

# eLucidate

**Vol. 1 Issue 5, September/October 2004**

**ISSN: 1742-5921**

Statements and opinions expressed in this newsletter are those of the various authors and should not be taken as being endorsed by CILIP or UKOLUG.

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eLucidate is published by UKOLUG – The UK electronic information Group  
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UKOLUG is a Special Interest Group of CILIP: the Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals. CILIP Registered Office: 7 Ridgmount Street, London, WC1E 7AE, Registered Charity No. 313014

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## Online

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### EBSCO

EBSCO have added two new H.W Wilson Company databases - Current Biography Illustrated and Book Review Digest. Current Biography Illustrated offers the content of the printed monthly magazine, Current Biography, produced by the H.W. Wilson Company, in searchable, electronic format. This database offers up-to-date biographies written since 1940. Book Review Digest is a reference database that provides review excerpts and book summaries for current English-language fiction and non fiction books for all ages. Abstracting and indexing are included for more than 112,000 books, with more than 8,000 new records from 109 periodicals added each year.

### EDINA

EDINA has announced that for the subscription year starting 1st August 2004 it will be offering a service to the CAB Abstracts database for UK FE and HE institutions. The database CAB Abstracts is a bibliographic database compiled by CABI Publishing. It covers the significant research and development literature in the fields of agriculture, forestry, aspects of human health, human nutrition, animal health and the management and conservation of natural resources.

### Emerald

Emerald Group Publishing Limited announces the launch of Emerald Management Xtra, the largest, most comprehensive collection of peer-reviewed management journals and online support created to meet the specific needs of educators, students, researchers, librarians and deans in the higher education management field. Building on the success of its highly regarded Emerald Fulltext and Emerald Management Reviews databases, Emerald Management Xtra combines core content from over 100 Emerald selected journals with practical working tools and resources. These include Conference Central, a regularly updated Research Register, Resources for librarians, Teaching Tips, and numerous book reviews, case studies, and interviews. The renowned Emerald Literati Club has been integrated as well, offering unparalleled resources for academic publishing.

## JISC

JISC and the publisher Thomson Gale has signed an agreement, which will mean all colleges in the UK will be able to gain access to the free content of twenty-one top electronic reference titles in perpetuity. The titles include the Gale Encyclopaedia of Psychology, the Worldmark Encyclopaedia of the Nations, the six-volume Gale Encyclopaedia of Science, and many others. They have been specially chosen by representatives of the FE community for their quality and their relevance to the curriculum.

### ProQuest

ProQuest Information and Learning has released the latest version of the award-winning ProQuest® online information service. Many new features are included in the release. ProQuest Smart Search query analysis provides help on the fly for more and better results. Enhanced email capabilities allow users to track their results as well as share them with colleagues. Advanced browsing gives better access to non-periodical content.

As in previous releases of ProQuest, all of the enhancements were developed to help professional and novice researchers accomplish their research goals quickly with pinpoint accuracy. ProQuest Information and Learning and MyFamily.com are partnering to produce a new tool to support genealogy research in libraries. The Web-based database Ancestry Library Edition will replace and supersede the current library product offering, AncestryPlus, which will be phased out over the coming year. Ancestry Library Edition will be available effective August 30, 2004.

### Science Direct

Elsevier has announced the addition of twelve prestigious reference works to its premier electronic resource, ScienceDirect®. The titles span life, physical, social and health sciences and include prestigious titles such as Treatise on Geochemistry, Comprehensive, Coordination Chemistry II and Encyclopaedia of Physical Science and Technology. These additions increase total number of Elsevier Reference Works available on ScienceDirect to 27.

### SWETS

July 19, 2004 Swets Information Services announced today that it has recently succeeded in signing seven new publishers to SwetsWise Online Content. SwetsWise now carries a total of 8,325 full text e-journals from 309 publishers, with more than 90% of the top STM publishers participating. July 02, 2004 Swets Information Services, one of the world's

largest providers of subscription and information management solutions, announced today that BioMed Central's Open Access journals will be included in SwetsWise.

## **Internet News**

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### **Introduction**

I would like to introduce myself as your new internet column editor. My background, for the last twelve years, has been as a database designer of bibliographic databases, primarily in the SilverPlatter format. Following my redundancy earlier this year, I will be starting a new career in a secondary school Learning Resource Centre this September.

Peter Chapman suggested a slight change of focus for the column with the change in editor, a return to a focus on a single topic per column. Starting something new can always be a little daunting, and so I was interested in the subject of the upcoming UKOLUG one day course in November, 'An Introduction to Web Usability and Accessibility'.

Quite coincidentally, after this discussion with Peter, an article appeared in FreePint discussing usability. "Usability - ignore it at your peril!" by Sarah Agarwal covers the usability side of things so well, that I just refer you to it if you're looking for an introduction to the subject.

So, coming back to accessibility, the more I have researched this, the broader and deeper the subject becomes. So this column is by its nature a fairly high level overview of the subject area.

### **Web Accessibility**

Web Accessibility is becoming more of a hot topic currently with many countries enacting legislation to overcome disability discrimination; for instance, the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 in England, Scotland and Wales; the Employment Equality Act (1998) and the Equal Status Act (2000) in Ireland; and the Section 508 amendment to the Rehabilitation Act in 1998 in the US, which requires Federal agencies to make their electronic and information technology accessible to people with disabilities.

This quote "The power of the Web is in its universality. Access by everyone regardless of disability is an essential aspect." -- Tim Berners-Lee, W3C Director and inventor of the World Wide Web

-- captures the essence of why this is an important and essential aspect of website development and management for all of us.

In England, the RNIB is leading the way with the provision of information about how to make websites accessible. Their 'See it Right' award is made to websites which have been audited and found to be accessible. The directory of 'See it Right' accessible websites is at [http://www.rnib.org.uk/xpedio/groups/public/documents/publicwebsite/public\\_seeitrightlogo.hcsp#TopOfPage](http://www.rnib.org.uk/xpedio/groups/public/documents/publicwebsite/public_seeitrightlogo.hcsp#TopOfPage).

One website which has achieved the award is by Waitrose, and if you visit their site at <http://www.waitrose.com/> there is a footer link to accessibility, which provides a clear overview of how the site can be used. A case study explaining how this was achieved is also provided at [www.rnib.org.uk/xpedio/groups/public/documents/publicwebsite/public\\_waitrose.hcsp#TopOfPage](http://www.rnib.org.uk/xpedio/groups/public/documents/publicwebsite/public_waitrose.hcsp#TopOfPage).

By now you may reasonably be wondering how you can check how your site, professional or personal, would measure up to the various standards set by w3 or Section508. There are a dizzying number of different validators and checkers out there, some freely available and some purchased software. An extensive list of checkers and validators of various types is listed at [www.w3.org/WAI/ER/existingtools.html#General](http://www.w3.org/WAI/ER/existingtools.html#General) and also at [www.section508.gov/index.cfm?FuseAction=Content&ID=122&View=Print](http://www.section508.gov/index.cfm?FuseAction=Content&ID=122&View=Print).

As an experiment I used one web page and tested it for compliance using two different accessibility checkers. Bobby™ is a comprehensive web accessibility software tool designed to help expose and repair barriers to accessibility and encourage compliance with existing accessibility guidelines. There is a free portal service at <http://bobby.watchfire.com/bobby/html/en/index.jsp>, which enables you to test one web page at a time.

I picked a different validator, Hermish.com, from the section508 list of checkers and validators, this also works on one web page at a time. I entered <http://www.cilip.org.uk/about/about.html> into each tool and both returned a comprehensive on screen report detailing where and why the web page falls short of the Priority 1, 2 and 3 accessibility checkpoints established in W3C Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0.

In addition, the report from Hermish.com can also include the page's source code and it highlights the particular html instances of the problems it has

found. Both reports provide links to explanatory help pages detailing how to correct or modify the page to overcome the difficulties encountered.

Comparing the two reports, the Bobby™ help pages were the more detailed, and also provided links to further discussions and illustrations of the consequences of the particular problem being highlighted.

The RNIB's 'web access centre' part of their web site provides a great deal of background and detailed practical information for creating accessible websites. The list of broad topic areas leads to further levels of topic choices, each one containing much detailed and useful information and guidance. In particular, their 'Design and management resources' section links to 'checkpoints and techniques', which gives an A-Z topic list of specific topics and further links to other checklists, such as 'layout and structure', 'linearisation', 'multimedia'. The direct link is [www.rnib.org.uk/xpedio/groups/public/documents/publicwebsite/public\\_checkpointsandtechnique.hcsp#TopOfPage](http://www.rnib.org.uk/xpedio/groups/public/documents/publicwebsite/public_checkpointsandtechnique.hcsp#TopOfPage).

If you are looking for a different way of learning about web accessibility, rather than the bite size chunks approach, you may like to take a look at this online book from Mark Pilgrim, <http://diveintoaccessibility.org/>.

If you are looking for a book about designing for web accessibility, there are a handful of titles listed on Amazon, try accessible web sites in the search box. For another range of in-depth resources and links from W3C, visit their Web Accessibility Initiative web site.

## Reference Management

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### Full text availability

The unanswered question when supporting reference type software is that of "Why can I not link to the full text?" A perfectly valid question and one for which there are several possible responses...

Firstly, you can use the OpenURL links within packages such as Endnote. This provides a short cut to different resources in fulltext whether the original is from an OPAC or a database via the various resolvers available such as TOURS.

A list of possible resolvers can be found on the JISC website at [www.jisc.ac.uk](http://www.jisc.ac.uk)

These services, once configured, will provide links to full reprints or access to an electronic Inter Library Loan form. As information professionals we need to ensure that the links from these resolvers are accurate. This can be made difficult with the various bundled deals Institutions sign up to which often embargo electronic access to the latest issues. This is further compounded by the lack of back linkage in that if users find an item of interest in an OPAC there is often no option to download this data into their reference package.

