

# eLucidate

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## **The Future of Reference Publishing: Interview with John Dove, CEO, and James Raiher, Publishing Manager, Xrefer Ltd**

*This interview is extracted from a report entitled "The Future of Reference Publishing" published by Electronic Publishing Services Ltd in October 2005, and is republished in Elucidate with their kind permission. For details of how to purchase the full report see <http://www.epsltd.com>*

*How has the movement of selling of reference works online affected print sales?*

It used to be the case that a quality reference work was sure to have 2,000 purchases by libraries. So as long as a publisher could control costs to break even at 1,500, they were pretty much assured of a profit. Now only 700 or 800 can be counted on. It is clear that publishers can still make money by selling print-based reference content, but it is a riskier business than in the past. There are still reference works that sell 8,000 or even 10,000 but these are the exceptions. The fall in print sales is reflected by the experience of libraries that have found usage of their reference rooms declining. While print reference still has a place, the ability to continually update online content gives networked-based services a significant advantage over print for those reference works such as directories that provide up-to-date information.

The reference works in which print will continue to be highly valued will be those where the reader benefits from

the high quality of layout and imaging that is still vastly superior in print rather than online.

*Which online business models are most commonly used by reference publishers and aggregators of reference content?*

There are several business models in use by reference content publishers and aggregators, including:

- Usage-based: Services are charged for based on the levels of usage achieved (simultaneous user limitations, pay-per-view, pay-for-clicks, connect fees, etc.). Librarians tend not to like this model because they want to be able to encourage usage without having a negative impact on their budget. Too many times they've seen companies come in at a very low price, but then usage grows and the budget gets squeezed;
- Full-time equivalent (FTE) model: Services are charged for based on the population served. For example, this could be the number of students at a university, or the population of a local area. This is the model employed by Xrefer;
- First few accesses are free prior to charging a subscription (this is used by HighBeam, for example);
- Advertising is also used by reference publishers to supplement subscription income. In certain ways Google is itself a 'publisher' and many users use it for traditional reference questions, even as a 'spell checker' – much to their peril.

*How will publishers be able to compete in this online world?*

Free content will continue to grow, whether published by governments, non-profits, or even produced by volunteers (the main example here is Wikipedia). However, publishers will continue to ply their core skills of assembling the world's best experts and educators to put them to the task of explaining crisply and coherently the whole landscape of particular fields of study. While free content sources may be of value to casual users, those needing the content for business or educational purposes must be able to trust the source implicitly. The difficulty is that for most users 99.9% of information on the Internet is of no use, but the 0.1% that is highly valuable differs from individual to individual. In order to find this 0.1%, users need authoritative facts as a basis, with the added ability to make sense of this information. This is where Xrefer believes its value lies: in the contextual links created among the world's best and most authoritative reference sources. Some users want a quick definitive answer while others need to understand the answer in context – at present lists of search results do not facilitate this, and there is an important role for the visual representation of search results.

Xrefer believes that as a reference aggregator it is well positioned to provide the necessary context around the content. Searching online enables users to easily answer questions that could be very difficult to address in a print world. For example, a user interested in the American Civil War might want to know which historical figures lived within 20 miles of the battle of Gettysburg. Trying to find this in a physical print library would be almost impossible to fully research. But content

marked up with geographic tags by an aggregator of reference works (because no single publisher will have all the information) could produce this fairly easily.

*Who buys reference publishing material?*

Xrefer's principal buyers are libraries, although a successful subscription pilot was launched for individuals this year. There is a range of library types, including:

- School (K-12) libraries;
- College and university libraries;
- Research centres;
- Public libraries;
- Government libraries;
- Medical libraries;
- Corporate libraries in a range of vertical sectors.

*Is the customer base changing online?*

The role of the librarian is changing, and the amount of interaction that librarians have with end users is very much reduced now. Some of the librarian's traditional roles translate well online, and libraries can offer facilities such as 24/7 assistance through chat services. Guided orientation is also possible, with librarians providing pathfinder documents for new students trying to understand the range of resources available through the library. However, many end users feel that they do not need assistance and see research as a self-serve activity that they do only online. Distance learning is also an important driver for online reference.

*How are customers' expectations changing?*

Search engines have conditioned users to tolerate some fuzziness in their search results. In other words, false positives are considered OK (as long as they don't overwhelm the desired results).

*What do you feel will be the impact of services such as Wikipedia, Wikibooks, the Open Content Alliance and Google Print?*

Xrefer already integrates free content such as the *CIA World Fact Book* and government-published statistical data such as parts of the *Statistical Abstracts of the United States*. Census data from the United Nations, Canada, and hopefully the EU will also be added soon. If and when librarians find it valuable to do so, Xrefer is also prepared to add snap-shots of content from Wikipedia.

There are some highly regarded open-access reference content resources and Xrefer will seek to include them in its online reference service. Google Print, Google Library, and the Open Content Alliance are positive trends towards the goal of providing everyone in the world with awareness of potentially useful information. Clearly that awareness has to be provided without compromising the legitimate interests of the copyright holder. In reference there are some special problems that have to be worked out with the schemes being discussed in the industry for indexing information. For many reference works, returning a sample of the information may, in fact, give away the whole of the content (for example with many dictionaries).

*Do you foresee any other threats for reference publishers? How could reference publishers counter these?*

The rise of the second-hand book market is a major challenge to all types of publishers, and is becoming more of a threat as re-sellers like Amazon introduce services such as offering both new and used copies of book titles. Discounting in bookshops is also challenging for publishers.

Books are now under more scrutiny from end users and librarians, who were previously unable to double check their content – there is now so much more easy availability of content that publishers must be very careful about their fact-checking prior to publication.

*What are the main opportunities available to reference publishers? How could they best take advantage of these?*

The Internet provides publishers with paths to new potential markets, and publishers are able to expose their content to a wider audience through tagging it well, and through services such as Google Print. Working with aggregators is a very low-cost activity which can significantly increase usage and, in turn, sales. However, it takes a lot of time and investment to get fully involved with the new technology – many of the smaller reference publishers have low budgets for this activity and find it difficult to take advantage of what the Internet can offer. Another important opportunity for publishers is the ability to get closer to librarians and to end users, and to feed this interactivity back into improving the quality of their work. Finally, rather than seeing Wikipedia as a threat, there is no reason why publishers can't use Wiki technology to facilitate collaboration on the development of their content and

services. Socially-produced information may be an excellent base-line input to an editorial process that could then produce a high-quality result.

## Online

By Jan Litton, University of Wales, Aberystwyth (Aberystwyth Online User Group). Please send your submissions for the next edition to [jrc@aber.ac.uk](mailto:jrc@aber.ac.uk)

### Inderscience Journals

**Catalogue**  [<http://www.inderscience.com/catalogue>](http://www.inderscience.com/catalogue)

The 2006 Inderscience Journals Catalogue (now available) gives details of the 170 journals published in Engineering, Computing/ICT and Technology; Energy, Environment and Sustainable Development; Management and Business Administration; Healthcare, Sport and Leisure.

Inderscience have also started a free quarterly newsletter called HIGHLIGHTS, at <http://www.inderscience.com/highlights> featuring news, free trials, free articles, details of RSS, etc., with something special coming in February. Inderscience content (8,000 peer-reviewed articles) can be freely searched from <http://www.inderscience.com/>.

**CSA Illumina** <http://www.csa.com/pais>

The complete PAIS Archive is now available through CSA Illumina. This is a retrospective database supplementing PAIS International and contains more than one million records. The initial release of PAIS Archive provided backfiles to 1937 and this release extends access back to 1915. These sources cover topical public and social issues and the making and evaluating of

public policy. They are worldwide in scope and include publications in English, French, German, Italian, Portuguese and Spanish that deal with public affairs.

