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.

Digitisation Projects/Preservation

Anderson, David., Delve, Janet., Pinchbeck, Dan. **Toward a workable emulation-based preservation strategy: rationale and technical metadata**

New Review of Information Networking 15(2) (2010): 110-131 – An interesting, but highly technical article on digital preservation. Provides an introduction to the complex issues surrounding the preservation of digital objects. The authors walk us through the polarised debate between the emulation approach (Rothenberg) and the migration approach (Bearman). The authors are part of the European consortium project KEEP (Keeping Emulation Environments Portable) which proposed a hybrid approach by developing a virtual machine as a platform on which emulators are written – I warned you it was technical! My interest in the article increased as the authors went on to apply their ideas to the most complex of digital objects, the video game. This application helped to illustrate their valuable on the practical

issues of preserving games for the future. When it was pointed out that Quake is now fifteen years old, I wondered if perhaps someone should work on preserving me too. [ATB]

Hole, Brian et al. **The Life³ Predictive Costing Tool for Digital Collections** *New Review of Information Networking* 15(2) (2010): 81-93 – Foretelling the cost of preserving digital collections over the longer term is becoming a significant concern for individuals and institutions. This article discusses the Excel- and web-based versions of the predictive costing tool delivered by phase 3 of the LIFE (Life Cycle Information for E-Literature) project. The project was undertaken by a collaboration of University College London, The British Library and the Humanities Advanced Technology and Information Institute (HATII) at the University of Glasgow. Funding was provided by the Joint Information Systems Committee (JISC) and the Research Information Network (RIN). The LIFE tool aims to provide a simple-to-use financial model that allows individuals and institutions to fully estimate the potential costs associated with

various digitisation options. The model has been developed using extensive case study and survey data, and the Web tool specifically designed for ease of use irrespective of the background of the user. A fourth stage of the LIFE project is proposed which aims to internationalise the financial model and move the tool to a sustainable service. [NW]

Erway, Ricky. **Defining 'Born Digital'** Dublin, OH: OCLC Online Computer Library Center, Inc., November 2010. (http://www.oclc.org/research/activities/hiddencollections/borndigital.pdf) – This brief but pithy paper by my OCLC colleague does a great job of identifying the diversity of "born digital" materials, from digital photographs to harvested Web content and many other types of materials. She also identifies a starter set of additional issues that pertain to these materials, such as bit rot, obsolete media, hardware, and software, and authenticity. Questions such as whether one should attempt to recover deleted files and when something in digital form should be considered "published" are raised. This four-page PDF can serve as a useful introduction to this topic (especially in relation to the more detailed and complex "Digital Forensics" document also cited in this issue), and is even accompanied by a brief but amusing video. [RT]*

Kirschenbaum, Matthew G., Ovenden, Richard., Redwine, Gabriela. **Digital Forensics and Born-Digital Content in Cultural Heritage Collections**

Washington, DC: Council on Library and Information Resources, 2010. (http://www.clir.org/pubs/abstract/pub149abst.html) – It's unlikely that many cultural heritage special-

ists, such as archivists, are familiar with digital forensic techniques. This report suggests that, in an age where important source materials are increasingly born digital, they should be. As CLIR President Charles Henry says in the report's introduction: "when the shared interests of digital forensics and responsibilities associated with securing and maintaining our cultural legacy are identified—preservation, extraction, documentation, and interpretation, as this report details--the correspondence between these fields of study becomes logical and compelling." The report examines key issues related to legacy hardware, software and file formats, unique and irreplaceable data, data authenticity, data recovery, and forensic costs. It also discusses ethical and privacy concerns, and it provides recommendations for further progress in the use of digital forensic techniques by cultural heritage workers. Descriptions of forensic hardware and software and further resources for study complete the report. [CB]*

