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The Nemesis

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The Workaholic Nemesis

by Chuck Hamaker (LSU)

Just to help us remember that it isn't only the big commercial publishers who are problems with uncontrollable interests in increasing prices, Clarendon Press, Oxford England has come out with a revised edition of H. A. Priestly's Introduction to Complex Analysis.

The book originally retailed in 1985-86 for $24.95 (197 pages). The new improved and vastly better 1990 edition is 214 pages and has a list price according to Yankee of $72.00, a list price according to BIP of $49.95 and a CIP record entered in August of 1989 of $37.50. Sort of a Ripley's believe it or not situation. Since the book is a textbook, (Advanced Undergraduate is Yankee's coding) I assume this really is aimed at grad students in mathematics. And we know they are a rich audience. But pity the poor graduate student. For the library world, I guess we can only hope all of this is one big typo.

One of the biggest typos in recent weeks however, deals with that tycoon of tycoons Robert Maxwell who must feel a bit like Donald Trump these days. USA Today reported in late September that he was going to have to sell off 400 million dollars worth of the empire to pay some short term debt. The week after that article, NPR (National Public Radio) ran a spot indicating the "real" figure was $700 million. So far the only sell off I am aware of is Collier Macmillan's sale of P.F. Collier to Germany's Bibliographisches Institut & F.A. Brockhaus. I could be mistaken but I think that means Collier's Encyclopedia can no longer even vaguely be considered an American product. I guess that's only a fair turnaround since Encyclopedia Britannica stopped being a British product at the end of the 19th century. Is Maxwell's problem the one academic and research libraries are struggling with? Did he borrow from the continent for the Macmillan purchase and now must repay in vastly devalued dollars because of currency exchange performance? Somehow, I think that would be poetic justice, if he is paying back DM or even British pounds with costs to service short term loans rising in the 20% plus range. As Donald Trump has learned, it takes a lot of cashflow to pay for the casino.

One of those jazzy little newsletters that libraries often don't buy crossed my desk lately, this one on a topic of a great deal of interest to us. Media Letter: Interactive Media Technology for Business, Education and Entertainment 1,1 (June 1990) has a number of short articles that are written in an English even I can understand. The editor Denise Caruso informs me: "You belong to a select group I believe is especially likely to reap financial and professional rewards from multimedia as it develops into a powerful communications tool for both corporate life and in education and the home." Interestingly enough, although librarians traditionally consider themselves "information providers" they are not mentioned in the ranks of those who have a stake in interactive media and multimedia technologies. "Included in your ranks are: Information providers such as film studies, television networks, news services, traditional publishing houses, photo and music archives...."

A major theme of the newsletter is that multimedia is "about the business of collaboration." Among the issues of common concern to the library, publishing and vendor community addressed in the newsletter are articles such as Caruso's own "Forging a New Copyright Ethos: Nobody wins unless everybody wins" and John Kelly's "Lessons from the Near Future: Developing Multimedia Publications." Sean Callahan's thought provoking article "Forum: How about trying an idea before its time has come" starts out with the provocative statement: "The single biggest issue in multimedia — and electronic publishing in general — is the concept of fair use, compensation and ownership of intellectual property (music, photographs, illustrations, video, etc.) as defined by the copyright laws." He also indicates "Media providers — owners and authors of intellectual property — have been skeptical about digital technology for some time, but I sense a change of attitude in the past year, and it is becoming increasingly hostile." Callahan believes those with the greatest potential interest in this issue, Apple and IBM, etc., "have taken the position that they will support any constructive effort in this area, but will not initiate any action." He volunteers his electronic mailbox as a "repository of industry views on intellectual property rights in the digital world." Contact him through (Appletlink:Savitar; Presslink: Callahan; Connect: SEANCALLAHAN).

And if you have $395.00 for 12 issues send it to : Media Letter, P.O.Box 5199 Belmont CA 94002-9998. In this particular instance continued on page 42
Library Profile
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technology librarians manage their
own branch libraries and function
as an independent “cluster.”

Automation profile: LIAS
(Library Information Access System), locally developed, is the
Libraries’ online catalog, and
supports cataloging, circulation,
fund accounting, and electronic
mail. MicroLIAS, an IBM PC-
based version of LIAS, can be used
to create and maintain databases by
downloading records from LIAS or
by manual input of data. Recently
Acquisitions implemented the Fund
Accounting control System (FACS)
of LIAS, which allows online access
to and manipulation of acquisitions
budget data for twenty library
locations. FACS is available to all
collection development personnel
and library administrators. Library
Computing Services, part of Penn
State’s computing division, is in the
process of migrating LIAS from
Honeywell to DEC computers.
When this project is completed,
LIAS development will focus on
the acquisitions component. Library
personnel work closely with Library
Computing Services in developing
and implementing each LIAS
component.

And They Were There
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For librarians, Frankfurt could
be an important experience. You
can meet with book suppliers from
many countries. There is a
librarians/booksellers meeting area
reserved for this purpose. You can
talk to the top people in larger
publishing houses (by appointment
only, and usually for just a few
minutes), expressing your views
on issues of professional interest.
You can see, by country, what is
being published. There are halls
devoted to art books, children’s
books, and other specific subjects.
For anyone with an interest in the
book world, and I do mean world,
Frankfurt is a worthwhile
experience.

****Some tips on attending the
Frankfurt Book Fair****

Hotels are full for miles around,
and prices go up about 25% for the
duration of the fair. The Book
Fair office can help find private
home accommodations in and
around Frankfurt. Many people
stay in Weisbaden or Heidelberg,
which are less than an hour away
by train. Moderately priced hotels
in Frankfurt are about $125.

Germany, indeed all of Western
Europe, is expensive. Restaurant
prices are comparable to better
restaurants in large US cities.

Busses and trams run to the fair,
and cost about one dollar. Taxis
are comparable to prices in the
States.

There are 10 halls the size of a
typical ALA convention. You
will do a lot of walking. People
wear business attire at the Fair.
The weather is comparable to our
northeast in October. Don’t arrive
the day before the Fair; give
yourself a couple of days to get
over jet lag. The Fair will exhaust
(exhilarate) you.

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Schools, non-profits and
government agencies get a price
break: $95.00, $495.00 outside
North America (Only $8.33 per
issue more for foreigners — have
they been watching the British or
what?) and a special corporate
price of $200.00 each for 10 or
more subscriptions. Hey Katina,
take a page from this group, break
our newsletter down by “type” of
subscriber and you could really
make some money on Against
the Grain. For 12 pages (this first
issue’s size) 12 times a year (144
pages in all) the bargain rate for
Europeans et. al. works out to
$3.44 a page. There are lots of
quotable quotes in the Newsletter
and they fit all sizes.

Some Thoughts
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as the first step, I submit that
a small cadre of like-minded book
people, prepared to commit to
the long, arduous and often
discouraging course which this
transformation of the role of
scholarly librarianship and of the
scholarly enterprise will require,
bond together in a committee
to formulate a position and an action
program aimed at bringing this
transformation about. The
Charleston Conference has proved
itself to be an enduring gathering
of book people prepared to
consider and investigate radical
departures from the presently
accepted dogmas of librarianship
and the place of libraries. I submit
that a handful - 8-12 - of people
who have over the years proved
themselves to be the backbone
of the Conference gather together
to explore the way to proceed.

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