### CSA Research Databases

[<http://www.dialog.com>](http://www.dialog.com)

Dialog are now offering an Alert subscription to the CSA research databases for customers in the corporate and government markets. Alerts subscriptions for the more than 30 databases of CSA scientific and technical research being added to Dialog will be available in coming months. These databases cover research in the fields of aeronautics, astronautics, engineering, environmental sciences, life sciences, materials, metals and alloys, space sciences, social/library sciences and technology, among others. When relevant new CSA research is added to the Dialog online service, the Alerts service will email the user.

### Dictionary of National Biography

[<http://www.oup.com/oxforddnb>](http://www.oup.com/oxforddnb)

The Dictionary of National Biography has a new theme – reference groups. Articles explain the membership, aims, and influence of historically defined groups across all periods of British history. At present there are thirty groups listed varying from the Amateur Athletic Association to the Kit Kat Club to the Suez group.

**Edina**  [<http://edina.ac.uk>](http://edina.ac.uk)

The Education Image Gallery has been updated for the current academic year and includes two improvements. So that users see the range of images available, fresh sets of images now appear throughout the service pages and every time a page is refreshed by a user, new images are displayed. The images represent the main subject areas

covered by EIG. To keep the content of EIG as up to date as possible, it will be updated on a monthly basis with approximately 200 of the latest Getty news and sport images from around the world.

### **Emerald**

<http://www.emeraldinsight.com>

Emerald have acquired four new titles in the field of accounting and investment from four different publishers: The Journal of Accounting & Organizational Change; Journal of Human Resource Costing & Accounting; Journal of Investment Compliance and Qualitative Research in Accounting & Management. All journals will be available on Emerald Management Xtra – bringing the number of Emerald management journals to 115 and accounting and investment journals to eleven.

Emerald has also introduced a free content service for academic library newsletters. The Library Link Newsletter Fillers offers professionally written filler articles from the Library Link Newsletter Fillers service for Academic Librarians producing their own in-house newsletters. The articles are written to promote the use of the library while educating and informing readers on information quality, information literacy, the value of the library and on timely issues.

### **Index to Theses**

<http://www.theses.com>

The Index to Theses has added a new sub-collection of Irish theses. This sub-collection looks and feels the same as the main site but restricts all searches to just those theses that come from Irish universities. They have also made improvements to the search facility by adding a button on every search page linking to a redesigned list of subject classifications and redesigning the advanced search page to include a

summary of the most useful field codes that allow you to target your searches at particular parts of the thesis, like author or subject classification.

### **Literature Online**

<http://lion.chadwyck.co.uk>

Literature Online has added six new journals: Critical Inquiry, Daedalus, Hudson Review, Journal of British Studies, and Nineteenth-Century Literature, bringing their total number of titles to 174. A total of 27 journals have been added to Literature Online this year, covering subjects such as Native American, Caribbean and Australasian studies, Arthurian literature, fairy-tale studies, pedagogy and rhetoric, alongside journals devoted to canonical authors such as W.B. Yeats, T.S. Eliot and Joseph Conrad.

### **New toolbar for dyslexics**

<http://www.textic.com>

The Textic toolbar has been designed to make reading the Web easier for users with dyslexia or other special needs. Once installed on a PC, the Textic toolbar can be used to alter the style of a web site to suit a user's particular needs. Background colour, text colour, text size, font style and colour can all be altered and the user has access to a thesaurus, dictionary and unique messaging 'keypad' especially tailored for use by dyslexia sufferers. Users can set the toolbar to one of seven 'comfort levels' ranging from 'big buttons' to choice of dyslexic friendly fonts and sizes.

### **World Digital Library**

<http://www.microsoft.com>

Microsoft has formed an alliance with Yahoo, Hewlett-Packard and Adobe, called the Open Content Alliance (OCA) aimed at digitising books, academic materials and other publications for online publication. Microsoft plans to

avoid any potential legal problems by concentrating initially on materials that are already out of copyright, and plans to digitize up to 150,000 books over the next year. They are in discussions with publishers to find ways to include other content without infringing copyright, which may involve users paying for content. OCA has the support of a number of leading libraries.

## Internet

### E-audio and Libraries

Susan Miles  
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Following on from my column in the last issue examining the possibilities of podcasting in libraries, this one will look at the related area of e-audio and libraries. E-audio encompasses audio files, usually book readings, delivered in electronic format, often as MP3 files. Readers may be familiar with this concept via the free downloads offered by *The Times* newspaper over the summer. Essentially this is another evolutionary step for 'books on tape'.

In the UK, only two public library services have experimented with e-audio – Richmond upon Thames, and Blackburn with Darwen. In what originally started as individual project ideas, both public library services pooled some of their NOF People's Network Excellence Funding grants in 2003 and approached Audible Inc. with a proposal for a joint purchase/subscription to purchase a collection of Audible titles. The services have since developed in slightly different ways.

Blackburn and Darwen's project also included the loan of e-books and the creation of an internal listening post within their library to support music from

local bands. Now, some two years later, while feedback has been positive, the lack of further funding and the effects of natural wastage on their collections of players means that the service is gradually tapering off.

In Richmond upon Thames, the situation seems more positive. The e-audio books service is offered within their 24/7 Internet library service and has a steady usage with a core of regular users taking out titles via the library-owned MP3 players. Interestingly, a couple of their regular users are visually impaired older users who really value the service and do not find the MP3 players too small or fiddly to operate, while commuters form another group of regular users. Peter Hey at Richmond acknowledges that because they started this service early on, service providers didn't really cater for libraries with library members wishing to do downloads onto their own MP3 devices.

In 2005, the landscape is has changed and providers are looking to be able to offer this service. NetLibrary offers a range of e-Audiobook collections for different types of libraries, and allows downloads onto library users' PCs or portable devices, for instance MP3 players or some types of phones. A licence is downloaded with the title, allowing three weeks of listening time, and once the licence has expired, the file can no longer be listened to but remains on the device.

In a very timely fashion, the use of iPods in public libraries became a hot topic at the Internet Librarian 2005 Conference held last week in Monterey, California. Ken Weil and Joe Latini from the South Huntingdon Public Library, Long Island, New York discussed their e-audio service, which started with downloading audio books to iPods or lending iPod shuffles for borrowers without their own



iPods, and is now moving into loaning music titles in the same way<sup>1</sup>. Jenny Levine in her Shifted Librarian blog summarises the paper here<sup>2</sup>. They have 20 iPod Shuffles and about 45 book titles. Since they are purchasing the titles through iTunes, they do not buy more copies of the digital version than they already hold in print format. When they ran a workshop about the subject at the beginning of October, they had 35 people attend. While take-up is slow, apparently their users really like it once they've tried it. One of the benefits they have identified is that it can be cheaper to buy the digital format than other audio formats, with the cost savings going towards purchasing the iPods.

This is a different scale of enterprise in comparison to Richmond's 900+ titles, but shows that a service like this can be successfully run.

E-audio has a different place in the e-resources arena. While there is a range of subscription based e-audio services, it is attracting the interest of people who are using Creative Commons<sup>3</sup> licenses

to create audio readings of books. For example, LiteralSystems<sup>4</sup> are "striving to create literary and poetic audio books under a creative commons license for your personal enjoyment". Their aim is to provide audio books that are of high quality and free without any membership or hidden hooks. Their current offering is a chapter a day of an unedited version of *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*. LibriVox<sup>5</sup> was founded by Hugh McGuire, who is interested in the "free movement" in its many guises, and wants all books in the public domain to be available, free, in audio format, on the Internet. There is a pool of 65 volunteers, of whom 27 have completed a recorded chapter, with four books having been completed. Although this is a fairly new undertaking, it is already attracting attention as it is now part of the Open Library, which was launched last week (more of which in a future column!).