To help in this, the second type of response for finding full text is to use the inbuilt connection files that allow users to connect out to a specific resource – whether database or library catalogue. The connection files are dependant on the Z39.50 protocol which needs to be configured.

Most packages come with a wide range of files but little information about what and how the resource(s) should be searched to obtain full text. You may find examples of keyword searching being interpreted as subject headings or any field being a title field search with word order searching imposed but not made clear. This may well diminish the functionality of this type of connection file. So if you are directing users to using such a service be sure you know what you are searching.

It is also worth checking whether the connection file has been configured to support additional features such as language fields (does each record have a language field completed?) or date range or phrase searching options.

Thirdly, you might try writing your own connection filter to your own full text resource such as your own OPAC or to the Cross Ref database. It would be necessary to provide an adequate, workable connection file to enhance the searching capabilities. The bath profile tried to set a standard on the implementation of Z39.50 when searching bibliographic databases so you may want to check that at [www.ukoln.ac.uk](http://www.ukoln.ac.uk)

The problems with database indexing generally and the lack of uniformity for truncation, author searching and such like is something that Chris Armstrong's company at [www.i-a-l.co.uk](http://www.i-a-l.co.uk) have been deliberating on for some time.....

If you do write connection files for databases or opacs you may wish to submit them to the adeptscience knowledge base for wider dissemination at [www.adeptscience.co.uk](http://www.adeptscience.co.uk)

Employing one or more of the methods above provides some opportunity to begin pulling together the referencing side of research and the actual research process itself.

### **Legal issues and reference software**

Linking to full text and capturing references into this sort of software needs to be done with some caution. Reference software itself is promoted as storing and maintaining bibliographic information for which there is no copyright attached. Where care needs to be taken is when additional data is added such as abstracts or full text.

So here are a few areas to give some consideration to when implementing such software:

Review what the software is to be used for based on the contract for the software licence

- Does the licence allow references to be distributed outside of the organisation to where research groups are based? Or it is for in-house use only?
- Are you using the software to provide a service, for example, such as Current Awareness? You may find you are liable for any services provided if your licence covers only personal use of the software
- Review the licences for the subscription databases by checking the terms of conditions of use. Single electronic copies of data searches can often be held in semi-permanent storage for personal use on magnetic storage medium. But be careful : some licences determine how many records you can store personally – say 5000 or can share only within one organisation. Read the small print if you are to promote this software and your database collections

Copyright is infringed by an form of copying, electronic storage, if unlicensed. So, for example, you cannot distribute electronic copies of data searches as this would infringe copyright. Abstracts, articles and chapters enjoy copyright and several copyrights may co-exist.

It is useful to be clear if users frequently search and download from the same databases time after time. So familiarise yourself with terms of use and the database licences signed. Make your users aware of the issue by promoting this side of the research coin. Use the websites to ensure users can use the software with confidence or are aware of any limitations – particularly if they wish to load this type of data on the web for purposes such as promoting their research. Please read any contract you sign carefully to ensure that you are able to use the

software you require and learn the basics of relevant copyright legislation. If in doubt, check with your legal department.

In the next issue I will consider new products on the market which are of use for managing references.

## **Public Sector News**

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### **Introductions**

This column is now brought to you by ALGIS! ALGIS represents information professionals working in local government and most of our members operate information services either in local authority departments or corporately. A few work in central government and a few in the private sector. We are affiliated to the Local Authority Research and Intelligence Association which aims to promote research within local government.

### **What is happening in the public sector?**

In local and central government at present the requirements to meet the e-governments targets of 2005 and the implementation of the Freedom of Information Act from January 1st 2005 are probably highest on the agenda.

### **E-government**

In June the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) issued a snappily titled paper on e-government: Defining e-government outcomes for 2005 to support the delivery of priority services and national strategy transformation agenda for local authorities in England. It can be found at [www.localgov.gov.uk/page.cfm?pageID=186&Language=eng](http://www.localgov.gov.uk/page.cfm?pageID=186&Language=eng) . This document sets out the priorities for delivering e-government in local authorities and identifies 'required', 'good' and 'excellent' outcomes. 'Required' outcomes must be in place by the end of 2005, 'good' by 1 April 2006 and 'excellent' outcomes will be agreed between the authority and ODPM around 'promoting awareness and take-up of e services.'

The head of the new e-Government Unit, which has replaced the Office of the e-Envoy, begins his new job in September. Ian Whatmore is at present UK managing director of Accenture and will report to

Douglas Alexander in the Cabinet Office. The emphasis of the new unit has shifted from putting services online to 'transforming delivery and improving operational efficiency.' The unit will work with the Office of Government Commerce to monitor the finance of IT projects and will lead on IT strategy across government. It is also responsible for DirectGov which replaced UKOnline earlier this year.

Plans have been announced to merge the Government Category List (GCL) with the Local Government Category List (LGCL) and the seamlessUK thesaurus developed as part of the Essex County Council community information project. These three have been developed to try to categorise government and local government information. A project funded by the new Local e-Government Standards Body will attempt to bring the three together and the work will be carried out by independent taxonomy expert Stella Dextre Clarke. A consultation exercise is expected to be announced. For more information on these and other standards visit [www.govtalk.gov.uk](http://www.govtalk.gov.uk)

### Freedom of Information

The Freedom of Information Act 2000 (Fol) will be fully implemented on 1st January 2005. (Go to [www.legislation.hmso.gov.uk/acts/acts2000/20000036.htm](http://www.legislation.hmso.gov.uk/acts/acts2000/20000036.htm) for a copy of the Act.) From that date anyone can ask one of over 100,000 public bodies for information they hold. The Act identifies a number of exemptions but as a general rule information is presumed to be available unless an exemption applies. The really scary bit is that we will have just 20 working days to confirm whether or not we hold the information and to provide it. Clarifying the request and awaiting payment if a charge is made will stop or rather the pause the clock. On the subject of fees for supplying information, these may be charged but as yet the scales have not been agreed. The Information Commissioner's web site at the time of writing predicts that they will be agreed during the summer.

What makes preparation difficult is not knowing what the scale of the demand will be. Horror stories from other countries who already have freedom of information legislation abound but the UK Act does make provision for dealing with vexatious and repetitive requests so this should limit abuse of the legislation. In preparation for the act all public bodies were required to develop a Publication Scheme which identified classes of information which the organisation was committed to 'publishing'. If an enquirer asks for information which is already made available through a publication scheme then the responsibility under the Fol Act is fulfilled by simply directing them to the scheme. These schemes were submitted to the Information Commissioner for

approval and must be made available on the organisation's web site. The scheme for Warwickshire County Council, for instance, is a link on our home page at [www.warwickshire.gov.uk](http://www.warwickshire.gov.uk).

The implications for government and local government records management and information management could be huge especially as the legislation is wholly retrospective. Many of us, if my own authority is anything to go by, are racing to get our house in order. Another aspect that will be a challenge to many organisations is that we must respond on behalf of the whole authority and not just one division or department. In preparation for this organisations are developing information asset registers to identify what information resources they hold. If nothing else the legislation should promote the use of good information management procedures. There is lots of training on offer but ALGIS will be running a very practical seminar on Freedom of Information on 14th October 2004 at The Adlephi, the offices of the Department of Work and Pensions in John Adam Street. More information on our web site. [www.algis.org.uk](http://www.algis.org.uk)

### People's Network

A report from the MLA (Museums and Libraries Archives) shows some encouraging results from the introduction of the People's Network in public libraries, especially in the way it is tackling social exclusion issues. The People's Network: moving forward Peter Brophy MLA April 2004.

### Official Publishing

The published output of government is huge and the debate around web only publishing raises temperatures at times. Should information only be made available on the web? Is it being archived? Can it be found and accessed in 10 years time? SCOOP is the Standing Committee on Official Publishing and is part of the Information Services Group of CILIP.

Its aims are described as: 'to improve the access to, and availability of, UK official publications; to identify problems in the provision of access to UK official publications, in particular their bibliographic control and distribution; to make proposals for possible solutions to problems in the provision of access to UK official publications; to provide a mechanism for the exchange of views on matters of common interest to the library and information community concerning UK official publications; to provide a forum with The Stationery Office (TSO) for the constructive discussion of services provided by TSO for the library and information community; to take the necessary steps to keep the library and information profession informed of their deliberations.'

**eLucidate Vol. 1 Issue 5, September/October 2004**  
**ISSN: 1742-5921**

Any concerns you have about the electronic delivery of official publishing can be discussed at this group. It provides a valuable forum for debating these issues and staff from The Stationery Office, HMSO, The House of Commons Library, government libraries and the British Library attend. I represent ALGIS there and am happy to take any comments or concerns you may have on official publishing to the group. The next meeting is on the 8th September 2004 so just e mail before then.



## Feature Article

### “Radio for the Deaf” – the role of the Web in widening access

As part of her undergraduate studies at Fachhochschule Ulm, Germany, Heidi Brandner elected to spend her final year in the School of Computing at Napier University, Edinburgh. There she was required to complete the equivalent of an Honours dissertation. Under the local supervision of Dr Hazel Hall, and with support of her remote tutor Professor Reinhold von Schwerin, she investigated how the Web might be used to mediate radio broadcasts for deaf and hard-of-hearing people. This article presents the main findings of the full study, as summarised by Heidi Brandner and Reinhold von Schwerin. The authors would like to acknowledge and thank Hazel Hall for her input to the work.

#### Introduction

This paper presents a new area of study which was investigated for the degree of Bachelor of Science with Honours in Computing. After the investigation of disabled people within broadcast media, the exclusion of deaf and hard-of-hearing people from radio broadcasts soon became obvious.

Radio stations and hearing impaired participants were posed questions about this topic. Of specific interest were attempts to engage deaf users in broadcast media: web pages for radio programmes offer the potential for deaf users to “listen” to the radio and for radio stations to enlarge their audience through text based information.

The study investigates how the Web could make it possible for hearing impaired people to participate in radio broadcasts and how to improve opportunities for social inclusion of deaf and hard-of-hearing people through the use of the Web. It examines initiatives that broadcasters have taken to provide social inclusion through web technologies.

