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Oliver Theodor Sitea Obituary

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An ecosystem in the natural world is made up of all the organisms that share the same habitat. This model of a Web of interdependent elements translates well to many aspects of human interaction as well. For example, a software ecosystem usually centers around a particular software platform and is made up of complementary products and components produced by third parties. Each element and producer needs to play well with others and occupy its own niche to keep the ecosystem balanced and stable. Unstable states occur when a system dominates the market and thus does not allow for healthy competition or there are too many products in the same space and some must die in order for the system to find equilibrium.

The Library Ecosystem

What is the library ecosystem? If a library is a platform, like a software system, library vendors and publishers are the companies producing parts and components to plug into this platform. Some of these products are competitors and strive for the same niche, while others live in harmony. However, for library acquisitions and library vendors, the ecosystem is changing rapidly. Just as global warming drives animals and library vendors, the ecosystem is changing in harmony. However, for library acquisitions and library vendors, the ecosystem is changing rapidly. Just as global warming drives animals and library vendors, the ecosystem is changing rapidly. For a vendor, being chosen on the basis of an order system is positive feedback. These ordering systems will begin to be a factor in libraries’ choice of vendors, since they provide automation to the library ordering process and can make dwindling acquisition departments more efficient and effective. Many systems however, are not developed to the point of being an advantage for vendors. In this case, a more incremental kind of feedback is needed to help develop the system. Feedback from librarians is important for these ordering systems since librarians know what they will need and want from these products. However, those who are most involved in using the product often have the fewest established lines of communication for requesting additions or changes in the software. Vendor advisory groups are usually higher level librarians who are able to travel to meet with the group or able to spend part of their work day interacting with vendors. The staff that use the product on a regular basis are more likely to be library staff that do not travel or meet with outside parties. How can vendors sell out practical feedback so their product can grow to meet the needs of its users? Online tools can help, whether user forums for questions and answers about the software, Webinars that encourage users to ask questions and make suggestions, or just a prominent link to a feedback form within the system.

Feedback

Feedback in an ecosystem could mean the survival of a new species. If you change your behavior and it leads to a better food supply, you have received positive feedback and will continue the new behavior. For a vendor, being chosen on the basis of an order system is positive feedback. These ordering systems will begin to be a factor in libraries’ choice of vendors, since they provide automation to the library ordering process and can make dwindling acquisition departments more efficient and effective.

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Finding your Niche

The ordering system is just one possible adaptive advantage to a vendor in the library ecosystem. But the need for symbiotic evolution holds true across a large part of our relationships. As libraries and library vendors adapt to a rapidly changing environment, we must talk with each other about what we need to survive, and what we can realistically accomplish along the way.