Current Awareness

Column editor: Clare Sinclair

Do you feel news from the world of information passes you by? That you can't keep up with the rapidly-changing e-publishing sector? Don't worry – we have solved the problem for you. This column is created by a team of information specialists based both in the US and the UK. They check a range of leading periodicals to make sure you are kept informed about the latest developments of relevance from them. Subjects covered include e-publishing, information access and retrieval, electronic publishing, preservation and virtual libraries.

Digitisation Projects/Preservation

John, Jeremy L., Ian Rowlands, and Peter Williams, et al. **Digital Lives: Personal Digital Archives for the 21st century. An inital synthesis**http://lists.webjunction.org/currentcites/2010/cc10.21.3.html London: British Library, 03 March 2010.(http://britishlibrary.typepad.co.uk/files/digital-lives-synthesis02-1.pdf). – As more and more of life becomes digital, the challenge of how to preserve our personal archives for the future becomes of greater interest. The *New York Times*, for example, recently addressed the issue in an article focusing on Emory's efforts to preserve Salman Rushdie's computer files. The Digital Lives project, coordinated by the British Library, has been exploring the technical, ethical, and cultural issues in acquiring and preserving personal digital archives. This 260-page report is a "beta" release of their findings, and will be mandatory reading for anyone interested in the subject (along with Matthew Kirschenbaum's recent report on *Approaches to Managing and Collecting Born-Digital Literary Materials for Scholarly Use*). Especially useful is the report's discussion of and support for computer forensics as an essential tool in data curation. – PH*

PARS Task Force on Audio Preservation Metadata, and MLA BCC Metadata Subcommittee. **Metadata Standards and Guidelines Relevant to Digital Audio** *Association for Library Collections and Technical Services* (Feb 2010) (http://www.ala.org/ala/mgrps/divs/alcts/resources/preserv/audio_metadata.pdf) – In keeping with their mission of applying new technologies to assure continued access to library collections, the Preservation and Reformatting Section (PARS) of the Association for Library Collections and Technical Services (ALCTS) has published a new document: "Metadata

Standards and Guidelines Relevant to Digital Audio". This easy-to-read chart provides a quick overview of metadata standards and guidelines for digital audio projects, including links to standards documentation and examples. The chart is arranged by metadata type, including descriptive, technical, and administrative metadata standards. By creating rich metadata for digitized audio files, libraries can manage and preserve their files for the future. Some of the standards in the document are applicable to other digitized files and collections. The chart was developed by the PARS Section Task Force on Audio Preservation Metadata in cooperation with the Music Library Association Bibliographic Control Committee Metadata Subcommittee. – KC*

E-Publishing/Legal Issues

Adema, Janneke. **Overview of Open Access Models for eBooks in the Humanities and Social Sciences**http://lists.webjunction.org/currentcites/2010/cc10.21.3.html Amsterdam: Open Access Publishing in European Networks, 2010.(http://www.oapen.org/images/OpenAccessModels.pdf). – With existing humanities and social sciences print book publishing efforts on the verge of collapse, there is a critical need to examine new models that will allow the continued publication of specialized, low-sales-volume books in these areas of study. This report uses case studies to examine eight emerging models for open-access publishing of e-books that show promise for the humanities and social sciences. The open-access models are: commercial publishers (e.g., Bloomsbury Academic), presses established by academies and research councils (e.g., The National Academies Press), presses established by libraries (e.g., Sydney University Press), library-press partnerships (e.g., University of Michigan Press), university presses (e.g., Rice University Press), presses established by academics (e.g., Open Humanities Press), press-commercial publisher partnerships (e.g., TU Ilmenau Press), and other publishing models and experiments (e.g., MediaCommons Press). In the conclusion, the author states: "In general, although there are many experiments going on at this time, it is still too early to say which publishing and business models will emerge in the open-access book-publishing world as the most viable. Perhaps a combination of funding and subsidies, resource sharing, efficiencies through economies of scale and collaboration, print sales and services, along with free content, will prove to be the most successful. In this respect, publishers may eventually become 'producers,' combining different sources of revenue and funding into a break-even model. But, just as monograph publishing has generally become unsustainable in a print world without some form of subsidies, it seems that open-access monographs will also require additional funding." – CB*

