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Innovations Affecting Us

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"Themes" section includes videos of authors speaking about themes of the genre, which also may be linked to articles in the encyclopedia. Grolier has further enhanced the 1.2 million-word book with photos of such science fiction luminaries as Jules Verne, Isaac Asimov, and William Gibson; videos of interviews with leading science fiction authors; and imagery from a variety of science fiction media. This work is available for Windows and Macintosh platforms at a suggested retail price of $59.95.

Grolier Electronic Publishing, Inc.'s 1995 Guinness Multimedia Disc of Records has a new interface to help users find answers about extremes in just about every walk or run of life. The new edition has more than 150 big new pictures, bringing the total to more than 1,000 images to accompany the 15,000 record entries. Videos include new audio tracks to enhance selected movies, adding more narration and music. The expanded list of videos includes a mobile hotel, a record-breaking assortment of jack-o-lanterns, and the longest fingernails in recorded history. Another added feature, What Makes Them Tick?, is a multimedia essay that integrates animation, pictures, audio and video. Here, users can take an in-depth look at some Guinness records based on interviews with some unusual, offbeat, and eccentric record-breakers. The title also contains a new Guess What? game for in-depth record-browsing. This feature poses a question, provides a short and provocative answer, and invites the user to explore the disc further to locate more information on the topic. The multimedia title is available in Windows and Macintosh formats for a suggested retail price of $49.95.

3 Prong Plug Previews Battleships of Stone Medieval Strategy Game

3 Prong Plug, a division of Grolier Electronic Publishing, is working with San Francisco developer, Hypergolc on Battleships of Stone, a first-person experience of a 3D castle siege in the medieval world. The title challenges users to manage a castle and its people. The player must consult with the architect to decide how complex and massive the castle will be. More than an exercise in building walls and turrets, it's an intense experience of siege engines, weaponry, food and weapons rationing, construction techniques, and cost management. A rotating bird's eye view and three-quarter view of the castle under construction provides an idea of the challenge that faced participants in castle life. Using 3D rendering, the player can wander around the castle, viewing battles from the towers and walls to understand what life was like in medieval Europe.

The game takes place in three acts. The first act introduces the medieval world through a series of movie-style scenes. The second act includes a session with the King's own architect who gives the player a box of blocks including gates, walls, stairs, and main buildings to construct a new castle. But the proof of good solid castle-building comes in the third act when a siege challenge is issued just after the castle is inhabited. The siege itself is brought to life by the simulation's 3D, first person perspective. The title brings history and strategy alive and can be replayed through randomly-generated plots of land and changing attacking forces to let the user learn about and appreciate the considerations and challenges of castle life.

UMI Makes Financial Times Available On ProQuest Direct

UMI and The Financial Times Group have signed an agreement to offer Financial Times on ProQuest Direct, UMI's online information system. The agreement calls for Financial Times, with a circulation of more than one million readers in more than 160 countries, to be available on UMI's ProQuest Direct beginning sometime during the second quarter of 1996. Coverage will include issues dating back to January 1995. ProQuest Direct, launched in September, offers users continued on page 82

<http://www.spidergraphics.com/atg>
server architecture, provides wide area access to databases from a variety of platforms. With the new developments, SilverPlatter now offers more choices for accessing ERL-compliant databases. Enhancements to SilverPlatter's Windows interface WinSPIRS 2.0 now provides the capability to search and retrieve information from bibliographic and fulltext databases simultaneously. With fulltext databases, users have the ability to mark sections and paragraphs, not just entire records. Additional enhancements include an improved Suggest feature which provides more accurate suggestions for alternate terms, and improved customization of defaults which enable system administrators to manage end-user activities for showing, printing, and downloading. Several improvements to the design of the interface have been made as a result of usability testing with searchers: “next” and “previous” buttons allow for easier movement between screens, a new option provides viewing of loaded databases, and capability to expand search history to full screen.

WinSPIRS, which is available in a variety of native languages, German, French, and Spanish, has been improved to allow the end-user to select the native language of choice. These native language interfaces offer translated buttons, pull-down menus and help screens. This extension of the interface provides unprecedented access to SilverPlatter databases for non-English speaking communities. While most of the data available is currently in English, related projects at SilverPlatter are designed to increase the number of native language databases.

UNIX access is now provided to SilverPlatter databases. A new version of SPIRS provides a UNIX character-based interface designed to offer terminal or telnet users access to databases located on an ERL Server. Similar in look and feel to PC-SPIRS, this version has the convenience of having terminal-specific keystrokes appear both on screen and throughout the help system. UNIX-SPIRS currently operates on a SUN Solaris Host.

WebSPIRS is a new gateway to SilverPlatter databases via the Internet. WebSPIRS is an http gateway that provides access to ERL-compliant databases from the World Wide Web. Any library or institution that has ERL installed can load WebSPIRS along with the web server to provide their users with an additional means of access via the Internet. Authorized users need only a forms-capable worldwide web browser to use WebSPIRS to search SilverPlatter databases mounted on the library's ERL server. Interested ERL sites can FTP the WebSPIRS gateway from: ftp:silverplatter.com, in the directory: software/erl-client/webspire/linux. Searches can also test the WebSPIRS gateway by visiting SilverPlatter's Home Page at URL: <http://www.silverplatter.com>. WebSPIRS on the Home Page points to SilverPlatter's Library Sampler, subsets of more than sixty databases. For more information, contact: SilverPlatter Information, Inc., 100 River Ridge Drive, Norwood, MA 02062-5043 Tel: 1-800-343-0064 (U.S. and Canada) or 1-617-769-2599 Fax: 1-617-769-8763 Internet: info@silverplatter.com.

