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Desperately Seeking Website-A discussion between Eric Albright and Amber Williams about electronic journals

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Oregon Trails
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The family photos in my office will come with me along with one other that will help warm the atmosphere in my new office. There I am, one of a group of four. From left to right, Marion Reid (CSU San Marcos), Frank D’Andrea (University of Montana), Tom Leonhardt (TBA), and Arnold Hirshon (NELINET). We are sitting on a wagon to which is hitched a striped donkey. We were attending an EDUCOM meeting in San Diego and on a whim, took the train to Tijuana, one of the few places in the world where striped donkeys are indigenous. If we didn’t look like tourists when we climbed aboard the wagon and donned our Mexican sombreros, we quickly reined our case.

The books in my office will go into storage. They are too heavy and too many. I will miss them, old friends, but I know how sweet the reunion will be when we are together again at the end of my adventure. But although they are heavy, too, I will take my paperweight collection to my new office. I will either pack them with my clothes or have my children mail them to me later on. I must have a dozen of them, some from a visit to England years ago but most with some kind of conference association. In other words, I am not an active paperweight collector (bookmarks are another story) but an occasional collector. Someone once noted that once you get three or four of something you have a collection. As I grow older it is easier to discard those inadvertent collections so that I can better concentrate on books and bookmarks. The paperweights are really mementos and do not seem to be propagating as my wife’s spoon collection is. She claims it is my collection but I am only the delivery boy, bringing back a spoon from whatever city I happen to have been in. They, too, will go into storage. Let’s just hope that I don’t, I mean, she doesn’t acquire any duplicates as a result of their inaccessibility.

I’ll take my two Dilbert heads, too—Dilbert and the Boss. They used to say things when you pressed down on them. Their batteries are dead now but their spirits live on. They also remind me not to take myself too seriously and to reflect on how I behave. I don’t want to become like some administrators I know who love to share Dilbert cartoons with the rest of us but fail to see that they have met the enery and it is them. They only think that Dilbert is funny. How sad.

From the opening paragraph you have guessed that I am on the move again but this is not an ordinary move and not the usual job change. On May 1, 2001, I will begin my duties as Director of the Information Resources Center and University Librarian at the International University Bremen (IUB). This is the chance of a lifetime for me, starting a new library at a new university in a country where I went to high school (albeit an American high school) and whose language and literature I have studied for many years. Finally, I have the opportunity to really learn the language and I will be able to browse regularly in German bookstores.

I am not sure if I will be in San Francisco for the ALA Annual Conference in June but I plan to attend the other midwinter and annual meetings for the next three years, just as I have done for the past twenty-five years. I also hope to continue writing for Against the Grain and hope to hear from my readers once I have my new e-mail address. In the meantime, you can get in touch with me, from May on, in Bremen, Germany. See this URL for details: www.ui-bremen.de. Aufwiedersehen!

Desperately Seeking Website

by Amber Williams (American Society for Bone and Mineral Research; Phone: 919-620-0681)
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I spoke with Eric Albright, Head of Acquisitions at Duke University Medical Center Library, and I realized our perspectives on the matter of online access are not so divergent. It is my hope that the paths of librarian and publisher can come together in more places than in print.

PUB: In your opinion, what is the most difficult aspect of accessing online journals?

LIB: Negotiating the license is usually the most difficult portion of this process. When we purchase print materials from our various publishers we know the restrictions, i.e. copyright and fair use, but that is not the case with a site license. Just as you have many customers with varying concerns we have various publishers each with different concerns which lead to the site licenses looking very different.

PUB: What do you think publishers can do to change this?

LIB: I offer either the adoption of mutually agreed upon model licenses or doing away with licenses altogether. What have either of us really gained from them?

PUB: You suggest the adoption of mutually agreed upon model licenses for publishers or to do away with the site license altogether, but doesn’t the site license offer protections/guarantees for the library customer as well? Shouldn’t these needs be addressed in some medium (such as the site license)? I don’t know how often you purchase online only subscriptions, but if you do, don’t you need some kind of security that the product will be available and maintained for you?

LIB: In the ideal world where we are full partners in the pursuit of academic endeavors, I would love it if we could do away with them altogether. Unfortunately, yes we do need simple agreements that say we agree to pay you and make it only available to certain IP ranges and to follow copyright and you agree to deliver the product and ideally guarantee archival access. That takes but a page or two. Some licenses we see go on for many pages about liability, indemnification and prevailing court authority. When we subscribe to a print title, we have expectations that you will deliver the title and its content to us. But we have yet to sign an agreement with you stating that we expect you to maintain an editorial board of such and such caliber and have it delivered by the 13th of every month with X number of minimum pages on glossy paper. We can do that in print because there are accepted norms in the publishing industry which we and the courts would uphold. In this emerging electronic world those norms have yet to be established.

I am not even certain that they ever will.

PUB: What is favorable about electronic journals?