The results showed that there is a demand on transcripts of radio broadcasts among hearing impaired people. Radio stations are not aware of these requests and offer therefore only a few summaries or transcripts of their broadcasts on the Web. They rarely use standards and guidelines to provide disabled people easy access to their web sites.

Speech recognition software was examined as a solution for social inclusion of deaf and hard-of-hearing people into radio broadcasts through the use of the Web.

The scope of this research was limited due to the restrictions of time and resources of the area under investigation. Due to the lack of previous work in this area, the research results have an important influence on a whole new audience – deaf and hard-of-hearing people.

#### Characteristics of the samples

The data were gathered from three different radio stations within the UK. These were the state sponsored service provider the BBC (London) and the commercial radio stations Real Radio (Glasgow) and Radio Forth (Edinburgh). Deaf and hard-of-hearing people were posed questions via online questionnaire. 35 hearing impaired participants took place. 6 of them were deaf and 29 were hard-of-hearing.

#### Results

##### The WWW

The investigation with the deaf and hard-of-hearing people revealed that all hearing impaired people who filled in the questionnaire used the Internet. All of them had online access from their homes. This result is not surprising. All participants had filled in a questionnaire which was online: everybody had to have access to complete the survey. Otherwise they could not have taken part. Fourteen participants had access at work, three used public libraries and educational establishments and one used Internet cafés to be online. People with a hearing loss very often spent time online on working days (80%) and at the weekend (71.4%). The rest of the respondents said that they used the Internet occasionally: 20% on working days and 28.6% at the

weekends.

The analysis of how deaf and hard-of-hearing people use the Internet shows that the Internet is a part of the daily lives of the hearing impaired. They have access from their homes despite the fact that 42.9% are unemployed. The Web gives them the feeling of being socially included in society (80%). Advantages of the Internet for deaf and hard-of-hearing people were mentioned as follows:

- The Internet is not based on hearing and speaking. So, being deaf does not matter when accessing web sites. The news and information is available on a text basis that the hearing impaired would miss otherwise. Nobody has to "listen" to it.
- Hearing impaired people can communicate with hearing people on an equal and easy level. Nobody knows that they have a hearing disability.
- The Internet is a silent world for everyone, except the occasionally animated greeting cards where a deaf person can only imagine what it says.
- It has advantages over phone calls in which hearing impaired people are constantly asking someone to repeat themselves.
- People are not alone with their disability. Internet users can exchange their problems with people all over the world.

The majority of the deaf and hard-of-hearing participants felt that they have easy access to the Web. This could be because hearing impaired people are able to access web based information as long as they can read the output. However, they wish to have more web sites for deaf and hard-of-hearing people and web sites which have alternatives to animation to absorb audio output.

A response to this lack of subtitled features could be achieved by more text based information. The radio stations must pay attention to the Web Accessibility Initiative (WAI) guidelines and standards of the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C), which could have improved the access of their web pages for disabled people. There is a lack of radio stations which provide social inclusion of disabled people through web technologies. Radio stations should always give alternatives to audio output on their web pages to guarantee access of deaf and hard-of-hearing people to radio web sites.

### **Copyright**

All three radio representatives explained that radio stations own copyright of their web pages and broadcasts, such as radio plays. They have to pay, for example, for copyright that belongs to artists and the music industry. Everything that radio stations transmit is owned by the radio station. So nobody else can rebroadcast anything that they have broadcast. From the data collected for this study it was found that copyright can be a big problem when people ask for transcripts and summaries of radio broadcasts. This will be discussed within the next sections.

### **Social inclusion in radio broadcasts**

The investigation showed that most of the deaf and hard-of-hearing people (60%) within this research thought that they are socially excluded from radio broadcasts. This could be because they cannot absorb the same information as hearing persons when they listen to radio broadcasts.

### **Radio programmes and web sites**

Cost is the main reason for the low number of transcripts or summaries of radio programmes which are made available on radio web sites. These costs arise due to copyright. Copyright restricts the degree to which summaries and transcripts are offered online. The commercial radio stations are owned centrally and therefore they have to obtain permission from their executives to provide their broadcasts on the Web in more detail. In general the BBC does not summarize broadcasts on the Web. However, it does provide some summaries of radio programmes after broadcasting. Such programmes are, for example, the news, "In Touch" (radio programme which is specifically for people who are blind or partially-sighted), "You and Yours" (a programme which covers news, views and information of interest to disabled people), and "The Archers" (a radio soap opera).

Transcripts or summaries would only be profitable for the radio stations if people wanted them. The findings showed that there is a demand for transcripts of radio broadcasts by hearing impaired people. However, the interviewed radio station representatives were not aware of any requests from deaf or hard-of-hearing people

for transcripts of radio programmes. It is recommended that radio stations find out whether people are interested in transcripts or summaries and, if this is required, they could invest in more detailed summaries. This could include more hearing impaired people into radio broadcasts.

A minority of hearing impaired people within this study had visited web sites of radio stations to “listen” to music or plays. However, there are also persons who do not know of radio programmes on the Web. This could be significant for radio stations, because if radio stations could make hearing impaired people aware of radio on the Web, then they could have more potential users on their web sites. If there was radio on the Web which could give deaf and hard-of-hearing people details about what is broadcast, then more hearing impaired people would perhaps use these web pages to interact with radio stations. This could also change the lack of awareness of deaf and hard-of-hearing people and whether radio stations consider hearing impaired people when designing radio web sites. Deaf and hard-of-hearing people within this study would expect some features from radio web sites:

- Simultaneous transcripts of radio broadcasts
- Transcribed music titles
- Emergency radio warnings
- Summarised radio programmes after the broadcast
- Opportunities for deaf people to win money on the radio like hearing people can do
- Live subtitles

If the radio stations fulfilled these demands this could make hearing impaired people participate in radio stations more often.

#### Participation of hearing impaired people

There are two ways in which people interact with radio. The participant can either be the person who is interviewed, or they can participate as listeners. Some radio stations have had deaf people as interviewees. They provided sign language interpreters or powerful headphones which enabled the hearing impaired people to get a sense of the speech. However, most of the hearing impaired interviewees could read lips as well, so that the radio stations had to ensure that they could see the radio presenter. On the other hand they can take part on live broadcasts by some means of communication, for example, E-Mail, live chat rooms, text telephones, messageboards, fax, post, mobile phone text messages.

Most of the deaf and hard-of-hearing participants (86%) did not know about interviews with deaf or hard-of-hearing people. This shows that they do not pay close attention to radio broadcasts, or that radio stations do not enough for the social inclusion of hearing impaired people. Radio stations should give them the opportunity to receive information about programmes which are broadcast especially for them. This could happen, for example, through newspapers, TV and web sites which are accessible for those persons.

#### Deaf listenership and their opinion of radio

The response indicates there is an interest in radio among deaf and hard-of-hearing people. Most of these people who participated in this research listen to the radio even if they cannot understand anything. Deaf participants do not listen to the radio, but listened before they had lost their hearing. It can be assumed that people who lost their hearing later, would still be interested in radio broadcasts if they would absorb this information. Hearing impaired persons who have never had the opportunity to listen to the radio may not be interested in it because they do not know what they are missing. The results demonstrated that radio is useful and relevant for some of them. Therefore radio stations should give hearing impaired people the chance to interact with radio through the use of the Web. Providing them with text based i.e. web accessible radio programmes could be a possible replacement for listening to the radio.

#### Deaf and hard-of-hearing people and technology

Technology is rarely used by the hearing impaired participants. The Internet is one of the most important means of communication or provider of information. TV is less important than the Internet, but still very popular among hearing impaired people. Radio achieved more importance than text telephones but not as much as TV and the Internet. The majority of the hearing impaired participants did not use any of the assistive technologies such as text telephones through the telephone network, text telephones through the use of the modem connection, light signaller alert devices and speech recognition software.

The investigation showed that speech recognition software is not perfect. However, this technology could be a possible solution for social inclusion of deaf and hard-of-hearing people in interacting online with radio stations.

The idea would be that radio stations install this software and train all radio broadcasters to use it. The radio station would have to create a speech recognition file for each person. The software would be connected to the Web, so that deaf and hard-of-hearing people could read the live radio broadcasts.

So if one broadcaster was on air for three hours the voice recognition file would not need to be changed. However, this software is not able to recognise all spoken words and makes spelling and grammar mistakes. To improve the whole situation, further research on voice recognition software should be fostered and perfected so that it can be used for social inclusion of deaf and hard-of-hearing people in radio broadcasts in the future. As long as it is not perfected, radio stations should offer more transcripts and summaries on their web pages, so that people with hearing impairments can participate in their programmes anyway.

### **Conclusion**

The aim of this research was not to produce findings that could be generalised, but it is hoped that this research will be useful for further research in this new area. Hearing impaired people like using the Web and do not need a lot of assistive technologies in order to interact online. Radio web sites do not offer enough for deaf and hard-of-hearing people because of copyright. Copyright works against sharing of good practice with regard to transcripts of radio broadcasts. Radio stations consider costs and how many people actually listen to the radio.

Hearing impaired people are interested in radio and transcripts of broadcasts. This should motivate radio stations to offer more text based information for the hearing impaired population. The future will show if radio stations will take the opportunity to enlarge their listenership by a whole new audience – deaf and hard-of-hearing people.

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## **Current Awareness**

**Column editor: Jane Grogan**  
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This column contains summaries of articles (print and electronic) about online services, CD-ROMs, networked information, electronic publishing, multimedia etc. including, with permission, abstracts identified with an \* next to the author initials, drawn from Current Cites, the monthly publication distributed electronically by the Library, University of California at Berkeley: <http://sunsite.Berkeley.edu/CurrentCites/> .