Both these organisations are also associated with Project Gutenberg<sup>6</sup>,

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<sup>1</sup> *South Huntingdon Public Library Online* [Online] (2005) Available from: <http://shpl.suffolk.lib.ny.us/> [Accessed 30 October 2005]

<sup>2</sup> Levine, J. (24 October 2005) 'Digital content – circulating audio ebooks on iPod shuffles'. *The Shifted Librarian* [Online]. Available from: [http://www.theshiftedlibrarian.com/archives/2005/10/24/2005102403\\_digital\\_content\\_circulating\\_audio\\_ebooks\\_on\\_ipod\\_shuffles.html](http://www.theshiftedlibrarian.com/archives/2005/10/24/2005102403_digital_content_circulating_audio_ebooks_on_ipod_shuffles.html) [Accessed 30 October 2005]

<sup>3</sup> "Its primary tool is the use of a range of copyright licences, freely available for public use, which allow creators to fine-tune control over their work,

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so enabling as wide a distribution as possible." *Creative Commons UK*. [Homepage] [Online] (2005) Available from: <http://creativecommons.org.uk> [Accessed 30 October 2005]

<sup>4</sup> *LiteralSystems – creative-commons audiobooks*. [Homepage] [Online] (2005) Available from: <http://literalsystems.com> [Accessed 30 October 2005]

<sup>5</sup> *LibriVox – acoustical liberation of books in the public domain*. [Homepage] [Online] (2005) Available from: <http://librivox.org> [Accessed 30 October 2005]

<sup>6</sup> *Project Gutenberg – Audio eBooks*. [Homepage] [Online] (2005)

either using their texts or providing e-audio files back into their audio books project. Some of the Project Gutenberg audio files are computer-generated, but the main effort is currently focussed on e-Books read by people. For instance, Sherlock Holmes novels have been provided by audiobooksforfree.com<sup>7</sup>, a British-based organisation. If you're looking for something different to listen to on your MP3 player, all these sites may be worth a visit!

And finally, Virgin Atlantic is producing podcasts of travel guides, thus combining these two themes; there are guides to New York, Cuba, Johannesburg and Shanghai, with more promised. Subscribing to the podcast feed will ensure that you get future releases.<sup>8</sup>

#### Acknowledgements:

Many thanks to Peter Hey at Richmond Libraries and to Ian Sutton at Blackburn with Darwen Library & Information Services for their help in providing background information on their e-audio services.

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Available from:  
<http://www.gutenberg.org/audio/>  
[Accessed 30 October 2005]

<sup>7</sup> *Audio Books For Free*. [Homepage] [Online] (2005) Available from:  
<http://www.audiobooksforfree.com>  
[Accessed 30 October 2005]

<sup>8</sup> *Word in your ear*. [Homepage of Virgin Atlantic's podcasts] [Online] (2005) Available from:  
<http://virginatlantic.loudish.com>  
[Accessed 30 October 2005]

## Intranets

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In early November, I took part in the inaugural CMF2005 <http://cmf2005.dk/> event in Aarhus, Denmark. This conference, which covered content management, web strategy and intranets, was devised and managed by Janus Boye <http://www.boyeit.dk/home>, who will be speaking at the Online Information Conference this year. The event attracted over 130 delegates from across Scandinavia and Finland, with some delegates coming from Iceland and the Faroe Islands, and even a few from the UK. The conference was a great success, and the 2006 event is already in the diary for 7–9 November 2006 <http://cmf2006.dk/>. I was running a pre-conference workshop on intranets, and let the attendees decide the subjects to cover. As a result, much of the morning was spent on what the elements should be of an intranet strategy. None of the attendees had a written intranet strategy, and this is a not uncommon occurrence in the workshops I run, no matter what the country. I find it very surprising that an organization can have policies and strategies for just about anything but not for information/intranet issues. Among the other topics that we discussed were the use of personas and scenarios to develop information architecture, and how to increase intranet use.

In the UK, the Intranet Benchmark Forum <http://www.ibforum.co.uk/> has held two very successful events. One was IBF Live, which was a two-day conference with a strong emphasis on sharing of experience, and the second was the launch of IBF Global, which (as you might gather) is specifically tailored for the needs of organizations with multinational, and often multilingual,

intranets. The meetings of the Forum that I have attended have been very well run, and if you are medium/large-sized organization then membership of the Forum is well worth considering. Paul Miller, who owns and directs the IBF, managed to persuade the Financial Times to do a short item on intranets, and this is well worth cutting out and sending to any less-than-encouraging senior manager. You will find it in the 30 August issue, p.10 of the Business Life section. It's also on the FT web site of course.

If you look at the IBF site you will see a list of Associate Consultants, and one of these is Helen Day. Until recently, Helen was the intranet manager at Boots, and won the 2004 International Information Industry Award for her excellent work in developing the intranet with very limited resources. Helen has now branched out on her own and you can find her web site at <http://www.helen-day.co.uk/index.htm>. Helen specializes in intranet governance issues, which are among the most intractable in any organization.

This indeed was another topic at Aarhus. We spend around an hour looking at the benefits and issues for various intranet "homes", including IT, corporate communications, HR and the library/information centre. The overall conclusion was that it did not matter where the operational responsibility for the intranet resided so long as there was a clear charter for the intranet that set out the corporate requirements for the intranet, and the extent to which other departments needed to provide support and resources.

This issue of Elucidate should arrive on your desktop before Christmas, so it is not too late to encourage you to purchase a copy of Peter Morville's book *Ambient Findability*, which is

published by O'Reilly Publishing and has a lemur on the front cover. (ISBN 0-596-00765-5). The subtitle of the book is "What we find changes who we become" and this sets the scene well for what is a very thoughtful and somewhat philosophical book. Reading it will certainly make you think again about the issues of navigation, search and information discovery, and I'd like to see it on the recommended list of every school of librarianship and information science in the country. Peter has been promoting the concept of findability for several years, and to gain a sense of the scope of the topic do have a look at his web site at <http://www.findability.org/>. Peter will be speaking on this topic at Online Information this year.

Two important resources for intranet managers remain <http://www.boxesandarrows.com/> and the Information Architecture Institute site at <http://iainstitute.org/>. Boxes and Arrows always comes up with thought-provoking articles and the IAI has a wealth of tools for things like wireframe design and content audits at <http://iainstitute.org/tools/>. On the Boxes and Arrows site as I write there is a review of a very good book on project management by Scott Berkin [http://www.boxesandarrows.com/archive/s/the\\_art\\_of\\_project\\_management.php](http://www.boxesandarrows.com/archive/s/the_art_of_project_management.php), but currently my favourite book on this topic is *Herding Chickens* by Dan Bradbary and David Garrett <http://eu.wiley.com/WileyCDA/WileyTitle/productCd-0782143830.html>, which is a first-rate introduction to the topic. All too often in CMS implementation projects I find that there is actually very little expertise in project management, and the project starts to go off-course almost before it has started.

While on the subject of books Luke Tredinnick's book *Why Intranets Fail*

(and *How to Fix Them*)<sup>9</sup> remains the only book published this century on intranet management, and is well worth acquiring and reading even by those who feel that their intranet is in good shape. It might be now, but next year...? ([www.chandospublishing.com](http://www.chandospublishing.com) ISBN 1-84334-068-2).

Finally, in this round up of intranet-related resources do have a look at the Gilbane web site at <http://www.gilbane.com/articles.html> . The reports listed here are all free of charge, and are exceptionally well written.

