles, Carrie Sherlock, Ann Smith, Matt Treadwell; Donald Tait; Nina Whitcombe