Current Awareness

Column editor: Clare Sinclair

The current awareness column is created by a team of information specialists from the USA and the UK, who check a range of leading periodicals to make sure readers are kept informed about the latest developments relating to information management. Subjects covered include e-publishing, information access and retrieval, electronic publishing, preservation and virtual libraries.

E-Publishing

Albanese, Andrew Richard. **Betting the House on HTML5** *Publisher's Weekly* 257(29) (26 July 2010), 37-40 (http://www.publishersweekly.com/pw/by-topic/digital/content-and-ebooks/article/43942-betting-the-house-on-html5.html) – The news is full of reports that the "tipping point" for ebooks has arrived. New on the horizon is HTML5, a format that allows book pages to be formatted in a logical way for web browsers, eliminating the need for third-party plug-in applications like Flash. Apple, Google, and Microsoft are all behind the new version of HTML, and Scribd, a "social publisher" has joined the club. Scribd is described "as a place for people to share what they are reading, writing, and publishing, just as people use YouTube to share videos". PW interviewed Jared Friedman, chief technology officer of Scribd about what HTML5 means for ebook publishing. Scribd's decision to use HTML5 predated the public battle between Apple and Adobe for the non-use of Flash on Apple's mobile devices. Friedman points out the benefits of an open standard that is supported by most equipment, including mobile devices. Moving beyond PDF and Kindle, HTML5 will allow users to see books and articles the way publishers want their users to see it, including all of the content, formatting, and possibly advertising. Friedman claims that users will be more likely to purchase content in HTML5 since they can use it on multiple platforms, which may allow ebook publishers to make more money. The call out for the article includes four reasons why an open platform like HTML5 is important for electronic publishing: social engagement, mobile distribution, monetization, and multimedia. [KC]*

Anderson, Rick. **If I Were a Scholarly Publisher** *EDUCAUSE Review* 45(4)(July/August 2010), 10-11 http://www.educause.edu/library/ERM1048 – Rick Anderson describes the pressures that library collection development budgets face, and speculates as to how content

providers might respond to a shrinking market. He suggests that in order to maximize profits, publishers may shift to direct sales to faculty and students, which would further erode the position of the library within the university. Clearly scholarly publishing is in the process of systematic change. Anderson's piece encourages libraries to consider how their functions might change as publishing changes. [PH]*

Information Preservation

McDonough, Jerome P., Olendorf, Robert., Kirschenbaum*,* Matthew et al. **Preserving Virtual Worlds Final Report**http://lists.webjunction.org/currentcites/2010/cc10.21.9.html 31 August 2010 http://hdl.handle.net/2142/17097 – Video games have become an important cultural force, as witnessed by the recent release of *Halo: Reach*, which made over $200 million on its release day (compare that to *Avatar*, which made $27 million on its opening day). Preserving the virtual worlds created by video games will be one of the greatest challenges librarians and archivists face. In this incredibly rich final report of a multi-institutional research project, McDonough and his fellow researchers explain in great detail why virtual worlds need to be saved, what needs to be saved (including documentation associated with the games), and some strategies for addressing the issue. There is important discussion of the strengths and limitations of the FRBR and OAIS models when applied to video games, and thoughtful discussion of the problems that intellectual property law creates for preservation. Needless to say, the discussion of the technical problems that the group addressed is also first-rate. This is a report that may seem esoteric at first glance, but will become essential reading for anyone interested in the broadest issues of digital preservation, bibliographic description, and archival practice. [PH]*

Management

McHale, Nina. **Managing Library IT Workflow with Bugzilla** The Code4Lib Journal (11) 21 September 2010 (http://journal.code4lib.org/articles/3814) – Managing 'trouble' reports from library staff is a common issue in library systems offices. While many libraries may rely on anything from notes scribbled on random scraps of paper to fully featured (and possibly expensive) trouble ticket systems, McHale describes a system that has tweaked the Mozilla bug tracking system to handle trouble tickets instead. After using it for nearly two years, she is clearly satisfied with it and she is now sharing her solution in a way that virtually any moderately competent systems librarian could implement. Go for it. [RT]*

Ryan, Frank. **Evaluating online information services** *Business Information Review* 27 (2), 104-111 – Practical advice on some of the key questions you should ask when thinking about

taking out a new subscription. Alignment with the organisation's core business is as important as is the content of the database and technical functionality. [MDS]

Mobile Technologies

Purcell, Kristen., Entner, Roger., Henderson, Nichole. **The Rise of Apps Culture** http://lists.webjunction.org/currentcites/2010/cc10.21.9.html Washington, DC: The Pew Research Center Internet & American Life Project, 2010. (http://pewInternet.com/~/media//Files/Reports/2010/PIP_Nielsen%20Apps%20Report.pdf –

This report makes interesting reading for libraries considering app- and mobile website development. According to the report, 82% of U.S. adults are cell phone users. Forty-three percent of these cell phone users have apps on their cell phones. However, only 68% of the users with apps utilize them, meaning that only 24% of U.S. adults actually use apps. The apps users group "skews male, and is much younger, more affluent, and more educated than other adults." The report also notes that only 38% of U.S. cell phone users access the Internet using their phones. Also of interest may be the recent Mobile Strategy Report, Mobile Device User Research from the California Digital Library, which concluded: "Based on our overall findings from this inquiry, we learned that the majority of academic ownership and use has not quite reached a tipping point of mass adoption. Thus, our general strategic recommendations are preparatory in nature."[CB]*

Virtual Libraries

Nielsen, Matthew, and Sean Park. **Free as in Internet: Using Linux and Open Source Software on Public Computers** *OLA Quarterly* 16(3) (Fall 2010), 11-15 (http://data.memberclicks.com/site/ola/olaq_16no3.pdf) - This brief article lays out the experience of the Coos County Library Service District in Oregon, which has switched the operating system on most of its public workstations from Microsoft XP to Ubuntu Linux. As older hardware began to struggle to run Windows, Park began experimenting with Linux, and the increase in speed and stability was impressive enough that the system made the decision to switch. The workstations now run the Lucid Linux (10.04) distribution, and a variety of other free and open- source software applications have been installed. This includes Open Office for the productivity suite, GIMP for photo editing, and Firefox for Web browsing. The workstations have been set up so that most patrons are able to quickly and easily find the application they need. For example, Open Office Writer has been renamed "Word Processing," and Firefox "Internet". In addition, the window manager used, GNOME, looks similar to Windows XP. While the switch has been a success, the authors also talk about some of the problems they encountered, including issues with hardware compatibility, and the

need to install some proprietary software. They conclude by offering several tips for libraries interested in following in their footsteps. [AC]*

Schiller, Kurt. **5 Trends Shaking up the Internet** *Information Today* 27 (9) (October 2010): 1, 51-52 and 54 – Discussion of some high-level innovations that will shape the Internet and how we use it over the next decade including analytics, entertainment, mobile platforms such as Android, new forms of social networking and HTML5. [MDS]

Web/Intranet Development

Chudnov, Dan. **Getting Over the Hump** *Computers in Libraries* 30(7)(September 2010): 31-33 – Chudnov is a well-known library coder who has probably done more to build a library-coder community than anyone out there. So this piece on how to become a coder is written by someone who really knows what he's talking about. He admits that he is "obsessed with the idea of librarians becoming better coders", and he sets out to do so by providing good advice for librarians seeking to get into coding. Among the things he advises: "build something you need" and "don't imagine there is a perfect solution". Also, "ask for help" and "expect to make changes". Highly recommended for anyone who may be leaning toward lifting the hood and tinkering with the engines that power our services. [RT]*

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