2010

If Rumors Were Horses

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Sustainability in Collection Development: 
Seeing the Forest and the Trees

by Karen Christensen (CEO, Berkshire Publishing; Phone: 413-528-0206) 
<karen@berkshirepublishing.com>

One of the things that makes academic publishing such a pleasure is that we create new ways for people to get information from the world’s experts, and new ways for those experts to reach a wider audience. I myself became an expert on environmental living, and a “green” author with books published in many languages, because as a young mother in London I asked so many questions about my baby’s food, water, air, and future.

Today, I continue to ask questions and have the privilege of working with hundreds of experts on all aspects of environmental sustainability. I’m dazzled by the range of analysis that’s being done. When it comes to understanding the impact of our everyday choices, however, we haven’t come far enough. There’s far more knowledge of specific issues than there was 20 years ago but not much more awareness of the impact of digital technologies. We seem still to be, quite literally, seeing only the trees. I wrote about this issue in Against the Grain last January, as well as in the USKG Serials journal, and now present a group of articles in this “Sustainability” issue that will help readers see the forest — the bigger picture.

Our focus here is environmental sustainability, which means using resources and interacting with the natural world in ways that will not reduce what is available to future generations. Merilyn Burke, University of South Florida, provides a fine overview of collection development challenges, while Tony Horava, University of Ottawa, digs into how sustainability affects collection management.

In “Getting There from Here,” environmental historian Michael Smith, Ithaca College, also looks at travel and professional conferences in terms of social welfare, an aspect of sustainable development. Maria Jankowska, UCLA, provides a fine summary of the sustainability strategies that libraries have used, and now she and her colleagues are testing environmental management in a field trial in Ithaca.

What To Look For In This Issue:
- The Dual Mission Paradigm: A Ranganathanian Critique
- The Future of the Textbook
- Toward a Modest Agenda: Academic Book Vendor
- EContent and the Future of the Academic Library
- How do you eat an elephant? or The Future of the Textbook
- The Dual Mission Paradigm: A Ranganathanian Critique

Interviews
- Moshe Pritsker
- Jud Dunham

Profiles Encouraged
- Moshe Pritsker
From Your (Brrrr) Editor:

It is freezing in Charleston! Where did this weather come from? I have worn my winter coat constantly for the past six weeks! I am ready for the Charleston heat. Or at least some snow if we have to put up with this weather!

Of course, the weather was an excuse to stay inside and work on this great issue of ATG — Sustainability in Collection Development — guest edited by the awesome Karen Christensen. We have articles by Merilyn Burke, Roxanne Myers Spencer, Michael Smith, Maria Jankowska, Whitney Bauman, and Tony Horava. Our Op Ed is by Liz Lorbeer and Heather Klusendorf. We have some great special reports by Patrick Carr (the mission of libraries in the 21st century) and Sara Killingworth and Martin Marlow (textbooks). Our interviews are with Moshe Pritsker and Jud Dunham. Our usual columnists have written about among other things, econtent (Biz of Acq), collaboration (University Presses), writing (Bookklover), data management (Standards), Netflxes (Technology), book approval plans and eBooks (Library Collections in the 21st century), open access (Red Herring), copyright in the digital age (As I See It), and many others! And Richard Abel returns to continue the Tale of the Richard Abel Company.

Ooops! They are telling us the weather is supposed to go down to the teens tonight and there may even be snow in the upstate! I have to open up my husband’s grandmother’s cedar chest and get out more warm clothes! Brrrr….

Merry Christmas, Happy Holidays and here’s hoping that 2011 is the best year ever! Much love to all y’al, Yr. Ed.

Letters to the Editor

Send letters to <kstrauch@comcast.net>, phone or fax 843-723-3536, or snail mail: Against the Grain, MSC 98, The Citadel, Charleston, SC 29409. You can also send a letter to the editor from the ATG Homepage at http://www.against-the-grain.com.

Here at ATG Headquarters we often receive birth announcements and pictures from our loyal authors and readers. In this issue we’d like to share a few with you. They’re all so cute, don’t you agree? — Yr. Ed.

This curious child peeking over a shoulder is Dennis Brunning’s grandchild, Elianna. Wonder if she got an iPad from grandpa for Christmas?

