Adventures in Librarianship -- Glosary of Terms

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From a recent reader survey, the ATG Editorial Board learned that many are confused by some of the terms the journal uses. Some accused the writers of being “high-fallutin,” “snoopy,” and (worst of all) “academic.” While the Editor demands that we wield the language with precision, our accountant reminds us of our obligation to you, generous readers, even those of you with inferior educations.

To remedy, we have compiled a short glossary of terms commonly used in our business but perhaps unfamiliar to those who are not really paying attention, and do not generally read ATG beyond the light, satirical stuff. We hope the following will quiet the unwashed.

Absorbitant: When a publisher, while buying up other publishers, holds more than seven separate imprints, that publisher is said to be “Absorbitant.” From the Latin sorbo: to inhale to such an extent that onlookers believe you might explode.

Ransoming: When a book-jobber’s representative drops by unannounced. From the Sanskrit amsin: a common metallic ore often mistaken for silver, or at the very least nickel.

Kilarchinum: A pile of shredded publisher’s promotional leaflets. “That’s not confetti; that’s kilarchinum!”

Overplenical: When, because a library has bought several aggregated databases, a common magazine has many pathways for electronic access. “Time magazine is extremely overplenical; so rather than explain the mess, let’s just tell customers we don’t have it.” From the English over, meaning “over.”

Contrapantalgation: The process of removing inactive vendors from one’s database. From the Greek pantoon, meaning to flush something out to sea or chase small children away by waving a stick.

Protrivexal: The feeling that a special librarian gets when asked why her highly professional collection includes online access to NASCAR Today and the like. “One of the Scientists chewed me out today about Modern Basketry. I got all protrivexal and had to sit down.”

Disengooiolation: 1) The iterative process of explaining to students that not all information is available freely on the Internet. 2) Any act of instruction where incredulous students snicker at the supposed ignorance of their teacher. From the Old English goog: an elderly person covered in a sticky substance.

Bibliopharmism: The change seen in any middle-management or administrative librarian who begins a regimen of antidepressants. From the Latin pharm: a place where animals live happily before being sent to slaughter.

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And speaking of Portico, look for our interview with Eileen Fenton, the executive director of Portico, this issue, p.54. As well as Greg Tananbaum’s column, this issue, p.84.

And speaking of archiving materials, continued on page 16

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