## Public Sector

### E-Government

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As I write, we have just two months to go before we reach the golden age when all local authorities are 100% e-enabled. At this stage, it is encouraging to read the headline "E-Gov will not fail, vows minister". This is quoting Jim Murphy, e-Government minister, and appeared in *Public Servant* (21st September 2005) The confidence of the minister stems from what he learned from a tour of community-based IT projects that he believes allow the government to deliver its 'choice' agenda. The visits made were also referred to in a Parliamentary debate on e-Government held on 13th October 2005. Mr Murphy cited examples of

situations where IT is making a difference to lives and giving people access to government information and services. The main aim of e-Government is to provide customer-centred services, but it is recognised that there are savings to be made and challenges to be faced.

It is good to take stock and consider just how much has changed in the way local and central government provide information to citizens, and how they interact with them electronically. There is doubtless a long way to go and there was enough to debate for the session to last nearly three hours! The Hansard reference is 13th October 2005 Column 143WH (as the debate took place in Westminster Hall), and you can find this by going to the Parliament website <http://www.parliament.uk>.

The debate made reference to the publication of the government's IT strategy, which was issued on 2nd November. Called *Transformational Government*, you can access the strategy at <http://www.cio.gov.uk>. In it, the government sets out how it will improve delivery of public services in ways that fit with people's lifestyles. The technology and services will be designed around the needs of the public and will tackle security issues, seek greater efficiency through reducing duplication and improve the planning and delivery of IT projects. Customer Service Directors will be appointed to represent groups of users and ensure their needs are met and are joined up across government. There is also recognition of the importance of mobile phones and digital TV, especially when reaching those who could be considered as socially excluded. Linked to this the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has produced a report called *Inclusion through innovation: tackling social exclusion through new technologies*. A

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<sup>9</sup> This book is reviewed in the book reviews section of this issue of Elucidate.

*Social Exclusion Unit Final Report.*  
(<http://www.socialexclusion.gov.uk>)

The take-up of local e-Government services is essential if all the work in this area is to be worthwhile. The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has therefore commissioned a 'feasibility study into undertaking a national campaign to promote the take-up of local e-services early in 2006.' The ODPM local e-Government programme can be found at <http://www.localgov.gov.uk>

In 2003, only 18% of the UK population were using e-Government services and by 2004, this number had risen by only 6%. This compares to a minimum of 40% in 2003 in Australia, Canada, Netherlands, New Zealand and the US, according to research carried out by Taylor Nelson Sofres and quoted by Helen Margetts of the Oxford Internet Institute, when speaking at the IDeA e-Champions Conference.

### **Government web sites**

A recent survey of 42 British and Irish government web sites conducted by iQ Content (<http://www.iQcontent.com>) rated most British sites as good, whereas more than a third of the Irish ones were considered poor. Improvement is still needed if government sites are to catch up with commercial sites, and the survey identified failings in understanding the users, developing good navigation and in keeping content updated. (*Benchmarking e-Government websites in the UK and Ireland: Who's getting it right? (And why?)*)  
[http://www.iqcontent.com/publications/reports/article\\_43/](http://www.iqcontent.com/publications/reports/article_43/)

A new government web site has been developed to provide a directory of public services for the most vulnerable in our community. The directory has

been established to back up the Supporting People programme of the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister. This programme aims to provide a stable environment for the vulnerable such as the elderly, teenage parents or victims of domestic violence, and the directory will help to match people with the right services to meet their needs. It includes 150 local authorities and 20 thousand service providers  
(<http://www.spkweb.org.uk>).

### **Procurement**

In the public sector, if you offer a contract above a certain value it must be advertised in the Official Journal of the European Union (OJEC). Currently the process used means that it takes 12 days for the advertisement to appear in TED, the EU Tenders Electronic Daily. From the end of October, new online forms have been made available and details of the contract will appear on TED in just five days. The new forms take account of other changes to the procurement process such as allowing for framework agreements and electronic reverse auctions etc. as specified by Directives 2004/18/EC and 2004/17/EC. You can find the forms at <http://www.simap.eu.int>.

### **Enquire, Discover, Read**

The Museums, Libraries and Archives Council (MLA) has launched its online enquiry service, which operates 24 hours a day and provides answers to questions either through live chat or by e-mail. The 24-hour coverage is provided by cooperative arrangements with Canada and America.  
<http://www.peoplesnetwork.gov.uk>

### **Statutory Instruments**

If you need to access Statutory Instruments online through the web site



of the Office of Public Sector Information, you may have noticed a change in the way they appear. From Statutory Instrument No. 2670, issued in September 2005, there are now three entries for each one. This is because there is now a web or html version, a pdf and explanatory notes. In fact, from October all new legislation is being provided as a pdf due to public demand. <http://www.opsi.gov.uk>

*Public Sector News is supplied by ALGIS (The Affiliation of Local Government Information Specialists) which represents information professionals providing information services to local authority staff and elected members. Jane Inman is currently Chair of ALGIS. For more information go to <http://www.algis.org.uk>*

## Current Awareness

Column editor: Jane Grogan  
(Jane.Grogan@gchq.gsi.gov.uk)

This column contains summaries of articles (print and electronic) about information access and retrieval, electronic publishing, preservation and virtual libraries etc. including, with permission, abstracts identified with an \* next to the author initials, drawn from *Current Cites*, the monthly publication distributed electronically by a team of Librarians and Library Staff and edited by Roy Tennant (<http://lists.webjunction.org/currentcites/>)

If you are interested in providing reviews for the Column, please contact Jane Grogan for further details.

## Content Management

Austin, Marcus. **Big Blue sets its sights on market dominance.** Information World Review, 215

(July/August 2005): 8-11 – This article looks at how IBM has been buying into the Enterprise Content Management (ECM) sector. The author looks at the strategic acquisitions that have been made, and speaks to IBM about their plans to develop further in this sector, including the scope of ECM in searching and in e-mail management in the light of users everywhere requesting something 'as quick and easy to use as Google'. – [RN]

## Education

Seaman, Scott. **Another Great Dissolution? The Privatization of Public Universities and the Academic Library.** – Journal of Academic Librarianship 31(4) (July 2005): 305-309. – Grim tidings are portrayed on the financial front as states gradually disengage from supporting institutions of higher learning. The changing financial environment, from public to private sources, begins then to change the nature and priorities of the institutions themselves. Needless to say, libraries are left with the short end of the stick. – [\*LRK]

## Electronic Publishing

Cole, Louise. **"A Journey into E-Resource Administration Hell"** *Serials Librarian* 49(1/2) (2005): 141-154. – Hair-raising jaunt through the "horrors" of managing e-resources, primarily subscription-based, that face an academic library in the 21st century. The author's tongue-in-cheek style makes palatable what otherwise must be a challenging situation. On display is a system so complicated that vendors can't tell what they hold, whether you're subscribed to it and, er, when it's expected to come back online. – [\*LRK]

Correia, Ana Maria Ramalho and Teixeira, Jose Carlos. **Reforming**

**scholarly publishing and knowledge communication; from the advent of the scholarly journal to the challenges of open access.** Online Information Review 29 (4) 349 – 364.

This article is intended to provide an overview of the changes in scholarly publishing as a result of the rise in Internet technologies and considers issues surrounding self-archiving and the challenges that open access brings to information managers.