The Current Cites database of citations now numbers over 1,000 and is searchable at <http://sunsite.berkeley.edu/CurrentCites/bibondemand.cgi> . This service is called "Bibliography on Demand" because it can be easily used to create printable or linkable bibliographies on information technology topics. Another service offered is full-text searching of all cited articles that are freely available in full-text. You can try it out at <http://sunsite.berkeley.edu/CurrentCites/articlesearch.html> .

### **ELECTRONIC PUBLISHING**

Alves, Rosental Calmon. "**Many Newspaper Sites Still Cling to Once-a-Day Publish Cycle**" Online Journalism Review (21 July 2004) (<http://ojr.org/ojr/workplace/1090395903.php> )

This article reports on research from the University of Texas at Austin which found that out of 30 news websites being monitored, "only 12 updated their home pages frequently, and the rest made few or no changes during the day." This, says the writer, demonstrates "the difficulty in breaking out of the print paradigm." No consensus exists in the news industry as to how often websites should be updated. The study also found that smaller papers were less likely to update their sites during the day than larger papers, and that

national news was the element most likely to be changed, followed by local/regional news. Few papers updated existing stories on their websites. – [\*SK]

Schonfeld, Roger C., Donald W. King, and Ann Okerson, et. al. **"The Nonsubscription Side of Periodicals: Changes in Library Operations and Costs between Print and Electronic Formats"** Council on Library and Information Resources (June 2004) (<http://www.clir.org/pubs/reports/pub127/pub127.pdf>).

Academic/research libraries have been confronting a major transition in the format of major parts of their collections, from print to electronic. This report, which analyzes data gathered from 11 U.S. academic libraries, examines the effects of this shift to electronic resources on library operations and costs. "The study is useful not only for its findings but also for the significant questions it raises about the cost shifts now under way between libraries, publishers, academic administrations, and third-party service providers. These shifts point to the need for staff with new skills, a new array of reader services geared to digital delivery, and a willingness to negotiate new relationships with other units on campus, from academic computing to facilities management." – [\*SK]

**"Top 10 eBooks Library Patrons Are Reading"** OverDrive.com (23 June 2004) (<http://www.overdrive.com/news/pr/06232004.asp>).

At the top of the list of ebooks borrowed from public libraries during the first half of 2004? Michael Moore's *Dude, Where's My Country*. Suspense author James Patterson has two titles in the top ten; among the how-to books which made the list are a low-carb cookbook and a guide to tech resumes. According to OverDrive.com -- which is involved in "digital publishing and eBook technologies, and Internet solutions for digital asset management and eCommerce" -- library patrons and students tend to prefer ebooks in PDF format. – [\*SK]

## GENERAL

**Council on Library and Information Resources. Access in the Future Tense** Washington, DC: Council on Library and Information Resources, April 2004. (<http://www.clir.org/pubs/abstract/pub126abst.html>).

The Council on Library and Information Resources (CLIR) hosted a conference in May 2003 to "examine key factors shaping the information environment in which libraries operate and how these factors will affect stewardship of the cultural and intellectual resources vital to education and research." This volume consists of papers commissioned from four experts to address key features of the changing landscape, along with a brief overview at the beginning and a concluding essay. Contributors include Abby Smith, Daniel Greenstein, Anne R. Kenney, Bill Ivey, and Brian Lavoie. – [\*RT]

Huffaker, David. **"The Educated Blogger: Using Weblogs to Promote Literacy in the Classroom"** *First Monday* 9(6) (7 June 2004) ([http://www.firstmonday.org/issues/issue9\\_6/huffaker/index.html](http://www.firstmonday.org/issues/issue9_6/huffaker/index.html)).

Huffaker explores the emerging potential of Weblogs as teaching tools for youth. Over 50 percent of all Bloggers are teens, yet Blogs as hands-on classroom teaching tools are still in the theoretical stage. He identifies several key value points of Blogging for classroom instruction, including instant publishing, journal (or diary) keeping, and two way communication -- all by means of a very simple interface. In some ways, Huffaker's analysis of Blogs casts them as a simpler version of 'ePortfolios' -- persistent, Web-based domains at colleges and universities that follow students through their entire academic career. His principal argument is based on the long-accepted fact that young students respond favorably to learning environments that emphasize storytelling, collaborative learning, and personal expression. He concludes by suggesting that more research into this area is needed, particularly in exploring how students develop language and vocabulary skills within the domain of the Blogosphere. – [\*TH]

McCarthy K. **Sharing lightens the download.** *New Scientist* 182, 2453, 26-29 (26 June 2004)

The article discusses P2P technology, highlighting the BBC's new Interactive Media Player (iMP) software which allows downloading of TV programmes. The downloading is distributed using a technique known as swarming. - [DJH]

McHugo, Ann, and Carol Magenau. **"Reinventing Acquisitions with a 'Forget-to-Do' List"** *Serials Librarian* 46(3/4) (2004): 269-273

Not your mother or father's Acquisitions. That's what I thought when I went over this presentation originally given at last year's North American Serials Interest Group Conference in Portland. The first job I ever had in a library was in Serials -- Check-in, thank you -- so it was particularly interesting to see how the Acquisitions Department at Dartmouth was meeting the challenge of managing new digital services and formats while

maintaining a tight lid on budgets and staff. Their solution was to drop (or otherwise modify) many procedures and processes long familiar to the acquisition function. This included such hallowed things as serials claims and TOC current awareness services. The Q&A section at the end of the report is also helpful in understanding how these changes were made. – [\*LRK]

McLean, Neal, and Clifford Lynch. **Interoperability between Library Information Services and Learning Environments -- Bridging the Gaps** Burlington, MA: IMS Global Learning Consortium and the Coalition for Networked Information, 10 May 2004. ([http://www.imsglobal.org/digitalrepositories/CNlandIMS\\_2004.pdf](http://www.imsglobal.org/digitalrepositories/CNlandIMS_2004.pdf) ). The introduction to this paper states its primary purpose "is to explore potential interactions between information environments and learning environments, with emphasis on work that needs to be done involving standards, architectural modelling or interfaces (as opposed to cultural, organizational or practice questions) in order to permit these two worlds to co-exist and co-evolve more productively." This is biting off the easier portion to chew, as the report itself acknowledges, since the toughest problems typically are the social/political ones, not the technical. So although this paper is an excellent start, we also need a strong and sustained effort to work together collaboratively to overcome the very real organizational and political obstacles that may prevent the technical solution from ever being implemented. Also, although this fifteen-page paper is an excellent overview of the issues, don't look to it for technical details. – [\*RT]

Nicole, Lindsay **Patients is a virtue**. Information World Review, Issue 204, July/August 2004. Pages 12-13 Report on the University Hospitals of Leicester NHS Trust (UHL) which is transforming its information services for staff and patients. Following the amalgamation of 3 hospitals, there is a 9 year project to dispense with the duplication of everything UHL has inherited and establish a singularity of information management and technology operations, systems, technologies and medical records. The article discusses progress so far, which has reached the second phase of the strategy. – [LR]

Weber, Steven. **The Success of Open Source** Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2004. The Success of Open Source is a clearly-written scholarly book about a subject relevant to anyone who uses a computer. While the history and development of the open source movement is given here, the value of the book lies in this political scientist's exploration of the larger issues arising from the phenomenon of self-governing groups which evolve very complex software programs outside of the commercial proprietary realm. From the preface: "By experimenting with fundamental notions of what constitutes property, this community has reframed and recast some of the most basic problems of governance. At the same time, it is remaking the politics and economics of the software world." After describing in detail the people and processes behind projects such as Linux, Weber seems to account for every ripple in the large ripple effect which they create. Among the many examples he gives to illustrate open source's impact, a representative one is his point that Apache, the popular open source Web server software, performs the unintended purpose of keeping the server side from being hijacked to favour a particular dominant proprietary Web browser. Even people who've never given a moment's thought to where software comes from are, as end-users, affected by technology-enhanced openness efforts such as open access scholarly publishing, and Weber's analysis informs those developments too. – [\*JR]

## INFORMATION ACCESS/RETRIEVAL

Alimohammadi, Dariush. **Are webliographies still in use?** Electronic Library 22(2) 2004 154-157 The author aimed to establish whether webliographies – browsable specialist directories of hyperlinks focusing on a specific topic, produced by subject experts or information professionals – are still in extensive use, hence meriting study as an object of information science research. Several hundred webliographies were retrieved via Google, and their level of use estimated from the date of last updating of content. The date spread among the retrieved webliographies carrying a last date of updating (85% after August 1999) was taken to indicate a high level of usage. One may question whether the most appropriate retrieval strategy was used here (why not include 'links' or 'resources' or (in an U.S. context) 'pathfinder'?) and whether the criterion for current use/usability was anything like rigorous enough. In the reviewer's experience, lists of web resources need to be updated several times a year if currency is to be maintained and 'link rot' avoided. – [CE]

Betts, Aled. **The gateway to Wales on the Web**. The New Review of Information Networking Vol 9 (2003): 96-100. The article describes the aims and objectives of the portal Wales on the Web (Cymru ar y We <http://www.walesontheweb.org/>) . The site is an online guide to quality, validated websites relating to Wales

and Welsh life. The project is based at the National Library of Wales in Aberystwyth with partners across Wales and the UK. Wales on the Web was originated as a response of a call for bids by JISC in 1998. The website went live in November 2002 and, following initial success, further support was secured from Cymru Ar-lein of the Welsh Assembly Government. The resource was intended to assist research into Welsh studies and to promote the online resources of Welsh professional and government bodies. At the time of writing, the resource provides access to 2000 validated web resources. Each record contains: a resource description, site author and subject headings. Wales on the Web has a number of search options: a search engine, searching using Dewey, A-Z listing and main subjects. As well as using Dewey, the resource has metadata to Dublin Core standard. It is planned that Wales on the Web will become a major component in the National Assembly's new online "All Wales Portal". – [JW]

