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On The Street-Out of Print Searching on the World Wide Web

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On The Street — Out of Print Searching on the World Wide Web

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by Eamon T. Fennessy (The Copyright Group) Assisted by: Linda Albright (Winthrop College) and Kathy Miraglia (Catholic University)

Do you want to get a good discussion going at your next library-oriented cocktail party? Just raise the topic of how to handle the problems of “Out-of-Print” (OP) titles. I did … for a survey to be reported in this column … and in no time at all I had about thirty librarians advising me about OP. Here’s a list of those who said I could identify them as participants. There were several more who couldn’t give me permission to mention them by name, or quote them.

Debbie WILCOX- New Hampshire College
Dawn VAN ARK- City of HOPE
Barbara STERLING- Dartmouth College
Elise PRITCHARD- Morehead State University
Marilyn NG- University of California, Berkeley
Kent MULLINER- Ohio University
Pam MATTHEWS- Gettysburg College
Helen MACK- Lehigh University
Ned KRAFT- Smithsonian Institution
Mary H. KAY- Humboldt State University
Steve JOHNSON- Clemson University
Annette JOHN- Washington & Lee University
Vince JENKINS- Maricopa County Community College
Emily HUTTON- Colgate University
Sarah HILL- University of Iowa
Bernard HELMS- Andrews University
Sharon HARTMANN- (No affiliation given)
Kim GILBERT- Grinnell College
David FISHER- University of California, San Diego
Daniel EVANS- Lafayette College
Douglas DUCHIN- Baruch College
Rebecca CALIHAN- Longwood College
Meg CAIRO- New York State Library, Albany
Laurie ANDERSON- Maryland Institute, College of Art
Marilyn ADAM- Viterbo College

Next we asked whether the Web was used as a “first resort” and if so which sources were the most popular. There were very few who used non-Web sources exclusively. Most used the Web as the prime resource with the following listed in order of popularity: Bibliofind and MXBookfinder were tied for first place.

Interloc
ABE
Amazon.com
Bibliocity
Outofprint.com
Blake’s
Advanced Bookfinder
AltaVista

PS. David Marshall at Georgetown also offers the following for French titles: SLAM (Syndicat National de la Librairie Ancienne et Moderne) — http://www.franceantiquite.com/SLAM/search.html. Sarah Hill of the University of Iowa expects to use “alibris.com” when it is available.

In those instances where responsibility for a search was given to a vendor, the most-often-mentioned sources were, in alphabetical order:

Antiquook (Dutch titles)
Blackwell’s
Boekenwondst (Dutch & Belgian)
BookLook
A.B. Bookman
Couts
C.Dickens
Eastern Book Co.
Midwest’s OP Service
Oldhand Books
Palmer’s Books (San Diego)
Powell’s Technical Books

Zentraten Verzeichnis Antiquarischer (German)

Our third question asked, “How does the Web “hit rate” compare with non-Web sources? There were many enthusiastic responses here. The trend is definitely to use the Web. Some liked the fact that you could immediately be advised whether a source had the title or not. Speed was the key. Most respondents used three or four Web sites but some used only one, with a single back-up source in the event the first didn’t pan out. Elsie Pritchard of Morehead State reported a 50% hit rate for both Web and non-Web, but did admit the non-Web sites were given longer search leeway. Mary Kay at Humboldt State applauded the Web and reported a hit rate of “perhaps 90%.” (Mary uses ABE and Bibliofind.) Steve Johnson at Clemson did well with Interloc and ABE at a 75% success rate. Emily Hutton at Colgate said the Web was “vastly superior.” She loved “the fact that you can … continued on page 64

<http://www.against-the-grain.com>
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When a vendor reports a successful search, Helen Mack at Lehig\nsh says she checks with\nthe requester regarding price and if that is too\nhigh, the request becomes one for an Interli\nary Loan rather than OP. David Fisher at\nUC, San Diego states, “We do not use ven\ndors who charge up front for searches.”

In our fifth and last question, we asked\nfor other comments on this topic and some interesting\nresponses. At\nDartmouth, Barbara\nSterling responded, “The Web sources are useful but time-consuming. It is a\ntitle by title search.”

(Does anyone have advice on how to over\ncome this?) Meg Cairo at New York State\nLibrary, Albany says, “Web has changed ev\neverything, made finding OP part of regular\nsearch streams.”

Only one librarian commented on the con\dition of OP titles. “Reading copy condition\nbooks” are acceptable. Marilyn Ng at UC,\nBerkeley wrote, “Science titles and confer\nence proceedings have always been difficult to locate in the OP market. We find that go\ning direct to the author/editor of a book can be\nerather successful with the needed book be\ngiven to the collection.”

Anote: accolade for the Web. Laurie Ande\nson of Maryland Institute. College of Art says:
“Web searching is the only way this one-person
acquisitions department would ever have time to
search for OP titles regularly.” At Baruch Col\lege, Doug Duchin commented that the Web,
“works well for us and is much cheaper. The
problem is that some OP vendors want credit\ncard payments, which means we cannot use them at all.”

Dan Evans at Lafayette College said: “The biggest
problem we have encountered is smaller dealers who refuse
to give their SS numbers, as re\quired by law, to our
controller’s office.” Steve Johnson, Clemson
University, summed up his comments this way:
The Web has revolutionized the out-of-print
business. Now we can obtain many more titles,
for much less hassle, much faster, and at a lower
price.”

In summary, I see several major findings,
probably the most notable:
1. The Web technology has changed OP
searching.
2. More institutions are resorting to credit
card purchases.
3. Some state institutions have difficulty-to-
implement policies.
4. U.S. titles are easier to find than foreign works.

Thanks to all who found the time to contribute to this column! We couldn’t do it without you.

Biology Bestsellers
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Moyrian, M. Social Regulation of Competition and Aggression in Ani\nimals. Smithsonian Inst. 1998. $27.50. Cloth 156098788x

Liebes, Sidney. Walk through Time: From Stardust to Us: The Evo\n lution of Life on Earth. John Wiley. 1998. $29.95. Cloth 0471317004

Froh, Robert C. Remote Sensing for Landscape Ecology: New Metric
Indicators for Monitoring, Modeling, and Assessment of Ecosystems. Lewis.
1998. $69.95. Cloth 1566702755

Helmreich, Stefan. 1966- Silicon Second Nature: Cultivating Artificial
Life in a Digital World. Univ. of California. 1998. $29.95. Cloth
0520207998

Cambridge Univ Press 1998 $29.95 Paper 052143842x

Welt, Margaret, 1961- Book of Nature: Natural History in The Un\ited States, 1825-1875. Northeastern Univ. 1998. $50.00. Cloth
155553426

Biodiversity Dynamics: Turnover of Populations, Taxa, and Commu-
Cloth 0231104146

1998. $24.95. Paper 0632049537

Michod, Richard E. Darwinian Dynamics: Evolutionary Transitions in
Fitness and Individuality. Princeton Univ. Press. 1999. $45.00. Cloth
0691026998

Restoration Ecology and Sustainable Development. Ed by Kristyna M.
Urbanska. Cambridge Univ Press. 1997. $80.00. Cloth 0521581605

Georgetown Univ. 1998. $39.95. Cloth 0878406778

Dewey, Thomas Gregory. 1952- Fractals in Molecular Biophysics. Ox\nford Univ Press. 1997. $65.00. Cloth 0195084470

Gayan, Jean. Darwinism’s Struggle for Survival: Heredity and the
Hypothesis of Natural Selection. Cambridge Univ Press. 1998. $95.00.
Cloth 0521562670


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University Library).

Send ideas by June 30, 1999, to:
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