A review of the literature provides the reader with a brief history of scholarly publishing since the 17th century and the reasons for its growth. Challenges facing the publication of scholarly works are highlighted, including: the rapid advance of most scholarly fields, intellectual property transference from author to publisher, peer review and the impact of subscription prices on access to serials. The authors mention the new publishing models now afforded disciplines including; e-journals, hybrid-paper electronic journals; author self-posting of materials and e-print repositories. E-print repositories and existing services are discussed in more depth. Of interest to academics are the benefits of archiving works with e-print repositories such as rapid dissemination and the improved archiving of scientific data in varying formats such as multimedia. In addition the authors discuss how use of e-print repositories can reform scholarly communication through the use of additional features such as the potential for adding peer commentaries and observations; how organisations can use e-repositories to enhance visibility, prestige and to attract funding; and the value of e-print repositories to scholars in poorly resourced countries. The Open Archives Initiative, The Budapest Open Access Initiative and general issues surrounding open access journals are discussed as

regards their potential contribution to archiving and electronic scholarly dissemination. Finally information managers are suggested as having key roles to play. Roles include the setting up of open access repositories; ensuring archival stability; the promotion of discussion on the advantages of open access; devise performance indicators; advise on copyright and support potential authors.

Overall an informative article providing background details on the issues surrounding open access. Information managers interested in considering or developing open access resources will be able to identify and follow up points for further investigation. – [SM]

Dudman, Jane. **Sons in the key of life** Information World Review, 215 (July/August 2005): 14-15. – An interview with John Jarvis, the MD of Wiley UK. He talks about the history of this family-run US publishing company. The interview also looks at Wiley's plans to digitise all of its journals this year, and the future, generally, of e-publishing. – [RN]

Hayward, Eira. **On-line competition forces legal publishing shake up** Information World Review, 216 (September 2005): 12-13. – An overview of some of the changes in the legal publishing industry, and the moves to provide more data in an electronic format for both the larger players (LexisNexis Butterworths and Sweet & Maxwell) as well as the smaller legal publishers. There are brief mentions of some future developments within the area, and also the rather worrying statement that lawyers widely use Google as their first port of call when conducting research, rather than reliable, verified subscription sources. – [RN]

## General

Benczúr, David. **Environmental scanning: how developed is information acquisition in Western European companies.** Information Research 11(1), 2005. [Available at <http://InformationR.net/ir/11-1/paper241.html>]. – Benczúr looks for an answer to whether the impact of the Internet and other Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) on Competitive Intelligence is still unknown or too insignificant to consider. Based on a literature survey of empirical reports, hypotheses were established and tested on an existing database containing information on more than 500 firms collected over two years. The field study showed that firms are still underdeveloped, but higher sales, better information technology development, environmental uncertainty and an organization turned outwards were correlated with a higher level of development. [IF]

Caldwell, Tracey. **Resolution to Persistence** Information World Review, 217 (October 2005): 20-21. – Tracey Caldwell looks at linking technologies, discussing initiatives such as OpenURL as used by Edina, the JISC-funded national data centre. It also discusses cross publisher linking with CrossRef and the increasing awareness and use of Digital Object Identifiers (DOI). – [RN]

**In Depth: Libraries** Chronicle of Higher Education (30 September 2005) (<http://chronicle.com/indepth/libraries/>). – This is a special Chronicle supplement on libraries containing a package of stories, most of which are available to subscribers only: Thoughtful Designs: "As they renovate old libraries and plan new ones, colleges consider the purpose of the buildings — and how to make them popular." Evolving Roles: "Today's reference librarians need IT

and pedagogical skills. Institutions are adapting in various ways", says W. Lee Hisle. The Beauty of Browsing: "Fred D. White doesn't want stacks closed and mechanized. He wants to hold books in his hand and see where they take him." Should Librarians Get Tenure? Yes, It's Crucial to Their Jobs: "College librarians are crucial partners in teaching and research, and they should be eligible for tenure like their faculty colleagues, says Catherine Murray-Rust." (This one is available free to non-subscribers.) Should Librarians Get Tenure? No, It Can Hamper Their Roles: "Librarians should be involved in college governance, but, writes Deborah A. Carver, they don't face the academic-freedom issues that professors do, and don't need tenure." (This one is available free to non-subscribers.) – [\*SK]

## Information Access/Retrieval

Almasy, Edward. **Tools for creating your own resource portal: CWIS and the Scout Portal Toolkit.** Library Trends 53(4). – Edward Almasy, co-director of the Internet Scout Project, is also dedicated to facilitating the development of easily searchable subject gateway systems for the academic community and beyond. In "Tools for creating your own resource portal: CWIS and the Scout Portal Toolkit," Almasy describes a user-friendly means for building high-quality subject gateways. He and his colleagues have developed the Scout Portal Toolkit (SPT) and the Collection Workflow Integration System (CWIS). The two software packages are very easy to maintain and operate and easy for non-technical staff to download, set up, and populate with metadata. – [IF]

Biever, C. **Sex, lies and cyberpower** New Scientist 2515 (2005):117. – A proposal in 2000 to suffix pornography



web sites with an .xxx domain has opened up a hornet's nest of concerns over how the Internet is controlled. Initially the idea won backing from US politicians and ICANN, the US-based organisation that approves domain names. However, civil liberty groups, conservative organisations and many foreign governments have since raised objections. Initial opposition to the .xxx on moral grounds has now grown into a game of political football. The US Department of Commerce is opposed to the .xxx and has the power to overrule ICANN's decision, though till now it has never done this. If ICANN bows to such pressure, observers will see this as evidence that ICANN is too strongly influenced by the US government, and have expressed greater concerns as to who has ultimate control over the governance of the Internet itself. It is a testing time for ICANN and its independent status. Their final decision was due mid-September. – [LF]

Ebersole, Samuel. **On their own: students' academic use of the commercialized Web.** *Library Trends* 53(4). – Samuel Ebersole considers school students' use of search engines. He found that students' research is influenced by commercial sources and that students do not have sufficient help in negotiating the Web environment. He considers developments that may be of particular interest to parents and students. – [IF]

Enochsson, AnnBritt. **The development of children's Web searching skills – a non-linear model.** *Information Research* 11(1) 2005. – Enochsson used an ethnographic approach to determine the various skills required for information seeking on the Internet in an educational setting. She took a socio-cultural perspective in considering students' perspectives on the possibilities and difficulties in using the

Internet. NUD\*IST software is used for the qualitative analyses of interviews and questionnaires. These are supplemented with log analysis. Students regard six skills as fundamental: language, knowledge about the technology, knowledge about different ways of information seeking, how search engines work, setting goals and being critical.- [IF]

**Enterprise Search and Knowledge Retrieval** *Information World Review*, 217 (October 2005): 29-30. – A sector update providing a focus on some of the key providers in the search and retrieval market. This looks at their main products, key users, and new developments. The companies covered are: Autonomy, Convera, Endeca, Fast Search & Transfer (FAST), Google, Solcara and Verity. – [RN]

Fabos, Bettina (ed). **Library Trends** 53(4), edited by Bettina Fabos, addresses Web content within the context of Internet commercialization and democracy, and includes a wealth of information for UKeiG members. With input from a variety of disciplines such as communication studies, informatics, information management, research programming, computer science, engineering, and library science the problem of search engine commercialization as well as solutions to the problem are addressed. According to Fabos the ongoing work toward subject gateway development based on free, open source software, provides a limited but growing counter reaction to the commercialization of "the universe of knowledge." It is especially important that librarians and citizens should work together to ensure democratic access to information that is

not clouded by the commercial interests of search engines. – [IF]

Frechette, Julie. **Cyber-democracy or cyber-hegemony? Exploring the political and economic structures of the Internet as an alternative source of information.** Library Trends 53(4). – Julie Frechette investigates Web filtering software, which public officials are currently pushing in public libraries and schools. She argues that unlike measures to block or filter online information, students need to be empowered to analyse, evaluate and judge the information they receive. – [IF]

