Bet You Missed It -- Press Clippings -- In the News -- Carefully Selected by Your Crack Team of News Sleuths

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THE CHINA CHALLENGE
by Sandra Beehler (Lewis & Clark College)

Everyone knows that the huge U.S. trade deficit is partly due to China’s keeping its currency pegged to the US$.  U.S. bond yields are also kept low because China has been buying Treasury bonds to hold down its currency. China finally moved to change that last week, with a small revaluation of the yuan — a move which could, if revaluation continues, drive U.S. bond yields higher and badly hurt the U.S. economy. But China’s impact on world economy goes beyond the U.S. Its immense cheap labor force has forced competitors to lower their labor costs, driving down the cost of goods worldwide. Cheaper goods have kept interest rates low, encouraging borrowing — especially in the housing markets. China’s demand for oil to fuel its growing economy has contributed to the rise in price, but in a way that is less likely to hurt global growth or raise inflation rates. It is clear that China will be a major player in the future world economy. Therefore, rather than enacting protectionist measures against China, it makes sense to make it a full member of forums such as the G7 and the OECD, so it will have a reason to support global economic stability.


INDECENT REGULATION
by Sandra Beehler (Lewis & Clark College)

With the FCC crackdown against “indecent” content in the media, the industry has been on the defensive, cutting back on any programming that could be considered controversial. However, if FCC regulation is extended to cable & satellite TV, the industry is poised to fight back. Counter-arguments to regulation focus on technological advances (e.g., the V-chip) which allow parents to control the exposure of their children to content they deem indecent. There is also a growing support for “a-la-carte” purchasing of media content — though that would likely mean higher costs for consumers.


GROUP THERAPY
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ment in a grassroots way by running a workshop on Google Scholar through our Faculty Center for Teaching and eLearning. It will be one of many kinds of workshops we are offering with their imprimatur. I prepared the description of the workshop and set the times. FCCTel will advertise it along with the other workshops, and their staff will also take registration for the workshop. Hopefully, we will get participants who otherwise would not have attended. This is the description of the workshop:

Google Scholar and Open Access to Scholarly Literature

So you think the Internet contains no access to scholarly literature? Think again. Come to this workshop to learn how you can access citations and some full-text to scholarly literature from academic presses, institutional repositories and professional societies.

Though my immediate objectives are to help faculty learn how to introduce Google Scholar to their students, I hope this will help some faculty understand the complexity of information, namely that it is not as simple as peer-reviewed vs. no peer-reviewed. Evaluation of information, ideologically, not simply authoritative is imperative. Neither is it as simple as “good stuff is in subscription databases; bad stuff is on the nonproprietary part of the Web.” Finally, I hope it will encourage others to think of librarians as the logical administrators for institutional repositories.

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HEIRS SING THE BLUES
by Bruce Strauch (The Citadel)

A relentless blues historian tracked down the half-sister of Gibson guitar legend Robert Johnson, and she opened a musty old trunk to show him two photos. Johnson died flat busted and intestate in 1938, poisoned by a jealous husband.

The sleuth, Steve LaVere, persuaded the elderly Carrie Thompson to assign him rights to the photos, memorabilia and all the songs which until then were thought to be public domain.

A little money started to roll in. Seven figures worth. And then other heirs started to show up with lawyers. A 73-year-old gravel truck driver had a birth certificate with "R.L. Johnson, laborer," as the father and an affidavit from an ancient woman who swore she witnessed the sexual intercourse nine months before the birth. Litigation has been going on for fifteen years.


TOP SECRET EXCUSES
by Bruce Strauch (The Citadel)

And for all of you who enjoy paranoia about the Homeland Security Act, the feds have ordered airline pilots to not fly near nuclear power plants on pain of being forced down by fighters — but won’t reveal where the plants are. It’s Sensitive Security Information.

Under the Act, SSI can include anything that might help someone defeat transportation security systems. The secrecy binge is running wild with agencies willy-nilly stamping things FOOU (For Official Use Only) — like a farewell breakfast invitation for retiring Federal Air Marshals.


BIGGER ISN'T ALWAYS BETTER
by Sandra Beehler (Lewis & Clark College)

Enthusiasm for further enlargement of the European Union is waning and it is becoming less likely that more eastern European countries will be able to join as full members. This change in attitude is due to increasing fears among people in the existing member nations that cheap labor represented by these poorer countries will undermine their own quality of life. Officials in Brussels have not given up hope of enlargement, believing that it will help to stabilize Balkan governments and, in Turkey, strengthen ties with the Muslim world’s only pro-Western democracy. However, voices fearful of losing their jobs and of security risks posed by extending the EU into the Middle East, are likely to vote negatively in any referendums on the enlargement.


ICANN NOT UN CAN
by Sandra Beehler (Lewis & Clark College)

Since the inception of the internet, the U.S. has controlled the infrastructure that underlies it, through the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN). Other countries have been lobbying to move that control to the United Nations, and the UN’s Working Group on Internet Governance released a report in July which favors inter-governmental oversight of the system. Pre-empting that recommendation, on June 30th the current U.S. administration announced its decision to retain control of ICANN, citing concerns over the Internet’s “security and stability.” It is theoretically possible to create a new system of naming that would bypass ICANN’s monopoly, but so far that idea has not been pursued.


International Dateline — Open Access Gathers Pace in Europe
by Peter T. Shepherd (Project Director, COUNTER) <pt_shepherd@hotmail.com>

The summer of 2005 proved a hot one in Europe, at least for those engaged in the funding and publication of scientific research. In May following the success of their initial experiments in open access publishing, Oxford University Press launched Oxford Open, which offers an optional author-pays model to authors of accepted papers in a range of journal titles. This was followed in June by a very significant statement from Research Councils UK (RCUK) strongly favouring open access (OA) to the outputs of the research that they fund. RCUK sought reactions to their proposals and these have kept the temperature of the debate high in the ensuing months. Nor was the heat confined to England. At a September meeting in Geneva CERN took another step to advance its OA policy by holding a meeting of authors and key managers to discuss different publishing models. Meanwhile, the number of European-based open access journals continues to grow. While there are literally dozens of open access journals in the life sciences, in some other fields they are rare indeed. One has now been sighted in chemistry, the Beilstein Journal of Organic Chemistry, published by the distinguished Beilstein Institute of Frankfurt, Germany and hosted by BioMed Central, the largest publisher of open access journals.

Research Councils UK Position on Open Access

RCUK represents the eight UK Research Councils that are the principal investors in publicly-funded research in the UK. In June 2005 they responded to the debate on improved access to research outputs by putting forward their emerging views on the issue. Their position was formed after extensive consultation with the research community, university administrators and with publishers. In launching the RCUK position statement Professor Ian Diamond said: “The Research Councils are responsible for supporting and promoting the activities of a research base that is vibrant, productive and sustainable. We’ve therefore committed to ensuring the widest possible dissemination of ideas and knowledge, effective quality assurance of research and its results, cost-effective use of public funds and the long-term preservation of research outputs. Our emerging position on the access issue should come as no surprise to those who understand our remit.” RCUK argues that technology offers new possibilities to communicate the results of research through developments in electronic publishing such as open access journals and e-print repositories.

In summary, RCUK proposes:

• A requirement for all grants awarded from 1 October 2005 that, subject to copyright and licensing arrangements, a copy of any resultant published journal articles or conference proceedings should be deposited in an appropriate e-print repository (either institutional or subject-based) wherever such a repository is available to the award holder. Deposit should take place at the earliest opportunity, wherever possible around the time of publication.

• Research Councils will also encourage, continued on page 82

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