2009

People Profile: Rich Rosy

Editor

Follow this and additional works at: http://docs.lib.purdue.edu/atg
Part of the Library and Information Science Commons

Recommended Citation
DOI: http://dx.doi.org/10.7771/2380-176X.2512

This document has been made available through Purdue e-Pubs, a service of the Purdue University Libraries. Please contact epubs@purdue.edu for additional information.
needs. At Texas we’ve had a wide-open patron driven pay-per-view model for over 18 months, and so far, our spending has consistently met our projections. But a slight miscalculation could result in invoices with nasty surprises and theoretically even force the library to shut off the information spigot in the middle of the semester just when wide open access is needed the most. In other words, it’s probably best to take a controlled approach, such as with a portfolio-based collection and budgeting model, in which a portion of the budget is allocated to pay-per-view, a portion to print-on-demand, a portion to traditional just-in-case purchases, etc. Of course, in an ideal world the key to making this type of model work would be to base decisions on actual user information seeking behavior patterns, instead of going along with the usual messiness of campus politics and egos, but for now a portfolio approach is probably best.

Providing discovery mechanisms in a networked world in which library content changes second-by-second 24 hours a day, cannot be handled by a stand-alone OPAC even if every library had 1,000 catalogers and unlimited server capacity. It’s questionable whether we even want a collection of shelved objects within four walls to be called a “library” in today’s world. We may eventually decide to use a new term for such collections, something along the lines of a “disconnected” or “orphaned” library.” In any case a large centralized knowledge-base containing records for hundreds of millions of items is going to be essential for a functioning networked library. Whether this knowledge base is going to be WorldCat Local, Google, or a next-generation commercial product is difficult to say, but when Google Books already contains the full-text of seven million volumes, and articles are produced by the tens of thousands a day, library discovery efforts are going to have to improve or we risk being left in the ditch by the side of the road.

RR: First of all, libraries must acknowledge the need for change. Once they embrace this changing landscape they can begin to better understand how it affects libraries. There is more information available and in more formats than ever before. The demand for content is increased. People are confronted with the reality of shrinking budgets. When evaluating new options, we must first ask the question: “How does this fit into my library?” They should also bear in mind that, over time, there will be more and more information available in various forms of e-content such as journals, books and other library material, including materials made available by Google.

ATG: How about audio books and mobile devices? As was predicted at the Charleston Conference many years ago, will we be tied to our iPhones, Blackberries, and the like for all our content in the future?

DD: I don’t own a cell phone or any other mobile thought interruption device because they interfere with my ability to achieve any semblance of personal coherent mental activity. But, I realize others are more cognitively nimble and view these devices as brain extensions, kind of like having a second brain in their pockets except with different and more reliable abilities. In that sense, all of these gadgets are essentially personal mobility devices, similar to cars, except that they enable thought mobility rather than bodily mobility. Because of this, I believe we will be tied to these devices forever, just like we are tied to our cars, even though some people still use horses, bicycles, and buses to get around. In other words, these devices are brain extenders and there are similar devices out there already (like the printed book), so having one more brain extender and thought mobility device seems harmless enough and a good idea (…but I still have no intention of buying a cell phone). Audio books are an unalloyed good, especially if they can be made device independent and easily downloadable.

RR: As I mentioned earlier, these are all points of access to content. We live in a traveling society, constantly in motion. In addition, as the amount of content available grows, it is only natural that the number of access points would increase as well. As for audiobooks, they are also going to become more widely available. Ingram Digital is one of the companies at the forefront of that trend. We will be launching a significant audiobook initiative in Q1.

ATG: There was a panel of expert library directors (Nancy Eaton, Joyce Ogburn and Rick Luce) at the 2008 Charleston Conference predicting the library of 2020. What will academic libraries be like in 2020? That’s only 11 years away!

DD: I originally got into libraries when it dawned on me that over 95% of the books remained on the shelves at any one time, and that the vast majority of the books would be lucky to get checked out once every ten years. Any profession that was this comfortable with a failure to move its inventory, and that seemed to celebrate idiosyncratic book choices that were seldom or never checked out — seemed like a profession that valued the individual, and a place where I could find a home. I suspect that by 2020, we’ll be able to take this model global. If there is a worldwide network containing most of the world’s books, articles, images, etc., including those that are seldom used — then libraries are going to be a necessary part of this infrastructure. Publishers will be anxious to insure that any items used thousands of times a day remain available, but it will take library interests, resources, infrastructure, and