Griffiths, Jillian and Brophy, Peter. **Student searching behavior and the Web: use of academic resources and Google.** Library Trends 53(4). – Jillian Griffiths and Peter Brophy discuss student searching tendencies at college level: students depend heavily on search engines rather than other academic resources, and not surprisingly, Google is the favourite. They consider students' perceptions of ease of use, success, time taken to search and reasons for stopping a search. – [IF]

Jones, Paul. **Strategies and technologies of sharing in contributor-run archives.** Library Trends 53(4). – Paul Jones illustrates the important developments in the collaborative subject gateway movement. He discusses contributor-run archives such as the Linux Documentation Project, the Degree Confluence Project, and Etree.org – all technologically inventive portals supported by passionate volunteers who cooperate to build these open source services. These are based on the input of experts and public citizens, with no librarians being involved. – [IF]

Koch, Alison L; Arfken, C.L.; Dickson, M.W.; Agius, E. & Mitchel, J.K. **Variables associated with environmental scanning among clinicians at substance abuse treatment clinics.** Information Research, 11(1) 2005. [Available at <http://InformationR.net/ir/11-1/paper244.html> ]. – The authors aimed to identify variables associated with higher levels of environmental scanning among substance abuse treatment clinicians. A cross-sectional survey was administered to 162 clinicians at fifteen substance abuse treatment clinics in Michigan, which were selected based upon treatment modality, population served, geographic location, and affiliation with the Clinical Trials Network. Environmental scanning was measured by frequency of use of the Internet, journals, seminars or conferences, and people at other treatment clinics for new substance abuse treatment information. Clinicians were asked for their perceptions of their clinic's openness to new treatment techniques and support for acquiring new information, access to and satisfaction with information sources at work, as well as if they feel it is their job to keep up to date with current treatment research. Additional measures included whether they intended to quit their jobs and whether they were emotionally drained from work. Positive associations were found between environmental scanning and perceived clinic support for acquiring new information, perceived clinic openness to new treatment techniques, access to e-mail and Internet at work, and satisfaction with resources. Turnover intention and being emotionally drained were negatively associated with environmental scanning. The authors conclude that individual and organizational level variables were associated with higher levels of environmental scanning activity. Although the causal directions of these

associations are not known, the findings suggest ways to increase environmental scanning among clinicians. – [IF]

Kourtell, Liana. **Scanning the business external environment for information.** Information Research, 11(1) 2005. [Available at <http://InformationR.net/ir/11-1/paper242.html> ]. – Examines the business external environment scanning theory for information in the context of Greece. By means of a questionnaire the relationships between the general and task business environment, perceived uncertainty, scanning strategy, and sources of information with respect to type of environment, size and industry are explored. The sample covered 144 private organizations operating in North Greece. Perceived uncertainty of the general and task business external environment factors depend on the type of the environment, size of organization, and industry where the organizations operate. Organizations adapt their scanning strategy to the complexity of the environment, and personal sources of information seem to be more important than impersonal sources. External sources of information are equally important with internal sources; and higher levels of environmental uncertainty are associated with higher levels of scanning the various sources. Kourtell concludes that business external environment scanning of information is influenced by the characteristics of the organizations themselves and by the characteristics of the external environment within which the organizations operate. – [IF]

Lavoie, Brian, Lynn Silipigni Connaway, and Lorcan Dempsey. **Anatomy of Aggregate Collections: The Example of Google Print for Libraries.** D-Lib Magazine 11(9) (September 2005) (<http://www.dlib.org/dlib/september05/la>

[voie/09lavoie.html](http://www.dlib.org/dlib/september05/la) ). – Google's plan to digitize parts of the collections of four large research libraries, and the entire collection of one has certainly raised some important questions. In this interesting piece, OCLC staff looks at five aspects of the project based on what they know of the collections from information in WorldCat: coverage, language, copyright, works, and convergence. They found that the combined collections of the 'Google 5' libraries cover approximately one-third of the items in the entire WorldCat database. Of that one-third, 61% of the items were held by only one library of the Google 5; only 3% were held by all five. There are other intriguing findings, not the least of which is that over 80% of the books to be digitized are still under copyright. This piece is essential reading for anyone interested in the Google Library project. – [\*RT]

Liu, Xiaoming et al. **Lessons learned with Arc, an OAI-PMH Service Provider.** Library Trends 53(4). – The authors discuss the success of Arc, the first end-user OAI-PMH service provider. The searchable repository can serve as a model of future academic Web searching. – [IF]

Shreeves, Sarah et al. **Current developments and future trends for the OAI protocol for metadata harvesting.** Library Trends 53(4). – Sarah Shreeves, Thomas Habing, Kat Hagedorn, and Jeffrey Young report on the latest developments and future directions within the Open Archives Initiative (OAI) community. – [IF]

Singh, Rachael. **Market Research and Business Intelligence** Information World Review, 215 (July/August 2005): 16-17. – A useful run-down of key market research and business intelligence resources. The reviews cover Aroq, Business Monitor

International, Datamonitor, Economist Intelligence Unit, Euromonitor International, Global Insight, KeyNote, Marketresearch.com, Snapdata International Group and Thomson Dialog. Each review gives an overview of the providers and covers new products and services, reference sites and any other new initiatives. – [RN]

Sullivan, Danny. **"End of Size Wars? Google Stays Most Comprehensive But Drops Home Page Count"** SearchEngineWatch (27 September 2005) (<http://searchenginewatch.com/searchday/article.php/3551586>). – Sullivan reports that Google has removed the "page count" figure from its home page, although it still claims to offer "the most comprehensive collection of web documents available to searchers." Since, as he points out, this move "divorces the notion of page counting as a way to 'prove' comprehensiveness," it will help to quell, somewhat, the ongoing "search engine wars." Search engines have touted the size of their databases "as a quick, effective way to give the impression they were more relevant," which is simply not true. As every information profession knows, bigger is not always better; relevancy of search results is what really counts. Another important factor is duplication of content. What good, really, is a huge database that returns a large percentage of duplicate results? Sullivan provides an overview of some of the more recent battles in the ongoing search engine war, as well as reviewing some studies on the accuracy (or lack thereof) of individual search engine database size claims. And there is considerable question how worthwhile these sort of comparisons are, anyhow. "Quality includes comprehensiveness. So if someone devises a test of real queries, things that don't involve rare words but

instead rare information on the web, that's of interest." – [\*SK]

Thomas, Kim. **Local sites for local people** Information World Review, 217 (October 2005): 17-19. – A look at the implementation of the e-Government Interoperability Framework (e-GIF) within local councils as their December 2005 deadline comes closer. The idea behind e-GIF is to provide 'joined-up' systems for citizens to alleviate issues of them not knowing where to locate local information. E-GIF will allow databases belonging to, for example, the police and social services to work together to provide an integrated service for information provision. To enable this there are a series of standards to which councils should adhere, but the concern is that in the rush to ensure online access is available, not all of the standards are being met. The article includes a case study of the portal 'Dorset-for-you'. – [RN]

Walker, Jill. **Links and Power: The Political Economy of Linking on the Web** Library Trends 53(4). – Jill Walker presents search engines as commercial entities that reinforce the most powerfully funded information. – [IF]

Winder, Davey. **A Wider View** Information World Review, 216, (September 2005): 18-20. – A discussion of the market for Enterprise Search technology providers and the future developments for this area. It touches on the limits of simple desktop search providers such as Google, and the advanced needs of users for better enterprise search functionality and the industry's attempts to meet those requirements. There are some interesting notes on semantic search and search linguistics, apparently the next step forward for enterprise search, as well as some discussion of the growth of folksonomies. – [RN]

Winder, Davey. **News in Views**  
Information World Review, 217 (October 2005): 25-27. – A look at five RSS news aggregators; BottomFeeder, NetNewsWire, Newsgator, NewzCrawler and FeedforAll. Discusses the way the services work and outlines their pros and cons. – [RN]