Goodman, Andrew. **"The Future of Search"** SearchEngineWatch (22 July 2004) (<http://searchenginewatch.com/searchday/article.php/3384481>). - In this report from the Search Engine Strategies 2004 Conference, held in March of this year, personalization is identified as "a key driver of change" in the search engine industry. It will affect both how search results are displayed to users and the content of those results -- e.g., a "self-learning" technology will be able to determine whether a user who types "eagles" into the search box is looking for information about the national bird or the NFL team. Keyword advertising will increasingly be targeted geographically, by IP address or by country. Several of the panel pundits at this conference agreed that "the concept of a single set of rankings on a given phrase (what search marketers often call 'the algorithm') may soon be obsolete." Also discussed was "paid inclusion" -- where advertisers ante up to have their links included in search results. Different companies have tried different methods of doing this, but as the writer pointed out, most of them "seem to understand that search engines lose their credibility when they turn into glorified referral services." – [\*SK]

Khoo, Christopher S G and Wan, Kwok-Kwai. **A simple relevancy-ranking strategy for an interface to Boolean OPACs.** Electronic Library 22(2) 2004 112-120 The difficulties that readers have with formulating and refining Boolean queries when searching library online public access catalogues (OPACs) are well documented. One approach to this problem is to develop a natural language search interface that acts as middleware between the user's web browser and the OPAC system. The search interface can accept a natural language query from the user and reformulate it as a series of Boolean statements that are submitted to the OPAC. The records retrieved from the OPAC are ranked by the search interface before forwarding them to the user's browser. The study describes the development of a relevance-ranking system for such an interface, and its comparison with that used in another system being developed by the authors, the E-Referencer. They provide an overview of relevance-ranking models, and describe an experiment to evaluate the effectiveness of the algorithm used. The algorithm used in the experimental interface operates via a series of steps. In step 1, all the query keywords are used in the retrieval, hence only records containing all the query keywords are retrieved. In step 2, the term with the highest frequency within the document (indicating least importance) is dropped, and a search statement formulated using the remaining query words. Step 2 is performed repeatedly, each time dropping the keyword with the highest document frequency. Within each step there are four sub-steps, each designed to broaden the search using fielded searching, term proximity and truncation. The experiment compared the relevance of records retrieved with ten sample natural language queries (formulated by undergraduate and graduate students) with those of records retrieved via a simulation by hand of the algorithm, using Boolean search statements entered into the university Web OPAC interface. The relevance was ranked in each case by the experimental subjects. The algorithm obtained good results, with a mean overall precision of 0.42 and a 41% improvement in average precision compared with the E-Referencer. It was found that word truncation was not useful if word adjacency was preserved in the query. The main limitations of the study were the small sample size of queries and the limited nature of the library OPAC system used in the study. – [CE]

McCook, Alison. **"Open Access to US Govt Work Urged"** The Scientist (21 July 2004) (<http://www.biomedcentral.com/news/20040721/01/>). - Open access has been on the agenda of legislative committees in both the US and the UK of late. In the US, the House of Representatives Appropriations Committee recommended that NIH-funded research be made freely available on PubMed Central six months after it is published. If NIH funds were used to pay for publication fees, immediate availability would be required. Meanwhile in the UK, the House of Commons Science and Technology Committee wrapped up lengthy hearings into scientific publishing and issued a report that recommended funding institutional repositories and mandating that funded research be put in them (more on this development in "UK Committee Backs Open Access"). (If this wasn't enough to delight OA advocates, the European Commission has started its own investigation into scientific publishing.) – [\*CB]

Othman, R. and Nor Sahlawaty, H. **Retrieval features for online databases: common, unique, and expected.** Online Information Review vol. 28 (3) 200-210

This article examines the retrieval options offered by a range of database providers with the aim of answering the following questions: What are the retrieval features that are common to all databases? What are the retrieval features that are unique to the databases? How are these retrieval features used in the database? What are the difficulties faced by these users in applying the features to complete their retrieval tasks? What are the retrieval features expected by these users and missed in the database? Methodology used included an examination of the retrieval facilities of 25 databases, retrieval training sessions and post training and retrieval session interviews. In addition interviews were held with a group of participants who had not undergone any retrieval training. Database providers examined include Ovid, ProQuest, Silverplatter, Gale, CSA, El Village, EbscoHost, ACM, IEEE, Emerald, Biblioline and Science Direct. The findings (albeit not unexpected) are interesting in that they provide us with a good overview of the issues end-users are facing when searching across a range of databases. This includes variations in terminology, e.g., Boolean operators being referred to as 'Boolean', 'logical' and 'set' operators, depending on the databases being accessed. Variations can also be found in the use of symbols representing truncation and wildcards, and few were found to distinguish between the two and of course not all databases provide all of the same types of retrieval options. The article moves on to provide us with an overview of the 'first impressions' of the participants in examining the retrieval options, which, perhaps again not unexpectedly, differ from their impressions once having tried to utilise the retrieval options. Unfortunately little information has been provided as to any differences found between the untrained and trained participant groups. Overall an article that further confirms much of what some end users and information professionals have been grumbling about for some time, the need for more consistency if not standardisation across products. – [SM]

Robb, Drew. **"Text Mining Tools Take on Unstructured Information"** Computerworld (21 June 2004) (<http://www.computerworld.com/databasetopics/businessintelligence/story/0,10801,93968,00.html> ).

Unstructured data, according to this article, "typically accounts for 85% of an organization's knowledge stores, but it's not always easy to find, access, analyze or use." Most of this is text files, and a new generation of text-mining software "allows companies to extract key elements from large unstructured data sets, discover relationships and summarize the information." While there are separate tools available for analyzing either databases or text files, "there are also techniques that allow the two to be correlated." These applications are relatively easy to install, but require special expertise in order to be used effectively. Users must not only have analytic skills, but must also understand the subject matter of the datasets under analysis. – [\*SK]

Suber, Peter. **"The Primacy of Authors in Achieving Open Access"** Nature Web Focus: Access to the Literature: The Debate Continues (10 June 2004) (<http://www.nature.com/nature/focus/accessdebate/24.html> ).

In this article, Peter Suber, author of the SPARC Open Access Newsletter and editor of the Open Access News Web log, underscores the critical role that authors play in facilitating open access, and he suggests that open access advocates "can guide, help or nudge authors" to become active participants in the open access movement. He emphasizes the importance of peer communication in this process: scholars are most likely to be persuaded by colleagues who have experienced the personal benefits of open access, such as higher citation rates for their papers. However, librarians can also be effective change agents by assisting scholars in depositing their works in institutional repositories, providing workshops on copyright issues, and through other strategies. Suber also discusses how the "Ingelfinger Rule" continues to concern scholars, who are hesitant to put preprints online because journals may view this as prior publication and refuse to consider them. He suggests that universities and funding agencies could require scholars to make their work available through open access arrangements, and he cites a study that offers preliminary evidence that they may welcome this. He concludes by discussing the importance of journal prestige factors in scholars' choices of what journals to publish in, and he suggests ways to enhance the prestige of open access journals. – [\*CB]

Swan, Alma, and Sheridan Brown. **"Authors and Open Access Publishing"** Learned Publishing 17(3) (2004): 219-224.

In this survey research study, Swan and Brown assessed the attitudes of authors who had published in open access journals and those who had not. An interesting finding was that both groups had a relatively low awareness of e-print archives (fewer than 30% of each group), while 62% of the "non-OA" authors were aware of open access journals. Why do authors publish in OA journals? Ninety-two percent said free access, 87% said faster publication times, 71% said OA journals had larger readerships, 64% said higher citation rates, and



56% said concerns over the expense of conventional journals. The reluctance of non-OA authors to publish in OA journals was attributed to unfamiliarity with OA journals in their fields (70%), low impact or prestige of these journals (69%), smaller readerships of OA journals (64%), or an inability to find a relevant OA journal to publish in (56%). For other interesting findings, see the article (or the complete study, which is available at [http://www.jisc.ac.uk/uploaded\\_documents/JISCOAreport1.pdf](http://www.jisc.ac.uk/uploaded_documents/JISCOAreport1.pdf)). – [\*CB]

## PRESERVATION

Gibbons, Susan. "**Establishing an Institutional Repository**" *Library Technology Reports* 40(4) (July-August 2004)

Institutional repositories are a hot topic with academic institutions, and in particular academic libraries. This 67-page report is an excellent summary of institutional repository benefits, potential uses, features, costs, and software options. The author has been involved with establishing an institutional repository at her institution, but it's also clear that she did her homework in putting this publication together. The information here is accurate and up-to-date, and can serve as a very useful overview of the state of institutional repositories currently as well as useful guidance for any institution wishing to create such a repository. Although LTR is published on a subscription basis, individual issues can be purchased at the web site ([www.techsource.ala.org](http://www.techsource.ala.org)). – [\*RT]

Lavoie, Brian, and Lorcan Dempsey. "**Thirteen Ways of Looking at...Digital Preservation**" *D-Lib Magazine* 10(7/8) (July/August 2004) (<http://www.dlib.org/dlib/july04/lavoie/07lavoie.html>).

It's certainly a sign of maturity in our understanding of digital preservation, that we can have a thoughtful article like this that concentrates on issues beyond the more familiar technical obstacles. Indeed, the authors make clear that the technical part cannot happen as an "isolated process" but only as part of a broader "digital information environment." The authors go into 13 different considerations with this wider context in mind. – [\*LRK]

Olsen, Florence. "**A Crisis for Web Preservation**" *Federal Computer Week* (21 June 2004) (<http://www.fcw.com/fcw/articles/2004/0621/pol-crisis-06-21-04.asp>).

