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## Adventures in Librarianship -- KnowledgeQuest

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# Adventures in Librarianship — KnowledgeQuest

by **Ned Kraft** (Ralph J. Bunche Library, U.S. Department of State) <kraftno@state.gov>

**B**ased on the impressive achievements of **Mapquest** and its competitors, **Darkmound University Library** is beta testing **KnowledgeQuest** designed by an interdisciplinary task force of librarians, Information Technology graduate students, the undergraduate chess club, and the girl's swim team. This week, for the first time, students and faculty were able to go to the library and try out the system. Members of the task force, clipboards in hand, watched the search strategies and gathered feedback.

The underlying concept is "how do I get there from here," processed through complicated sociological algorithms, distraction cosigns, the **Dewey Decimal System**, and bio-feedback rejectocators. Early responses to the system, during its first hours on the job, included "this is exactly what I need to keep from failing European History," "I hope this will be available from my desktop," "I'm not sure I understand what just happened," and "are you guys taking a survey or something?"

For a taste of **KnowledgeQuest**, here is a representative sample response to an opening-day query.

## Rumors

from page 6

(IP) reform at a fringe event at the Labor Party Conference. The fringe event—entitled "*IP: Fee or Free? Public Access versus Commercial Opportunity in the Digital Age*," and featuring representatives from industry heavyweights **Microsoft UK**, **Google**, the **National Consumer Council**, the **British Phonographic Industry** and the **Open Rights Group**—will explore the problems and paradoxes of IP rights in the digital age. In recent years debate on IP reform has become increasingly polarized as digital communications transform the way that information is shared, stored, and copied. Existing legislation urgently needs to be updated, though the manner in which this is achieved has the potential to nurture or curtail the development of new kinds of creativity and new models of public and private sector value. "Our **IP Manifesto** sets out the unique role that the **UK National Library** must play as both a leading voice and an honest broker in the debate that the digital revolution has generated," said **Lynne Brindley**, **Chief Executive** of the **British Library**. "As a publisher in its own right, the **Library** understands the opportunities and threats presented by digital to the publishing industries. As one of the world's great research libraries we are equally mindful of the threat that an overly restrictive, or insufficiently clear, IP framework would pose to future creativity and innovation. For example: currently the law does not permit copying of sound or film items for preservation," she explained. "Without the right for libraries and archives to make copies, the **UK** risks losing a large part of its recorded culture." And there's more. "The **World Intellectual Property Organisation**, the body that frames intellectual property law internationally, is clear that limitations and exceptions such as fair dealing and library privilege are as

Where I am:	Where I want to go:
Sophomore	Term Paper
Public School Education	H125: History of the Past
Undeclared	Professor: Heimlich
Shoe size: 11	Due Date: tomorrow

- From Harrison Quad, find amphetamine (under bleachers by the old track, ask for Kevin) and take amphetamine. (20 min.)
- Go to Fraught Memorial Library (modern building with many books) and settle into a cubicle for the night. (10 min)
- Surround self with random books, tablets, pens, empty Mountain Dew cans. (30 min)
- Begin to cry until approached by attractive MLS grad student. (20 min)
- Explain predicament and suggest that the assistance of attractive MLS grad student would save self from scholastic doom and guarantee attractive MLS grad student (AMLSGS) a place in heaven and an invitation to ΔΠΣ Halloween party. (30 min)
- Ask AMLSGS what she means by "thesis." Pretend to listen to explanation. (1 min)
- Follow AMLSGS through the stacks complimenting same on intelligence, sensitivity, clothing. (2 hrs)
- Read through gathered literature with AMLSGS. Every 25 minutes, inquire whether AMLSGS needs food, drink, additional writing devices, shoulders rubbed. (3 hrs)
- Sympathize with AMLSGS as she struggles with thesis and outline. Compliment same on insight, perception, and eyeglasses. (45 min)
- Offer to type as AMLSGS dictates text, but explain that you can only type with left thumb because of high school rugby incident and recent battle with Ambiotopic Exclamosis. (15 min)
- Stay with AMLSGS as she types. Offer to feed her cat over Christmas break. Supply tissue as emotion level requires. Hold hand of same as morning breaks. (2 hrs)
- Bring coffee and pastry. Cherry-filled type with white zig-zag icing. (25 min)
- Thank AMLSGS using: sincerity, bowed head, tears of joy and exhaustion. (1.5 min)
- Run to class. (3 min)
- Total driving time: 10 hours, 45.5 minutes.

Programmers admit that the "white zig-zag icing" output was an unnecessary flourish. Such eccentricities will be removed before **KnowledgeQuest** goes into full production.



relevant to the digital environment as they are to its analogue equivalent," **Lynne Brindley** added. "However, out of thirty licensing agreements recently offered to the **Library** for use of digital material, twenty-eight were found to be more restrictive than the rights existing under current copyright law." She concluded: "Our concern is that, if unchecked, this trend will drastically reduce public access, thus significantly undermining the strength and vitality of our creative and educational sectors—with predictable consequences for UK plc." To read the **IP Manifesto** in full, go to [www.bl.uk/news/pdf/ipmanifesto.pdf](http://www.bl.uk/news/pdf/ipmanifesto.pdf) (PDF format).

**Scopus** and the **Bibliotheca Alexandrina**, the **New Library of Alexandria**, have announced that the library will make **Scopus** available to their community. Situated close to the original site of the ancient **Library of Alexandria**, the **Bibliotheca Alexandrina**, the **New Library of Alexandria**, inaugurated in October 2002, is dedicated to recapturing the spirit of the original library. It aspires to be the world's window on Egypt and Egypt's window on the world. The library complex contains space for millions of books, a

center for the Internet and its archive, museums of antiquities, manuscripts, the history of science and more. In addition the library includes seven research institutes covering manuscripts, genealogy, calligraphy and writing, information sciences, Mediterranean and Alexandrian studies, the arts and scientific research. Says **Dr. Sohair Wastawy**, chief librarian of the **Bibliotheca Alexandrina**, "**Scopus** is an essential addition as its broad, interdisciplinary coverage offers not only abstracts of major peer reviewed journals in STM, but also Open Access Journals, trade publications, and conference proceedings. It represents a tremendous aggregation of resources for our users. It is great to see how easy it is for our researchers to use **Scopus**; whether they are budding scholars or well established scientists. **Scopus** adds value by putting researchers in the driving seat. It helps them filter and analyze the vast quantities of research available." [www.info.scopus.com](http://www.info.scopus.com)  
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continued on page 10