## Legal Issues

Band, Jonathan. **The Google Print Library Project: A Copyright Analysis.** E-Commerce Law & Policy 8 (2005)  
(<http://www.policybandwidth.com/doc/googleprint.pdf>). – This analysis by a noted copyright lawyer examines how the Google Print program works and dissects its copyright implications. It concludes: "By limiting the search results to a few sentences before and after the search term, the program will not conflict with the normal exploitation of works nor unreasonably prejudice the legitimate interests of rights holders. To the contrary, it often will often increase demand for copyrighted works." (The article link is to a preprint.) – [\*CB]

Smallwood, Robert. **DRM in ERM: Know Your Rights Providers**  
EContent: Digital Content Strategies & Solutions 28(9) (September 2005): 34-41.  
(<http://www.econtentmag.com/?ArticleID=13481> ). – Digital rights management is a hot-button issue among information providers, discussed in the same context as fair use, and the author points out that it usually refers to "protections of digital entertainment files in the business-to-consumer marketplace." Though DRM and ERM, or enterprise rights management, aren't entirely distinct from each other, ERM is the subject here so we're looking at the management and protection of confidential information both inside and outside an organization's firewall. IT

managers, CIOs and others with the responsibility for securing intellectual property will benefit from Smallwood's overview of current security tools and the companies that are developing them. He provides context, relating the systems to platforms and commonly used office software, and interesting sidelights such as the particular hoops to jump through in China, where encryption may be illegal but business information theft is on the rise. For those of us who have to be more concerned with defending access to what the public has a right to, perhaps "know your enemy" is a bit strong, but the article increases awareness of what may need to be monitored for inappropriate use or overuse. There are two sidebars, one describing recent developments in standards for DRM/ERM software, and the other profiling the holders of patents behind some of the products described in the main body of the article. – [\*JR]

## Metadata

Kelly, Brian et al. **Gateway standardization: a quality assurance framework for metadata.** Library Trends 53(4). Brian Kelly, Amanda Closier, and Debra Hiom discuss the various strategies for streamlining metadata when adding new resources and maintaining subject gateways once they are built. They have developed a toolkit that works as a straightforward self-assessment tool for subject gateway developers. – [IF]

## Preservation

Rosenthal, David S. H., Thomas Robertson, and Tom Lipkis, et al. **Requirements for Digital Preservation Systems: A Bottom-Up Approach** (September 2005)  
(<http://www.arxiv.org/abs/cs.DL/0509018> ). – This paper inspects threats to digital preservation repositories from



internal issues such as the failure of storage media, hardware, software, operator error, natural disaster, external attack, economic failure, organizational failure, and others. The authors then suggest strategies to address these issues, such as replication, transparency, migration, diversity, audit, sloth (yes, sloth), and others. The paper ends with some specific recommendations for repositories, many of them focused on open disclosure of internal policies and procedures. – [\*RT]

### Virtual Libraries

Mitchell, Steve. **Collaboration enabling Internet resource collection-building software and technologies.** Library Trends 53(4). – Steve Mitchell discusses a virtual library collection-building software platform in this article. – [IF]

### Weblogs And Wikis

Caldwell, Tracey. **Pen a blog buster** Information World Review, 216 (September 2005): 16-17. – Blogs continue to be on the up and up, and this article looks in particular at their use within academic libraries. It touches on issues against the use of web logs, noting the high-profile doubts of Michael Gorman of the ALA amongst others, but also focuses on libraries where blogs have been successfully introduced and promoted, including Warwick University and a case study of their use at Loughborough University. – [RN]

Farkas, Meredith. **"Survey of the Biblioblogosphere: Results"** Information Wants to Be Free (12 September 2005) (<http://meredith.wolfwater.com/wordpress/index.php/2005/09/12/survey-of-the-biblioblogosphere-results/>). – Who are

the library bloggers? If you think they are mainly under 30, the results of this survey may surprise you. For example, 16.4% were 41 to 50, 8.5% were 51 to 60, and 3% were over 60. OK, the research design may not pass *JAS/ST* standards, but this is a fascinating glimpse into what is going on in the biblioblogosphere in terms of blogger demographics, attitudes, behaviours, and motivations. – [\*CB]

Gerry McKiernan, **"WikimediaWorlds. Part I. Wikipedia,"** Library Hi Tech = News 22, no. 8 (September/October 2005): 46-54. Purpose – This article is part 1 of a two-part series on wikis. Part 1 focuses on Wikipedia. Design/methodology/approach – The article is prepared by a library professional and provides a summary of the main features. Findings – A wiki is a piece of server software that allows users to freely create and edit web page content using any web browser. Wiki supports hyperlinks and has a simple text syntax for creating new pages and crosslinks between internal pages on the fly. – [Publisher]

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## Book Reviews

### **Managing suppliers and partners for the academic library**

David Ball, with contributions from Jane Ryland and Jill Beard. London: Facet Publishing, 2005. 184pp. ISBN 1-85604-547-1

Universities are facing fundamental changes on two fronts: the effects of the electronic revolution and its impact on educational technology and research, and the emphasis on widening participation and collaboration between institutions. This book focuses on two types of relationships now critical to academic libraries: those with commercial suppliers and those with partner institutions.

Suppliers are defined both as publishers and aggregators providing materials, electronic and print, and systems vendors supplying library management systems and virtual learning environments. The authors emphasise the importance of the right specification and ongoing contract management both at the outset and throughout the life of the contract. Other issues covered include the information chain, issues in electronic purchasing such as the pros and cons of the "big deal", licensing constraints, consortia, pricing models and outsourcing. An important conclusion highlighted by Ball is that user involvement can often be left out once a contract process is underway. Issues of concern to librarians rather than those of users are highlighted. While it is not suggested users should be made to pay, the economic consequences of their demands should be made clear to them.

The second section of the book covers relationships between HE and FE colleges and the NHS. The relationship with these two sectors are opposite in one fundamental sense. Whereas in the "franchising" relationships with FE colleges the HEI is the commissioner; with the NHS it is the NHS that commissions the service from the HEI. There are however many similarities and, as for suppliers, an effective management of the partnership, with its formalised terms and conditions, is involved.

The book is particularly well illustrated with evidence from a wide range of studies to support its points, with examples ranging from the actual number of documents in institutional repositories to the percentage of journals in blanket deals actually consulted by users. Examples are taken both from UK, academic and public sector, and USA.

The authors conclude that the current environment offers the opportunity for university libraries to contribute to the development of HE provision and to influence in their favour the commercial environment. This book offers a comprehensive yet succinct guide in support of librarians working towards this end.

Helen Edwards. Head of Information Services, London Business School

### **Why Intranets Fail (and How to Fix Them)**

Luke Tredinnick. Oxford: Chandos Publishing, 2004. 174pp. ISBN 1-84334-068-2.

There's no end to the ever-increasing number of books on computing: word-

processing, operating systems, the Internet. Strangely, however, in bookshops otherwise well stocked with computing titles, I can never find more than one or two books on intranets.

Why is this? It's not because of a shortage of intranet implementations. Any company with more than a few staff is likely today to have an intranet. Is it because they are simple to install and to manage? Certainly not, as Tredinnick shows clearly in his book. Intranets are difficult, and you don't have to go far to find one that is not as successful as its creators intended.

Tredinnick's perspective is clear: he thinks the way to avoid failure with your intranet is to involve information professionals, and not just to leave it to the IT staff. According to the author, we are all becoming information professionals nowadays. Even an accountant or an auditor deals only in information. However, what makes an information professional distinctive is that they see information as an end in itself. However this may be, their goal it to be self-effacing: the book's final sentence is the stirring: "A truly successful intranet allows the users to forget it is ever there."