According to this article, the Federal Depository Library Program (FDLP) is lagging to such a great extent in "cataloging and preserving access to government documents published only on the Web," that access to such material is growing spottier and spottier. The GPO, which runs the FDLP, is wrangling with this "fugitive document" issue; "fugitive documents" are "electronic publications that remain outside the federal depository collections in 1,300 libraries nationwide." The agency is considering Web harvesting software, but this technology is not particularly good at unearthing information from the so-called "deep web." The author notes that a recent study by the California Digital Library "found that about 85 percent of the Deep Web is in the .gov domain." There are more government documents published online each year than in print, and the agencies which publish them often fail to notify the GPO that they are available. Also, the copyright issue can be muddled, as it sometimes can be hard to determine whether a report was produced by the government and is in the public domain, or whether the rights belong to a contractor who produced it. Up to this point, the GPO has established an electronic archive which currently contains more than 100,000 documents, and the agency is seeking help from experts, notably university libraries. For example, it entered into a partnership with the University of North Texas Libraries to maintain a collection of documents from defunct public agencies, known as the CyberCemetery. But everyone concerned recognizes that the problem is far from being resolved at this point. – [\*SK]

## WEB DESIGN

Chillingworth, Mark **Identity check**. *Information World Review*, Issue 204 July/August 2004. Pages 14-15  
Article about "digital object identifiers" (DOI) and their use by the government. The e-Government Unit (part of the Cabinet Office) is preparing a public consultation report on the possible adoption of DOIs for government information. The aim is to adopt persistent identifiers for data and rid official resources of dead links, ensuring that digital resources carry a dog tag of identity information. Central to this is the need for information to be delivered to an increasingly wide variety of devices and ensure that it is always reliable. – [LR]

Entlich, Richard. "Flash in the Pan or Around for the Long Haul? Assessing Macromedia's Flash Technology" RLG DigiNews 8(3) (15 June 2004)

([http://www.rlg.org/en/page.php?Page\\_ID=17661#article3](http://www.rlg.org/en/page.php?Page_ID=17661#article3)).

Those who create web sites who wish to provide advanced multimedia capabilities frequently use Macromedia's Flash technology to provide such functionality. This informative and interesting piece reviews issues relating to its usability, access, and preservation. The format is also compared to Scalable Vector Graphics (SVG), the closest open standard competitor to the mostly proprietary Flash technology. Readers wishing for advice on a clear victor will be disappointed, however, since the issues are many and complex, with mitigating factors on both sides of the issue. Highly recommended for anyone wishing to create highly interactive web sites, or those wishing to archive same. – [\*RT]

Hillmann, Diane I., and Elaine L. Westbrooks. **Metadata in Practice** Chicago, IL: American Library Association, 2004.

This volume is a set of reports from the field on how metadata is being used today in libraries. Written by leaders in the field about their mostly cutting-edge experiences with metadata in creating new services or enhancing existing ones, this is a book not to be missed by almost any library professional. And if you're a cataloging librarian, run -- don't walk. After all, like it or not, your future lies in retooling your skills to encompass much more than MARC, which the editors of this book epitomize. – [RT \*]

Moffat, Malcolm. **RSS – a primer for publishers and content providers**. The New Review of Information Networking Vol. 9, 2003, pp. 123-144

The article provides an introduction to RSS (Rich Site Summary, RDF Site Summary or Really Simple Syndication). An RSS file (also known as an RSS feed or channel) feeds a list of updated items on a website (e.g. jobs, news or events) with links to the items themselves, and can be reused on other websites to provide quick access to your content. RSS is based on XML. An RSS file consists of a channel with its own attributes and a number of items with their own attributes. The BBC provides RSS feeds to link to content, for download and via RSS aggregator services. Moffat gives examples of web-based RSS services and of desktop readers; he also provides some FAQ's and a list of example RSS feeds (including: Industry News, General News, Jobs, Press Releases, Conference announcements, ToC's and Tenders). The article continues by describing the methods of producing RSS files, including: coding by hand, online editors and automatic RSS production (from HTML, CMS's and databases). The specifications of RSS are described. The author gives a list of Technical Pointers, web resources, tutorials and tools. Some straightforward good practice recommendations are given: RSS specification 1.0 should be used, RSS feeds should be validated, persistent locations of RSS feeds should be ensured, feeds for external use should be restricted to 6 items, item descriptions should be concise, content should be kept timely, visibility of feeds should be ensured by registering with appropriate sites, language should be kept inclusive (with jargon avoided) and HTML mark-up should not be used. The article discusses the promotion and discovery of RSS feeds and gives a list of RSS directories and aggregators. Ways of including RSS feeds into your own website finish the discussion. – [JW]

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## Meetings Reports

### Metasearching - Better Searching?

**British Computer Society Electronic Publishing Specialist Group one-day seminar  
Said Business School, Oxford, Thursday 22 July 2004**

This was a lively meeting that provided good insights on a key topic for journal and for reference publishers. 'Metasearching' is the use of tools to provide better search and retrieval, across multiple databases, services, platforms, protocols, and vendors. From the rapidly increasing number of vendor solutions on the market, it is clearly a growth sector.

Andy Powell of UKOLN provided a clear overview of metasearching, based on the JISC-funded work UKOLN carried, out, for example towards the JISC Information Environment, a set of standards for seamless access across multiple resources. He pointed out the problems of searching across incompatible Web resources: they have different user interfaces; everything is in HTML, so it is difficult to merge, copy and paste the information you have retrieved, and you don't necessarily get access to the resource itself. Metasearching has two approaches: cross-searching, which is real-time searching across several databases, and harvesting, batch processing of pages into a local database. The latter provides a quicker result for the user. The JISC Research Discovery Network is a nightly harvest of several smaller gateways. Searching across databases typically uses the Z39.50 protocol; harvesting is typically done using the OAI (Open Archives Initiative) protocol. Metasearching websites involves the wonderfully named 'web scraping' of information from the site, which, as its name suggests, is an imperfect solution. As soon as the web page is updated, the scraping may no longer work.

Increasingly, solutions are appearing to the problem that provide better standards for metadata, for example the NISO Metasearch Initiative, and repositories of metadata such as the eGov metadata standard and the LOM metadata profile.

Other presentations showed how these approaches are being implemented in specific sectors. John Davidson of Sentient Learning described how Sentient tools can be used to make a university reading list shared across all the stakeholders, including the library, students, and local bookshops, thereby enabling better use of existing resources. James Culling of ExLibris described widely used tools such as SFX, an Open-URL compliant link

server, providing context-sensitive linking for journals, and MetaLib, providing access to an institution's e-resources, whether local or remote.

Hilary Ollerenshaw described a recent initiative from the North Bristol NHS Trust. Entitled Knowledge4Health, it is a portal of internal and external resources, providing a single point of access for evidence- and Trust-based patient information, including local, regional, and national services.

Chris Knowles of Magus Research described a rather different problem: searching across an organised, structural and managed body of information. Merchant banks, for example, frequently want to search across several structured but incompatible resources. He described tools to facilitate such a search from a single search screen; a similar approach is now being implemented for law firms.

Finally, Martin Kelly of the Institute of Physics Publishing talked about initiatives to improve searching across large-scale scientific databases. These included using a proprietary search tool, Vivisimo, which groups search results into clusters, and compared it to Verity. Vivisimo worked well with unstructured data, while Verity was better where a taxonomy already exists.

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## Book Reviews

**Metadata for information management and retrieval**  
**David Haynes. London: Facet Publishing, 2004**  
**ISBN 1-85604-489-0 xiv, 186pp. £39.95**

It's over eight years since I last worked full-time as a librarian. Though I do still return to the fray occasionally, temping or doing contract work, my primary occupation now is as a freelance indexer – mostly of books or other print materials, but I've also ventured into web site indexing, dabbled in indexing of other electronic texts, and generally tried to stay on the track of emerging ideas and new developments in ways of getting information from electronic resources.

Anyone who has followed a similar trail will know that it's fairly easy to pick up a basic understanding of metadata as a tool for resource description and

subject indexing. Going beyond that, though, in breadth or in depth, can be time-consuming. In my case, there were certainly plenty of gaps in the understanding, and some near-bottomless chasms of ignorance about metadata's other uses, in and outwith the LIS community.

David Haynes' book offers plenty of material to help fill those gaps. Its aims are summarised as 'describing recent progress in metadata standards and applications and focusing on the concepts behind metadata'. The book's target audience is 'information professionals who want to develop their knowledge and skills in order to manage metadata effectively, and managers who are faced with strategic decisions about adoption of IT applications that use metadata.'

Haynes first looks at the historical background of the term, and concepts associated with it. He then puts forward his own approach: in place of the usual 'data about data', he defines metadata as 'data that describes the content, format or attributes of a data record or information resource', applicable to structured or unstructured information, in print or electronic form, and stored either in the resource or in a separate database. Subsequently, he outlines a five-point model of metadata's purposes: resource description; information retrieval; management of information resources; documenting ownership and authenticity of digital resources; and interoperability.

Two chapters then deal with metadata in general, the first looking at ways of defining, expressing and storing it. Mark-up languages such as XML, with its tags, schemas and Document Type Definitions, embed metadata in the document it refers to; databases of metadata store it separately. Haynes then reviews various contexts in which metadata is used: word-processing, cataloguing, records management, e-commerce, and content management.

Next, he considers some of the data modelling systems underlying metadata standards. Almost all of those covered were new to me, apart from the Resource Description Framework (to which Haynes supplies the most comprehensible introduction I've yet come across). The others discussed are the ABC Ontology; Functional Requirements for Bibliographic Records; the Indecs metadata framework; and the Open Archival Information Standard. This chapter ends with a review of metadata standards themselves: Dublin Core and its extensions/derivatives; MARC; ISAD (International Standard Archival Description); ONIX; and standards for multimedia and educational resources.

Haynes then revisits his model of purposes. Each of the five has a chapter devoted to it, providing both an outline of current developments and an introduction to relevant concepts in each of the specific areas. These are followed by a chapter on managing metadata. The five-point model returns again in 'Looking forward – the future', this time as a framework for consideration of trends and possible developments in each of the five areas. Finally, he looks at trends in metadata management, speculates on the durability of metadata, and makes some predictions about what the future may hold for it and those who work with it.