McSherry, Corynne, and Cindy Cohn. **Digital Books and Your Rights: A Checklist for Readers** *Electronic Frontier Foundation* (February 2010)(https://www.eff.org/files/eff-digital-books.pdf). – In a new white paper, the Electronic Frontier Foundation (EFF) encourages

readers to understand their rights when purchasing and using digital books. It gives readers questions to ask, and why these questions are important. Topics include privacy, licensing and ownership, digital rights management (DRM), censorship, and compatibility. The white paper introduces readers to the concepts of the first sale doctrine, the ways companies can track (and share) your reading habits, and the open EPUB format. A must read for libraries and readers alike. – KC*

Schiller, Kurt. **A happy medium: ebooks, licensing and DRM**, *Information Today*, 27 (2) (February 2010): 1, 42, 44 – This article discusses some of the issues facing ebook users and information professionals who provide them for customers. It gives some real examples of where licensing and copyright issues have impacted on how people can "own" ebooks and how some DRM solutions may be subverting established practice. -MDS

Information Management

Foster, Allan. **The boss just said 'do more with less!': The Business Information Survey 2010**, *Business Information Review*, 27 (1) (March 2010): 8-26 – Some very interesting results from the 20th Business Information Survey, carried out in the UK. The qualitative approach (in-depth interviews with information managers) works well, and the comments from the interviewees presents a mixed picture for both business information users and providers. Although the survey points to signs of some recovery in this marketplace, the overall conclusion seems to be that the hard times will be with us for quite a while, and cost cutting and greater accountability will permeate information services. – MDS

Information Retrieval

Jacsó, Péter. **Metadata mega mess in Google Scholar** *Online Information Review* 34(1)(2010): 175-191. (http://emeraldinsight.com/10.1108/14684521011024191). – Google Scholar has many uses but "bibliometric" searches, say, by name of author or journal is not one of them. In fact, in this strongly argued piece, authors are routinely "robbed" of credit because chapter headings, journal names and even menu settings are misidentified as content creators. The parsers doing this are "under-educated" and most problems originate from "a mix of incompetence, carelessness and reckless negligence in essential quality control tests". Reading this litany, it's hard to understand why the company that gave us Wave and Buzz can't do a better job with structured data. That said, it's also hard to see why anyone would use it for "bibliometric" searches in the first place. – LRK*

Knowledge Management/Social Networking

Grensing-Pophal, Lin. **The new social media guidelines**, *Information Today*, 27 (3) (March 2010): 1, 46-47 – Useful article for anyone who is thinking about whether their organisation needs a policy for staff use of social media. This is a fairly controversial area, with conflicting advice from social media advocates and legal advisers. The article offers suggestions for where a formal policy may be appropriate and what it might cover. – MDS

Virtual Libraries

Mitchell, Erik. **Using Cloud Services for Library IT Infrastructure** *Code4Lib Journal* (9)(22 March 2010)(http://journal.code4lib.org/articles/2510). – The hype around "cloud computing" has been off the charts lately, and yet there is a dearth of actual experience with this strategy for meeting library information technology needs. Therefore, this piece on one library's use of cloud computing platforms is well worth reading. Mitchell begins with a well-done brief overview of cloud computing strategies and some specific examples focused on the library market. He follows with a case study of his own library, and the various ways they are using cloud-based services – including Amazon's EC2 service. The bottom line? "Placing our applications on IaaS [infrastructure as a service] platforms provided us with a flexibility which we had not previously enjoyed with local servers. As a result, the library has been positioned to be more responsive to new developments in the coming years." – RT*

Web/Intranet Design

Vandenbark, R. Todd. **Tending a Wild Garden: Library Web Design for Persons with Disabilities** *Information Technology and Libraries* 29(1)(March 2010): 23-29. (http://ezp.lndlibrary.org/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=aph&AN=48049875&site=ehost-live). – This article provides an overview of guidelines for creating a website accessible to patrons with disabilities. The author breaks down the major requirements of Section 508 (added to the 1973 Rehabilitation Act in 1998), which requires local and state government agencies to provide accessible versions of all materials on their website. The guidelines include instruction on ensuring that there are alternative means of accessing all of the non-text portions of a page – descriptions of images, transcripts of videos, and the like – as well as other concerns for patrons with a variety of disabilities. After discussing these regulations, the author makes suggestions of how library webmasters can begin to implement them. These include starting out by trying to access the existing site using a variety of assistive technologies, to understand better what works and what doesn't. The author also points out the benefits of fully-accessible sites: they are easier to use for all patrons, and easier for the webmaster to maintain. The author notes it is generally easier to build an accessible website from scratch rather than retrofit an existing site. This article is a great introduction to the topic for a new library webmaster, or anyone who needs a quick refresher on the main requirements of Section 508. – AC*

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