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The Google Effect -- Part 1

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The Google Effect – Part 1

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Google’s mission is to organize the world’s information and make it universally accessible and useful. Although it was founded in 1998, and has been a public company for less than four years, Google is now the world’s largest search engine.

Today, Google’s influence in the information and media market spaces continues to grow through acquisition, software creation, and growing advertising revenues. At this point, we thought it would be interesting to hear what you think about Google, and your response has been overwhelming! It seems that there are many “Google Effects,” so we decided to devote both the April and June 2008 issues to this topic. In this issue, we hear from librarians that use Google products to teach students about information literacy, aid in technical services, evaluate traditional indexing and abstracting services, explore the accessibility of government information and professional collaboration.

Aline Soules (“I Google, You Google, We Google...”) discusses how she uses Google in her information literacy classes to introduce topics such as copyright, privacy, the mechanics of the Internet, etc. Aline also addresses collection development issues such as maintaining print, why buy whole books when students only read sections, and do we need perpetual access.

Carol H. Jewell (“Using Google in Technical Services: An Unscientific Survey”) conducted an informal survey of technical services librarians to see how they used Google. She shares responses from a large variety of librarians mostly in North America. She found that technical services librarians were using both Google tools as well as the search interface.

If Rumors Were Horses

And surprising news! After 30 years at Elsevier, the most fabulous John Tagler has decided to make a career change. He has accepted the position as Vice President & Executive Director of the AAP/Professional and Scholarly Publishing Division. John will be working out of AAP’s New York Office. John’s last day at Elsevier was April 15th and he began work at AAP/PSP on April 21st. Thank heavens John will continue to be in touch with most of us as he uses his experience and knowledge of STM publishing in an industry-wide setting. His personal email address is <jtagler@aol.com>. A huge congratulations, John!

And, speaking of people leaving long-time jobs, effective June 16, the incredible Mary Page will be the AUL for Technical Services at the University of California at Davis. Mary says that this is an amazing opportunity for her and she is looking forward to being part of one of the finest public universities in the States. Not to mention how excited she is to be moving to California. Did you realize that Mary has been at Rutgers for 18 years (it hardly seems possible). Says Mary: “I’ve worked with wonderful people who have challenged me to do things I never thought I was capable of, with every support and encouragement. Rutgers will always be with me, and I hold good memories of the university that educated me and employed me for a good part of my working life. No disrespect to the Davis Aggies, but I will always be a Scarlet...”
collection have previously been available at a few American universities, but NC State now offers access to the entire range of 7,200 journals, encompassing more than 23 million full-text articles.

www.lib.ncsu.edu/

www.eastview.com

Despite everything he has on his plate, the incredible Bryan Carson <bryan.carson@WKU.edu> managed to complete his column Legally Speaking for the April Against the Grain. The column is about the Legal Concept of Privacy. Bryan is always right on point, isn’t he? And let’s wish him luck! He has his comps for his Ed.D in Higher Ed. Leadership & Policy from Vanderbilt University coming up in May, 2008. Bryan says he also has to complete a consulting project with a real client instead of a dissertation. He expects to graduate in May, 2009 “with more degrees behind [his] name and more gray in his already thinning hair.” BUT – he is still planning on writing for ATG. And he is going to attend ALA in Anaheim this summer! Whew! What a roller-coaster life!

And the awesome Elaine Robbins (see her review of The Informed Librarian Online, this issue, p.54) is leaving the College of Charleston library for other environs – military environs! That’s right! Elaine is leaving the College for the Citadel where she will be a reference and instruction librarian. We will miss her but hope to continue to keep her in our ATG pages! Congrats, Elaine and good luck, especially saluting!

And I don’t think I told you that I was dismayed to learn that DVDs have region and country codes. They may be encoded so they will only play in a certain country of region. We just found out when a DVD we bought from Italy would not play on our machines. Gosh! Found this entry in Wikipedia which seems to be accurate. en.wikipedia.org/wiki/DVD_region_code

Also, see the ATG New Channel – www.against-the-grain.com.