Cambridge Scientific Abstracts Signs Partner Publishing Agreement With SilverPlatter

Cambridge Scientific Abstracts (CSA) signed an agreement with SilverPlatter Information to license SilverPlatter's ERL technology to build 37 abstract journal databases. The partnership will permit CSA to use SilverPlatter's ERL technology to create the databases to make them accessible using SPIRS. The databases will be mounted on CSA's server in Bethesda, Maryland and will be available for customers to access via CSA's Internet Database Service (IDS). Ted Caris, Publisher, CSA, commenting on the new relationship with SilverPlatter, said: "Although these databases are currently available from our server via the Internet, they are not searchable using SPIRS. We felt it important to offer these databases with the SPIRS interface because so many searchers are already familiar with SPIRS. Additionally, SPIRS offers a wealth of search features that we cannot currently offer with the existing interface. We also see that these databases will be the perfect complement to our aggregated databases, such as the Life Sciences Collection, currently available from SilverPlatter on CD-ROM. While the Life Sciences Collection is comprised of 22 CSA..."
For Readers Only

by Tom Leonhardt (University of Oklahoma)

With this issue we are instituting a new feature called "For Readers Only." The idea is to devote a page of each issue of Against the Grain to books. The individual theme will vary, infinitely, we hope, but the common line will be books, authors, genres, languages, countries, characters. You get the idea. Suggestions for themes are welcomed. We would like to provide some mystery, too, to keep you interested and reading, so a quiz will generally be included as part of this page for readers only.

We want to encourage non-required reading, reading that is nourishment for the soul, refreshing in the summer when it sizzles and warming in the winter when it drizzles.

The theme for this issue is the sea. This will help you solve the quiz that follows. If you are familiar with German, you know that "See" has two watery meanings. Depending on the article used, it can mean sea or lake. Lake Constance, for example, is Der Bodensee in German.

The sea as a theme is more to the point than trout fishing is to Richard Brautigan's book, Trout Fishing in America, but it is a superficial theme that provides a platform (floating?) for the authors to launch rather long discourses on the meaning of life.

These three books have long been favorites of mine. I had read each of them at least twice before reading them once again over the past holiday season. Each book seems to have improved with age, like fine read wines. I was reminded, too, that each of these books qualify for my "Reading as a Subversive Activity" list.

Can you name these books and their authors from the excerpts below? Two of the books are non-fiction works by famous authors, but only one of the books is famous. One author is of this century, one is from the 19th century. The work of fiction is from the 20th century and was written by a not-so-famous author praised for his works about the sea.

THE EXCERPTS:

A. "How does one organize an expedition: what equipment is taken, what sources read; what are the little dangers and the large ones?"

B. "The sun is but a morning star."

C. "Be master of yourself. The world is not an oyster to be opened, but quicksand to be passed. If you have wings you can fly over it, if not you may — yes, I am coming now, my dear! — you may quite possibly be sucked in."

"A" is the first sentence in the body in the body of the work and follows some preliminary matter. "B" is the last sentence of another work, and "C" is part of a speech delivered by a bookseller to a young man. The speech inspires the young man to give up everything and go off to sea.

Please send your answers to me via e-mail <tom@libadm.lib.ukn.or.edu>, fax (405/325-7550), or USPS (University of Oklahoma, Bizzell Memorial Library, 401 W. Brooks, Norman, OK 73019-0528).

There is a prize for the first correct answer. A drawing will be held should there be a tie. Good luck!

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journals, the 37 IDS databases are focused files and fit specific market segments." This arrangement signifies new opportunities both for Information Providers to publish additional data electronically and for subscribers who will now have electronic access, via the SPIRS interface, to information that was previously unavailable or with limited availability.

The Rutter Group and West Launch Desktop Continuing Education for Lawyers

California lawyers will soon be able to earn Minimum Continuing Legal Education (MCLE) credit from the convenience of their offices, homes, or anywhere that they have access to a computer, using multimedia technology. The Rutter Group and West Publishing announced that a new California-specific multimedia MCLE product is being tested in that state. First available for attorney testing in West's

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to both the National Library of Medicine's (NLM) MeSH database and a site's own catalog via the Unicorn client. George Washington University's Himmelfarb Health Science Library is one of the first sites to use the product.

From OCLC:

* OCLC has announced that Puvill Libros S.A., based in Barcelona, Spain, has agreed to contribute its unique database of Spanish titles to the OCLC Online Union Catalog in early 1996. Approximately 15,600 bibliographic records will be added initially, and some 400 records will be sent to OCLC each week to update the database. The records are in US MARC format and will be available to PRISM users, in the WorldCat database, and on EPIC. OCLC also tells us that cataloging records for European Union publications will be added to the Online Union Catalog. The agreement between the Office for Official Publications of the European Communities (EUR-OP) and OCLC will launch a one-year pilot project in 1996. This project is in response to a proposal from EUROLIB, the cooperative group of European institutional libraries. Following a technical assessment by OCLC of EUR-OP catalog records, a date will be agreed upon for the creation of a EUROLIB/EUR-OP resource file which will be accessible via the OCLC PRISM service. EUROLIB catalogers will upgrade their records to full OCLC records. During the first year pilot, 2,500 records are expected to be added. At the end of the pilot, EUR-OP, EUROLIB, and OCLC will assess the impact of the project.

* OCLC also recently announced that their FirstSearch and EPIC services now offer the EBSCO Magazines database from EBSCO Publishing. Featuring abstracts and indices from more than 2,300 periodicals and ASCII fulltext online from more than 1,000 of those periodicals, EBSCO Magazines is the fourth database on FirstSearch and EPIC to support fulltext online.