Information Management/Social Networking

Asunka, Stephen, Soo Chae, Hui, Natriello, Gary. **Towards an Understanding of the Use of an Institutional Repository with Integrated Social Networking Tools: A Study of PocketKnowledge** *Library & Information Science Research* (2010)(18 December 2010) (http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.lisr.2010.04.006) – Explores the use of PocketKnowledge, an institutional repository created and used by Teachers College at Columbia University. The

repository is open to students, faculty, staff and non-affiliates of Columbia, and includes social networking features, such as tagging and commenting. The authors of this study analysed transaction logs from eight semesters, exploring registrations, documents uploaded and downloaded, and use of the social networking features. The authors found that students were by far the heaviest users—they contributed almost 90% of the content uploaded to the system. They also found that whilst tags were regularly employed by registered users, commenting was hardly used at all: only nine out of over 3,000 items analysed carried comments. This seems to indicate that the repository is used as a place to store and retrieve documents, rather than a space to interact with scholars and classmates. The authors also found that registration rates declined in tandem with the decline of marketing and outreach efforts to publicise the repository, demonstrating that the library will need to continue promoting the repository in order to ensure its continued use. [AC]*

Nielsen, Jakob. **College Students on the Web** *Jakob Nielsen's Alertbox* (15 December 2010) (http://www.useit.com/alertbox/students.html) – Digital natives, online generation, technology geniuses—this is how we often think of college-age students. Jakob Nielsen conducted research with 43 students across the globe to study how they interact with websites, including university sites. They were given specific tasks to do on each site, and were also given some open-ended searching opportunities. The results busted three myths of student Internet use: (1) students are technology wizards, (2) students crave multi-media and fancy design, and (3) students are enraptured

by social networking. The students often preferred simple design, and repeated comments that have been heard again and again in website usability studies (e.g. website text should be easy to scan). Other findings included that students were skeptical of sites that lacked depth, and they often have multiple tabs open at once and switch contexts frequently. If your Web committee needs a reality check, this report from the guru of Web usability should do the trick. [KC]*

Knowledge Management

Manuel, Sue., Dearnley, James., Walton, Graham **Continuous improvement methodology applied to United Kingdom academic library websites via national survey results** *New Review of Information Networking* 15(2) (2010): 55-80 – The Continuous Improvement (CI) methodology developed by the Japanese car maker Toyota generated wider interest in organisations through the 1980s and 1990s. Also known as *kaizen*, CI looks at practices and people in an organisation and how processes and outputs can be improved for customers. Through the 1990s, and into the 2000s a number of articles looked at how the CI methodology could be applied in libraries. Here, the authors tackle the particular area of managing websites in academic libraries and draw on data from a UK survey of academic library Web practitioners. A quick tour through established methodologies and literature in the field is a useful introduction, and the principles drawn from a 2005 article by James Wiser are a good starting point for applying *kaizen* to the management of academic library Web sites. The article is weaker when

interprets data from the survey to map onto these principles. For example, the authors claim 'it is evident from the survey that senior managers do have a close involvement with the library website'. The data provided in the article doesn't seem to support this conclusion strongly, though perhaps the authors have other evidence that we don't see. On the whole though, I would recommend the article as it provides inspiration for improving our services through Continuous Improvement. [ATB]*

Virtual Libraries

Webster, Keith. **The Library Space as Learning Space** *EDUCAUSE* Review 45(6) (November/December 2010) (http://www.educause.edu/EDUCAUSE+Review/EDUCAUSEReviewMagazi-neVolume45/TheLibrarySpaceasLearningSpace/218705) – This piece is a thoughtful consideration of David Lewis' "Model for Academic Libraries 2005 to 2025". This suggests "(1) Complete the migration from print to electronic collections, (2) retire legacy print collections, (3) redevelop the library space, (4) reposition library and information tools, resources, and expertise, and (5) migrate the focus of collections from purchasing materials to curating content." Webster cites several studies, that seem to indicate that academic library users would agree with Lewis' model. "Although they make up only one component of evidence to support decision-making," Webster writes, "these

various studies do show that Lewis' vision is achievable. Of course, fundamental change will prove controversial, particularly when it involves the removal of print collections from open shelves. But we know that electronic resources are vastly preferred, and we know that we can care for print collections more thoroughly in off-site, environmentally controlled warehouses than in hot and humid libraries. We can then leverage this shift to free up space and staff to more effectively deliver the spaces and services required in our colleges and universities in the future." [RT]*

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