The book is chock-a-block with information, on virtually every aspect of metadata. The one omission I can identify is faceted metadata classification; there is no mention of it or its associated language, XFML. Slightly surprising was the absence of any reference to topic maps in the discussion of metadata's durability and future development. Topic maps share at least two of metadata's purposes – resource description and information retrieval – but it isn't yet clear whether they will compete with metadata in those arenas, or complement it in some way. A discussion of the possibilities could have made interesting reading.

The text is well-organised and well-presented, each chapter beginning with an overview of its content and ending with a summary, plus a list of references and further reading. A glossary would have been a useful addition, particularly as the index doesn't immediately identify where definitions of terms can be found.

The index has other weaknesses, too. Its coverage of the text is patchy: 'artificial intelligence' refers only to page 98, for example, ignoring the interesting comment on page 176 about the role of AI in future systems; 'controlled vocabularies' refers to a major discussion on pages 152-4, but not to the point made on p. 138 about their importance to interoperability.

Nor can it be depended on to collocate those references which have been indexed. The entry for 'automatic indexing' has two references more than the inverted form 'indexing, automatic'; the page referenced at 'multimedia, intellectual property rights' does not appear in the entry for 'intellectual property rights'; and the same is true of the entries for 'semantic interoperability' and 'interoperability'. Cross-referencing is not always adequately done: there is nothing, for example, to show that information about 'controlled vocabularies' may also be found under headings such as 'thesauri', 'taxonomies', and 'synonyms'. Finally, the two

entries and one cross-reference covering the subject of records retention are badly in need of sorting out.

If all that sounds like nit-picking, it isn't; it's groundwork for a point I think important to make. LIS professionals know that a poor index limits the usability of a book for reference purposes. We also claim, as one of our core skills, expertise in organising information for retrieval. Yet here we have a professional publication, about a new technique in information management and retrieval, in which the traditional, built-in tool of retrieval hasn't been made to function as it should.

That the defect blights an otherwise excellent book is disappointing. What bothers me even more, though, is this: if we do not, in our own professional literature, demonstrate the ability to make old methods work, what kind of message does that send about our abilities to cope with the new?

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**Freedom of information: a practical guide to implementing the Act**  
**Kelvin Smith. Facet Publishing. London. 2004**  
**ISBN 1-85604-517-X 200pp. £39.95**

If you don't already know the significance of the date 1 January 2005, you will do when you have read this book. This is when the Freedom of Information (FOI) Act 2000 and the FOI (Scotland) 2002 Act become fully effective, and when public organisations will have to make their information available. This book is for all those in public authorities, including central government, non-departmental public bodies, all tiers of local authorities down to parish councils, higher and further education, schools, police authorities and the National Health Service. At last the UK has FOI legislation bringing it into line with other countries.

Kelvin Smith is Head of the Cataloguing and Accessioning Unit and Records Management Consultant in the Records Management Department of the National Archives, and has been immersed in the subject for 6 years. He has succeeded in his aim to write a practical guide to enable those involved in enacting FOI for their organisations without fear or worry. The book focuses on implementation from a user's point of view, and has chapters on:

Background to the Freedom of Information Act  
The legislation  
Exemptions  
Publication schemes  
Enforcement and appeal

Records management  
Data protection, human rights and other legislation  
Staffing and training  
Getting ready for Freedom of Information

The Appendices have the full text of the Codes of Practice under sections 45 and 46 of the Act, Definitions, and Further help and guidance.

The Act is retrospective, and organisations need to:

Know what information they hold  
Manage their information holdings effectively  
Have in place the infrastructure for dealing with FOI requests  
Meet challenging deadlines in responding to individual requests for information  
Proactively disseminate information through a publication scheme  
Set up arrangements to handle complaints and appeals  
Ensure consistency in discharging their duties under the Act.

For information professionals used to the reference interview, it is of note that you cannot make enquiries as to why the information is being sought or what it will be used for. However, if a request is ambiguous, you can seek reasonable clarification. Information can also be refused if it is exempt under the Act as defined by 'public interest' (although this is likely to be tested in law), if the request is a repeat, or 'vexatious'. Exemptions are covered in detail; Smith thinks that it can be considered that information is not reasonably accessible if it is available only in digital form, but unlikely that the reverse will be upheld.

The use of publication schemes will save time and money by providing information which authorities publish as a matter of course. Most organisations publish these schemes on their websites, and screenshots of schemes from different types of organisation are included. Smith recommends that authorities look more closely at version control of documents, as earlier drafts of documents may be required to be released. He considers it likely that some information about public servants in connection with their work will be accessible, for example phone number, work address, role, responsibilities and grade. He suggests making available summaries of released information on the Internet (a database of requests submitted under Canada's Access to Information Act is available at <http://faculty.maxwell.syr.edu/asroberts/foi>).

Smith emphasises throughout that the legislation will only be as good as the quality of the records that are subject to its provisions. Responsibility for capturing, maintaining and ensuring access to records rests

with the organisation as a whole. I found the chapter on records management particularly useful. Smith recommends that electronic records be appraised at an early stage to avoid the risk of the information becoming incomplete or unreliable, or changes in IT systems causing the loss of degradation of records. A model action plan for records management is included.

Chapter 7 is a good summary of other legislation affecting information, with a useful table and flow chart outlining differences between legislation, and where access to information is guided by different legislation. The chapter on staffing and training has a useful competency framework for records management staff, as well as sample presentations to use in training, which can be downloaded from a website for the book. Chapter 9 pulls together information from the preceding chapters into an implementation plan, and has a sample plan of a typical project. Smith suggests setting up a tracking system with standard metadata to describe requests and standard fields to record outcomes. This could be networked for particular groups of the public sector; I would have appreciated more detail on this idea.

The Code of Practice under section 46 of the Act requires all public authorities to have a records manager. I would suggest that any public authority affected by the FOI legislation also needs a copy of this book. If they look at the signs of an organisation fully prepared to meet the requirements of FOI (p.140) and find signs lacking, this book will greatly assist. Anything not covered in great detail in the book is covered in the recommended websites.

It is a dense topic, but the book is clearly typeset with good use of headings and white space to make it readable. My only quibble is the rather basic index.

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**Building an Electronic Resource Collection: a practical guide. 2nd ed.**

**Stuart D Lee and Frances Boyle. Facet Publishing. London. 2004 ISBN 1-85604-531-5 176pp. £29.95**

There are times when you might think that adding electronic resources to your library couldn't be more difficult. If it's not deciphering the licence agreement, or getting the online resource permissions set, it's getting the CD-ROM loaded onto the network, or worse still, finding the CD again after someone has borrowed it. Lee and Boyle's book, now in its second

edition, clearly meets a need among librarians.

It's full of clearly laid out checklists to the steps you need to take in implementing a digital resource. Those working in larger institutions will know much, or most, of this, but this doesn't detract from the value of the book as a concise, up-to-date introduction – in fact, if you want the quickest possible start, the whole book is helpfully summarised in bullet points in the last four pages.

There is a valuable glossary, explaining terms that help to mystify the subject, such as "e-TOC" (electronic table of contents), although I noticed the glossary doesn't include terms such as URL or Z39.50 – these might be well-known, but how about "persistent URL" (p.89)? It's full of sensible advice that represents best practice, such as keeping a list of desiderata for proposed additions to the collection. If you can involve your users in realising that the budget is finite, and that adding resources requires a competition for limited funds, then your users are more likely to respect sometimes difficult decisions.

Equally, there is very sensible advice (too little implemented to date in many collections) that the ideal gateway unites print and electronic resources, even if such an integrated gateway raises difficulties of interface design and federated searching: users will eventually want such a seamless resource guide, and this should include learning materials created by the department, including material held on a VLE. One (nameless) subject librarian, when asked about materials provided by lecturers such as extracts for course material, told me "I don't get involved in that kind of thing ... I leave that to the department to implement." One hopes he sees a copy of this book before long.

One of the problems faced by resource managers is multiple budgets. It is not unusual for the print and electronic budget to be managed separately, and Lee and Boyle are clear on the benefits of cataloguing and managing resources in a co-ordinated way wherever possible, to ensure common goals are met.

Very importantly, the authors stress the value of usage statistics. While it is not always easy to interpret online statistics, they nonetheless provide far more information than was possible with print, and yet many libraries fail to make use of the invaluable indicators available from online usage statistics on how much the material is used (or not used) – an invaluable tool for determining future collection strategy. Even turnaways, those who tried to access the resource but were refused access for whatever reason, may provide valuable information on levels of interest in the material.

Some criticisms, given in the hope of making a good resource better. The index doesn't include "consortia", although they are mentioned in the book. Consortia are valuable for libraries because they can provide better value deals, obviously, but they can also ensure better designed product design and delivery, because publishers are often more willing to listen to a consortium's suggestions than to those of an individual library. Free resources are excluded from the book, but that leaves out many freely available yet highly reputable websites with specialist information. The glossary has no mention for Resource Discovery Network, nor is it in the index. As an introductory guide, I was surprised to see the fairly lengthy treatment given to e-books, since much of what is discussed is not yet widely available and subject to change, and therefore less relevant to the resource manager today.

It may be nitpicking, but the detailed checklist for evaluation access asks the librarian to monitor error messages and to calculate how often they appear, for example to check how often the message "too many connections/users" appears. Few librarians will have the time to carry out detailed error analysis of this kind.

Overall, however, these are minor points, and the book deserves every success.

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#### **International Yearbook of Library and Information Management, 2003 – 2004 Metadata applications and management**

**G E Gorman (General Editor). Facet Publishing. London. 2003 ISBN 1-85604-474-2 384pp. £60**

This year's volume is devoted to the broad subject of metadata, consisting of six parts:

Perspectives on metadata  
Metadata in the humanities  
Metadata in government  
Metadata in education  
Metadata and bibliographic organization  
Metadata and other applications  
There are fifteen chapters in this volume.

The aim of the volume is "to offer a broad overview of the current state of play with regard to metadata developments and applications both generally and in selected disciplines." The focus of this volume is primarily those activities being undertaken in the UK, America and Australia, with the welcome addition of a contribution from China, outlining the situation there.