Fascinating article in the Weekend Journal (The Wall Street Journal, April 5-6, 2008) about Germaine Greer’s newly released book Shakespeare’s Wife. (Harper, 978-0061537185. 416 p., $26.95.) The article’s about Anne (sometimes spelled Ann) Hathaway, “The 26-year-old harridan who trapped innocent 18-year-old William Shakespeare into marriage by getting pregnant.” See “The Bard’s Better Half: Germaine Greer Aims to Restore the Name of “Shakespeare’s Wife” by Cynthia Crossen. Little is actually known about the Hathaway/Shakespeare relationship but it seems fun to try to find out as much as we can!

The Op Ed in this issue – What is a Book? – is by David Lindley <David@aptitude.me.uk> who used to be with Coutts. It builds on a talk David gave in the UK last year. David is now running a freelance creative agency for libraries in the UK.

This month’s Group Therapy poses the question about bringing faculty into the decision as to whether or not to eliminate all print subscriptions even for current issues of a journal. It was interesting to me that the other day I got a email from a faculty member in the History Department. We had dropped a print subscription to a journal and replaced it with the electronic version. He was pleading with us to reinstating the print journal AND to continue to keep the electronic journal. He had good reasons. We decided to reinstating the print. Of course, the low cost of the print title was a factor. For more perspectives on this issue, see Group Therapy, p.64.

The 2008 Charleston Conference Website is coming to life. Our theme is “The Best of Times ... The Worst of Times.” We have posted information on hotels and some program information and speakers are also appearing. We are lucky to have several speakers already listed: Rick Anderson (University of Utah); Nancy Eaton (Penn State University); Derek Law (University of Strathclyde); Deana Marcum (Library of Congress); Michael Moss (University of Glasgow); Joyce Ogburn (University of Utah); Pat Schroeder (Association of American Publishers) and John Unsworth (University of Illinois). We hope to have registration information up in late May. And we have already received many proposals for papers, etc. You can suggest a paper or proposal from the Website NOW! Go and do it! Do not put it off!

www.katina.info/conf

Interesting article in the New York Times Monday, March 17, 2008 about Jimmy Wales and Wikipedia. Wikipedia is a non-profit and is experiencing the growing pains of success. There are issues of investment in Wikipedia from venture capital firms among others. We keep hoping to have Mr. Wales at a Charleston Conference one of these years. Time will tell.

See – “Open-Source Troubles in Wiki World,” by Noam Cohen. (complete with a picture of the illusive Mr. Wales)


And for those of you familiar with Charleston, the big Millennium Music store on the corner of King and Calhoun Streets (across from the Francis Marion hotel) is closing as of May 1. The $30,000 a month rent was too much for them! They had been in business for 15 years. But there is hope – Millennium is going to focus on building their two-year-old online business, continued on page 26.

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Julie Arendt (“Imperfect Tools: Google Scholar vs. Traditional Commercial Library Databases”) asks a provocative question - can Google Scholar be used to replace some subscription resources? According to Julie, we need to accept or reject Google Scholar based on how well it assists in a particular step in information seeking. She concludes that given some situations, Google Scholar maybe a better tool than some of the traditional indexing and abstracting resources.

Bonnie Klein (“Google and the Search for Federal Government Information”) asserts that a great deal of government information is difficult to find using Google. And, many government agencies have found that their products are not highly ranked in search results. While Google has a U.S. Government search option, it is somewhat hidden, and the result list is limited by Google’s search algorithm. Bonnie suggests that the problem can best be solved through a government mandated system-neutral method to unambiguously identify government information and its copyright status.

The last article in this issue (“Google Docs: A Review”) is a great review of how people can collaborate using Google Docs. Five librarians: Ramirose Attebury, Julie George, Cindy Judd, Brad Marcum, and Nicole Montgomery collaborated with Google Docs to write this review. They discuss the features and limitations of three Google products — documents, spreadsheets and presentations.

Thank you for your interest, and we hope to see you in June for “The Google Effect – Part 2.” We’ll learn about trends in library Web pages, integrating the Google Scholar “database,” teaching Google Docs & custom search engines and collection development in business resources. We will also hear from two vendors, the first will discuss how Google has enhanced their Web presence, and the other will look at “The 21st Century Searcher!”


Endnotes