So this is a refreshingly objective guide to the reality of intranets, and free of technical jargon. The helpful annotated bibliography points out that most books published on intranets "exude the uncritical enthusiasm for the potential of intranets to which this book is in part intended to form a cautious coda." The great strength of Tredinnick's book is that it is informed by information management theory, based on experience, and cautious.

Interestingly, if the book has a fault, it is that it is less a cookbook than an explanation of where we all went wrong.

The second part of the book, the how-to section, makes far more sense when read after the background discussion in part one. Although there are very useful tips in the book, the most interesting part for me was the analysis, which outlined some of the problems that intranets can face, rather than the cookbook section describing how to fix it. The recommendations become more meaningful from the context in which they are put.

The first part of the book explains in workmanlike fashion the corporate setting into which intranets are introduced. The author describes the six categories of intranet user, and the four functions of intranets, and begins by quoting the three reported functions users most want from their intranet: effective searching, good navigation aids, and up-to-date and relevant content. Here, as in other areas of research, the author is good at teasing out what users really want, rather than what surveys seem to prove they want. Intranets are not like Google: search engines work best on huge quantities of content, while intranets may be more effectively used by drilling down a hierarchy. All this is valuable and has plenty of implications for intranet design.

One of the best sections of the book is the description of navigation hierarchies. After describing information-based hierarchies and process-based hierarchies, he points out that in the virtual world of digital publishing content can be placed in multiple locations. In this way, a template could be found under a general heading of templates, as well as within the department in which the template was created.

Clearly, Tredinnick has experience of working in organisations – he describes



how splitting responsibility for creating sections of the intranet by department can cause problems due to departmental rivalry. (I never trusted that HR department, anyway.)

In one or two places, Tredinnick doesn't stick to his argument. Although the book emphasises the need for user-focused intranet thinking, rather than technology-driven sites, he becomes unnecessarily technical and prescriptive in stating that any documents not in HTML format, such as PDF, or Word documents, should be discouraged from being distributed via the intranet, because their format doesn't lend them to effective linking. But who is to police this format monitoring, and who is to do the conversion? It sounds to me like reinventing the dreaded webmaster role, the bottleneck that prevents the company website ever being up to date.

My experience of intranets is that however imperfect the new world they represent, and whatever legacy formats might be involved in getting the site running from day one, it's usually better than what was there before. Armed with Tredinnick's useful guide, one of the few critical guides available that enable you to create a sensible intranet strategy, the intranet can become steadily more effective.

Michael Upshall

## **Press Releases & News**

### **Adept releases Onfolio 2.0**

Adept Scientific releases Onfolio 2.0, an RSS reader, capturing references from online sites such as newspapers and academic databases. It is used for web research.

Building on the productivity tools in the award-winning web research product,

the new edition adds automatic reference capture from a variety of online sites including newspapers, magazines, academic journals, RSS feeds and academic databases. The Academic and Scientific Edition also adds a bibliography tool and automatic synchronisation of reference data between Onfolio and EndNote. It claims to be the first browser-based web research tool with the ability to automatically capture reference data and content from online news sites, magazines and book sellers, and to be the first RSS reader to support one-click capture of reference data from RSS feeds into EndNote libraries. In addition to these firsts, the new edition also speeds up the process of capturing and filing references from academic databases and journal hosting sites into EndNote libraries. For people who do not use EndNote, Onfolio includes basic bibliography tools that can place formatted references in MS Word documents and on custom-generated web pages. The entire cycle of online research is more efficient using Onfolio, the comprehensive web information-management tool. Seamlessly integrated with Internet Explorer and Firefox, Onfolio captures bookmarks and stores local copies of Web pages, PDF files, charts, e-mails and more into personalised collections for reliable offline access. The RSS reader makes it simple to read, organise and search RSS feeds, providing timely access to new information. Easy-to-use personal publishing tools allow researchers to effortlessly share information with colleagues. The addition of the new Academic and Scientific Edition enables effective handling of bibliographic references, making Onfolio the ideal tool for academic web research.

New features in Onfolio 2.0 Academic and Scientific Edition include:

- Automatic capture of references from a variety of online resources: journals, newspapers, magazines, scholarly databases – PubMed, ISI Web of Knowledge SM – and Amazon.com
- Live synchronisation of reference data between Onfolio collections and associated EndNote libraries
- Automatic capture of reference data from RSS feeds – including RSS feeds from PubMed searches
- Publishing of research reports with links and bibliographies
- Creation of annotated bibliographies in Microsoft Word or HTML

### **Sage announces new options for library consortia**

SAGE Announces Additional Options for Library Consortia

Thousand Oaks, California, and London, United Kingdom (September 26, 2005) – In response to research and feedback from the market, including discussions with the library community, SAGE is expanding its offerings to consortia customers.

SAGE has expanded and refined its library consortia offerings, providing more choices for SAGE journals content. Designed to provide both small and large consortia with the content needed to meet each of their individual libraries' needs, SAGE will now offer the following purchasing options:

- SAGE Premier Collection provides access to the 400+ SAGE journal titles in the social

sciences, humanities, medicine, engineering, and physical and life sciences, with a backfile to 1999 (for consortia wanting access to all of SAGE's peer-reviewed journals). The SAGE Premier Collection will be available only on the HighWire platform.

- SAGE Full-Text Collections, the ten popular discipline-specific databases, include backfiles extending up to 57 years. The SAGE Full-Text Collections are available only on the CSA Illumina platform.
- SAGE Collections Plus includes all ten SAGE Full-Text Collections plus the SAGE titles not included in the Collections (for consortia research libraries requiring the Collections' deep backfiles as well as complete SAGE journals offering). SAGE Collections Plus is a cross-platform offering with the Full-Text Collections portion available via CSA Illumina and the additional SAGE titles on HighWire.

"As the world of online journals continues to evolve," says Blaise Simqu, President and CEO of SAGE, "we remain firmly committed to listening to librarians and consortia to ensure our products and services meet their needs. These changes reflect that commitment."

### **OUP launches Oxford Digital Reference Shelf**

Already available in North and South America, and launched in the rest of the World in October 2005, this service enables customers to purchase e-reference titles from Oxford University

Press. Created from Oxford's print scholarly references, these e-reference resources are searchable with remote access available. Libraries can purchase titles on an individual basis.

'Highly recommended to all libraries serving researchers in the appropriate fields.' Cheryl LaGuardia, Library Journal

Features include:

- Each stand-alone e-reference is searchable, with a range of search options
- Unlimited and remote access allow for increased usage of your reference collection
- No need for special hardware or an online reader
- Bibliographic references in each title are OpenURL compliant to allow for searching of your library's OPAC
- Continuously growing selection of titles to be offered
- Standard usage reports allow you to track title activity
- Increase usage of the print edition by increased awareness of title

Specifications:

- Web-based articles will be delivered in HTML format
- Flexible hosting options – Choose to self-host within your library's own framework, or have Oxford manage the content for a small annual maintenance fee

- XML files will be delivered to self-hosting libraries
- MARC21 records provided at no charge to allow for linking through your library's online catalogue and web sites.

### **Probation Thesaurus published**

The NPRIE (National Probation Research and Information Exchange) "Probation Thesaurus" is now available on the NPRIE Website (<http://www.npie.info>).

Click "Probation Thesaurus" from the menu for the interactive javascript version. It will soon be possible to order printed copies, and to download a printable PDF version from the website.

Also on the website is the Glossary of Acronyms and Abbreviations (in Probation). For further details, contact Steve Burgess ([steve.burgess@west-yorkshire.probation.gsx.gov.uk](mailto:steve.burgess@west-yorkshire.probation.gsx.gov.uk)).