LIB: As opposed to print? The obvious advantage for us is the link from our indexing sources directly to the article. Our patrons, like most of society, want instant satisfaction.

PUB: Are you happy in general with the service you receive from publishers when subscribing to online journals?

LIB: At the turn of the year when the subscription agents cause us to lose access to a journal, it is rather frustrating but in general we are happy. We also do not get clear information about when some of the larger sites are down or experiencing difficulties. The electronic environment requires more communication than the print because of the enhanced expectations.

PUB: How do the subscription agents cause you to lose your subscription/access? Is this because they do not make payment in a timely manner or because they are responsible for getting online access for your institution?

LIB: We renew a title with the vendor but negotiate the site license with the publisher. Often it seems that the publisher cannot make the link from the vendor renewal request to continued on page 93

<http://www.against-the-grain.com>
DIVORCE HAPPENS TO LOVE GURUS
by Bruce Strauch (the Citadel)
Megabucks authors Ellen Fein and Sherrie Schneider promoted The Rules as a chronicle of their experiences in snagging the wildest male animal. Rules II was hot too, and Rules III—holding that marriage through subservience, long hair and low expectations of male sympathy—was due out.

Then Fein let it drop to Warner Books that she was about to divorce her husband. And the action had been filed a year earlier... before she signed the contract. She claims to have kept it a secret hoping for a reconciliation. Now the cover blur will have to be redone, dropping the claim to Fein's enduring marriage. See—Devon Spurgeon, "Author's Divorce Pits Her 'Rules' Against Reality" in Wall Street Journal, p.B1, March 23, 2001.

LEATHERSTOCKING TALES FROM MITTEL EUROPA
by Bruce Strauch (the Citadel)
Thief and swindler Karl May's Westerns have sold 100 million copies of 80 books, making him the bestselling German author of all time. His fans included Hitler and Einstein, and he sparked all the German Wild West clubs. Lufthansa recently linked non-stop flight to Phoenix to haul all the German tourists to May literary sites. May died in 1912 having never visited the Southwest. All his data came from magazine articles on Indian wars which he first found in a prison library. Now the Karl May cult has hit American campuses. As many as 100 Kinarts, film fests—possibly because the white men were usually villains, thus passing the p.e. test. Can doctoral dissertations and deconstruction be far behind? See—Cecile Rohwedder, "Germans Have a Thing About the Wild West, Thanks to Karl May" in Wall Street Journal, p.A1, April 4, 2001.

NICE WORK IF YOU CAN GET IT
by Bruce Strauch (the Citadel)
Sumner Redstone expanded his father's drive-in movie chain into Viacom. It now owns CBS, Paramount, MTV, Blockbuster and Nickelodeon. And with the help of that necessary "accomplished collaborator" he's going to tell us all about how he did it. Conveniently, Viacom owns the publisher Simon & Schuster. Which is giving him a coast-to-coast publicity tour, network t.v. appearances and a high-priced "lay-down date." That means the book will be launched everywhere on a single date, which requires a lot of tricky shipping. Sales staff have been出口ed to treat the launch as "A Passion to Keep Our Jobs," a little word play on the book's title A Passion To Win. Traditionally, these top exec books were highly suspect and were taken to another publishing house to prove they weren't total vanities. As you can guess, many don't sell very well. See—Laurie P. Cohen, "Simon & Schuster Is More Than Excited About a New Author," in Wall Street Journal, p.A1, April 5, 2001.

BUT DOES HE HAVE A TRUST FUND?
by Bruce Strauch (the Citadel)
Charles Webb was born rich, and his family was contemptuous of his novel The Graduate until it became a movie and a huge success. Irritated by the success ethic and American consumerism, Webb gave the money away to charity and moved with his wife to England, drawn by the English eccentric lifestyle. Now after forty years, he has published again—New Cardiff with Little, Brown & Co. And he doesn't care at all for the hype connecting him with his famous earlier book. In fact, he had six novels after The Graduate, all panned by critics as inferior to his big hit. See—Wade Lambert, "Author of 'The Graduate' (Finally) Publishes Again," in Wall Street Journal, p.B1, May 8, 2001.

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our online account. It happens every renewal that we lose 2-10 journals, then have to contact the publishers to re-establish access.

PUB: Would you like to see the print and online subscription process even more consolidated so that the subscription agents handle everything from payment of subscriptions to handling of site licenses?

LIB: I hate giving up the authority but relish the idea of time saved. Of course, the ideal would be for you to throw the online access or print in for free. The future of subscription service is a difficult thing to predict. The large publishers could make it economically attractive to deal directly with them. In the short term, yes, I can see the agents doing this for us.

PUB: In what ways do you see the online environment improving for library customers?

LIB: I foresee that in the future the access points will likely be more standardized, in particular in regard to access from various citation indexes. Also I see handheld and wireless technology as potentially having a significant impact upon the future online environment in libraries.

You can ring me at (919) 620-6081 or email me at <amber@jbrm.org> if you would like to add to this discussion or suggest topics to address in future columns.