Part one, Perspectives on Metadata, contains two overview papers which establish the context for both current issues and future challenges facing information professionals making use of, or creating, metadata.

Part two addresses metadata in the humanities, with one paper providing a detailed analysis of music metadata and the other examining the particular challenges facing those working with metadata within arts based organisations. In particular, that "access to structured metadata in the arts is a radical idea."; because "In the arts, it is a radical idea to federate cultural assets."

Part three examines metadata in government, the first paper outlining the integration of the components of a comprehensive information architecture, using the State of Minnesota portal as particular example. The second paper, Metadata and the UK Archives Network, discusses the range of international and national standards for content and data exchange, and the related issues facing archivists in the development of the online services making up the National Archives Network.

Part four looks at metadata in education by focussing on experiences in both the US and Australia. The American perspective focuses on metadata as it relates to those educational resources necessary to the teaching and learning enterprises; in particular those metadata for describing aspects of educational resources that make them different from metadata describing any other types of digitally available resources. The Australian experience is presented in two parts, firstly discussing the development and application of metadata standards as a feature of the evolving requirements of the education and training sector, and secondly, the notion of value creation in the development of metadata standards and knowledge-based economies is explored.

Part five discusses metadata and bibliographic organization, with three papers ranging over a broad sweep of metadata issues. First, by exploring the confluence of metadata systems which have evolved from electronic information communities and the bibliographic organization systems from the library community, the tensions between the two are examined. The second paper in this part looks at how metadata is taught in LIS courses, concluding that it remains a work in progress. The paper contains a useful overview of those metadata concepts, theoretical understandings and topics which metadata experts have indicated that all LIS students need to know. This section could also be a useful measure for practising information professionals to assess their own competency levels in this area. The third paper in this part is from

OCLC and examines some of the trends of the near future, as well as outlining some OCLC's research initiatives in these areas.

The final part consists of four chapters covering preservation metadata, spatial data, international metadata initiatives and the development of metadata initiatives in China. The role and importance of metadata in ensuring the long-term preservation of information as digital objects is discussed first.

The paper on spatial data explores the history and nature of digital geo-spatial data, GIS and metadata, and describes current best practices, as well as looking at the emerging use of metadata in this area. The third paper gives an update on activities within selected metadata initiatives in the last few years, and finds some common trends.

The final paper in this volume reviews and highlights the main Chinese efforts on the research and implementation of metadata standards, specifications and applications, by the institutions of national science and technology, education and culture, as well as the private sector.

This brief summary of the papers contained within this volume will demonstrate that the range of areas covered is broad, with issues being presented in great depth. Many of the papers contain URLs within them enabling the reader to find out more about a particular initiative or standard. Although these can be hard to relocate once you've read on a little further. It would certainly have assisted this reader if there had been a separate glossary of acronyms, with a brief explanation, or definition, or URL to an appropriate website for each one. This density of acronyms in some papers can make them quite difficult on the eye, considerably reducing their readability, particularly if you're trying to read the volume whilst on the daily commute.

The references given for each paper will enable further study of particular themes.

This is a scholarly, refereed publication which assumes a fairly high level of pre-existing knowledge of, or at least awareness of, underlying supporting concepts/ideas such as HTML or XML, DTDs, Dublin Core, EAD and so on. This assumption manifests itself most clearly in the extensive use of acronyms and concepts throughout the papers, many of which are either not explained, nor are links provided to background resources within each paper's References. For example, the Semantic Web is mentioned in several papers, but no reference is made to any of Tim Berners-Lee's papers in which he first put forward the idea of the Semantic Web. The index, however, does a good

job with pulling together acronyms from different papers. This volume will undoubtedly find a place with those who have a scholarly interest in metadata and emerging concepts and issues.

**Susan Miles**

**Libraries without walls 5: the distributed delivery of library and information services.**

**Brophy, P, Fisher, S & Craven, J (eds). Facet Publishing. London. 2004 ISBN 1-85604-511-0 275pp. £44.95**

When this conference series, organised by CERLIM at Manchester Metropolitan University, began, the intention was to deal with services for distance learners, but, as Brophy traces in his keynote, with the last couple the emphasis has moved towards the creation and management of electronic resources and delivery methods, especially through virtual learning environments. These are services for all remote users, whether they are some distance from the parent organisation or merely nearby, but outside the library.

This collection of over 20 papers from the September 2003 conference are from the US, Nigeria and various European countries, as well as from the UK, and cover VLE integration, user needs and skills, usability, designing the information environment and creating digital resources. Predominantly they have a higher education context. Some deal with specific research, others are case studies of practice in particular libraries. I'll mention just a few that seem particularly relevant to UKOLUG interests.

Gill Needham considers information literacy in the context of the Open University's 12 week MOSAIC course, which aims to familiarise students with sources and tools, to evaluate information, and so on. Surveys of students from two cohorts showed how beneficial they felt the course had been. It is recognised that the demographic range and study environments of OU students may not be typical and a shorter version of MOSAIC is being tested in other universities.

Neil King and colleagues from City University describe a framework for assessing usability and accessibility in digital libraries based on extensive research with JISC funded services. The basic assumption was that the main characteristics of a usable digital library are that it will support task-based information seeking behaviour and will have highly organised content. The framework includes requirement gathering, user and expert evaluations, analytic techniques and is iterative.



The Library of Texas is a virtual library providing statewide resource discovery, commercial databases, government documents and training. The resource discovery service has the features of a library portal, in having a large number of databases offering cross searching; including means to select appropriate resources; offering a variety of levels of searching; providing personalisation, and more. The paper discusses some of the usability issues involved.

Research for the UK Research Support Libraries Group during 2001 and 2002 into the information needs of academic researchers covered information resources, access to libraries, locating research collections, use of electronic resources, including training and future developments. Among the conclusions were that researchers lacked awareness of resources outside HE; Web use tended to be with generic tools rather than sources like subject gateways being developed for academic uses (as shown in a number of other studies); and the need for better training and guidance from academic libraries.

The European collaborative COINE project deals with cultural objects - so isn't just for libraries - and is developing software to allow people to create and publish their own stories and store and present objects and narrative. The paper was written at the early stages of the project so can only outline plans and is perhaps a little tentative for a permanent volume like this.

The paper on the DAEDALUS project at Glasgow University to archive locally research outputs, such as articles, preprints, theses and reports, doesn't say a great deal about the project, but does have a wider impact since it discusses the trends in scholarly communication that are prompting open archive and institutional repository activity. On the other hand developments in the last year, particularly the recent Select Committee report on scientific publishing, make this part a little dated.

Of wide interest is the paper from Andrew Cox and Anne Morris at Loughborough University on communities of practice, defined as groups of people with a shared interest in a subject who develop solutions, ideas, etc and share knowledge. (Perhaps similar to what were once called invisible colleges). A case study is presented of an unidentified UK IT support discussion list where textual analysis, questionnaires and interviews were used to analyse the working of the list. There is an emphasis on the theories of communities of practice. Reference to other studies of discussion groups and forums would have added to the value of the paper.

I could go on, but merely want to give a flavour of the content. There's probably something for everyone here, but the book lacks a coherence or any real overview for me. Maybe the LWW conferences have lost their distinctiveness as the focus has changed and many of the topics are familiar from other conferences and publications on electronic resources. The price is on the high side – for many people it may be enough to view the slides of (most of) the papers at <http://www.cerlim.ac.uk/conf/lww5/details.php>.

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**Project management: tools and techniques for today's ILS professional**

**Barbara Allen. Facet Publishing. London. 2004  
ISBN 1-85604-504-8 192pp. £29.95**

This book is designed for information professionals involved in any kind of project work. It explores tried and tested methods and techniques for managing projects and considers their use within the information and library field. The book is divided into three main sections: a broad introduction; project life cycle, systems and processes; and projects and people.

Although there is a great deal of information about project management available, this book has a number of strengths.

First, there are many examples taken from actual projects run in libraries. These include physical projects such as moving a library or merging two libraries; IT / web projects like creating a new intranet site or digitising a collection or developing a web-based information skills course; and service delivery projects for example developing a new marketing campaign or restructuring an information service or introducing an information literacy course. There is also the recognition that projects range in size from large complex projects to those involving only one or two staff. The techniques are illustrated by giving specific examples of how they are used in a library context. For example the need to keep close to a project and to double check that deliverables are actually delivered is illustrated by the case of a lab being reported as commissioned when in fact the computers had been delivered but not actually installed. "Chaos theory", whereby a relatively small change in one part of a project can result in unexpected and unwelcome changes elsewhere, is demonstrated by the case where timetable changes introduced elsewhere suddenly beset their information literacy programme. A quick

change of tack to move from allocating students to lectures and workshops to allowing them to sign up for sessions themselves actually improved the takeup of and satisfaction with the programme.

Secondly the book is a useful resource for anyone wanting to formalise their approach to project management. The stages of the project life cycle are clearly described and there are a range of useful tables, checklists and sample documentation which can readily be adapted to specific requirements. The chapter on using ICT to support the project gives a quick overview of some of the common tools available and demonstrates the advantages and disadvantages of their use.

The section on the people side of projects has an interesting discussion of the realities of life for the ILS project worker. It explores the experiences of project workers, differentiating between contract workers and those who work on projects alongside their mainstream ILS roles and identifies the particular difficulties inherent in both scenarios. The tensions between project and mainstream work for staff involved in both are captured in the example of

the end of a major move into a new building. After many months of very hard work organising and effecting this move suddenly the work was over and normal life returned. The impact of this was a general feeling of flatness and, over the next couple of months, increased sickness and staff absence. Anyone who has ever worked on a big project and experienced its completion, no matter how successful, can certainly relate to this.

**Helen Edwards**

## **Books waiting for review**

The following books from Facet Publishing are awaiting reviewers - please contact [Peter Chapman](#) if you would like to do one (or more...)

Cornish **copyright** 4th ed.

Feather **the information society** 4th ed.

Browne & Jerney **website indexing** 2nd ed.