The peacefully sleeping child to the left is Henry Boyce Crader, the newest family member to our book review editor Deb Vaughn. Who knows she might be reading to him right now.

AGAINST THE GRAIN DEADLINES
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audio, data sets) that changes the content and requires new applications and access considerations? And what is the best format for our patrons and for durable access? How will we decide upon standards?

I’m not one of those who believe that print is about to wither away; it is too deeply rooted in our society and intellectual culture to quickly vanish, and there are many people who will still find the print book to be more convenient and usable than the digital counterpart, in spite of what the eBook reader industry wants us to believe. This is quite different from the journal world, where the transition to digital has been faster and more thoroughgoing than anyone would have expected a decade ago. But as more and more of the collection moves into the cloud, we find ourselves in a new era where partnerships, flexibility, and innovation become the hallmarks of success. We don’t control the far-flung servers that house and deliver the streams of digital works that our patrons are using every hour of every day. We rely upon the many agreements we have crafted with vendors, publishers, and other libraries and cultural memory organizations for the reliable pipeline of access to these books, journals, databases, and reference works.

In the myriad of formal and informal publications, what do we collect for posterity and what do we support in a more temporary and short-term manner? More precisely, can we afford to maintain the traditional ownership model as the basis for collection management, or do we need to focus on access-based, user-targeted approaches that can accomplish our goals in a complementary manner? Patron-driven acquisition services and print-on-demand delivery have shown themselves to be more effective than many in the library community had expected. Large bureaucratic institutions like universities and colleges are typically risk averse and lack the nimbleness to respond quickly and creatively to new opportunities that arise in the digital information era. We need to cultivate a greater nimbleness and the luxury of being allowed to experiment and fail, and start again, if we want to hit upon the right opportunities that increase the usefulness and value of our collection strategies.

Here are a few more ideas that can hopefully lead us to a more sustainable approach to collection management.

Payming Only Once

We need to look carefully at where we are paying twice for the same work, whether it is a book, a journal, a report, or a dissertation. Can we become format agnostic and cut expenses where we find overlaps and duplication, particularly between aggregated collections and publisher-direct purchases? Can we make a commitment to a single format for books or journals, for example, in a given field?

Walking the Tightrope Between Competition and Collaboration

Libraries work together in consortial resource-sharing arrangements — for licensing digital resources, union catalogue records, and ILL arrangements, for example — but our parent institutions compete intensely with each other to attract and retain faculty, research grants, students, and public–private partnerships. Consortial collaboration has been very effective in enabling acquisition and cost-effective near-years information resources, but this doesn’t mean that we have a level playing field across institutions or a complete consensus on how cost-share arrangements are handled. The great diversity of funding levels, curriculums, and research profiles across institutions in the same region is symptomatic of the tensions with which we live. Can we strike a healthy and honest balance between competition and collaboration?

Partnerships with Publishers and Vendors

In the evolving scholarly communications ecosystem, our relationships with partners outside of the library are becoming more and more critical to our success. They need us as much as we need them. In moving away from the polarizing rhetoric of “us” versus “them,” we need to focus on where our interests overlap and where we can develop innovative and forward-looking models of collaboration that can enhance our delivery of scholarly resources to our community. Like us, the publishers and vendors are struggling to reinvent themselves in the crowded information landscape and the new technologies and business models that constantly buzz around us. Those who don’t want to listen to our interests and concerns are less likely to receive our business. Adopting a principled stand on questions such as unfair pricing models is important for our credibility and for prudent financial management.

The collection as a whole is always political. The dynamics of political decision making leave their mark on every library collection budget; it is the delicate art of the possible amid many competing interests in the institution, all of which require financial commitment. How we navigate these challenges, and how we address the various environmental challenges I’ve sketched in this article, will determine how effectively we position ourselves to develop a sustainable approach to collection management. Sustainability is the holy Grail shimmering in the distance — if we ask ourselves the key questions we will at least be on the right road. This means an ongoing process of rethinking our practices and strategies. The perceived value footprint we bring to the evolving academic enterprise, in terms of being essential to teaching, research, and learning, will determine how successful we are.

Endnotes


Speaking of which, I was interested in the Charleston Observatory Survey of the use of social networking by researchers which the gracious times two Ian Rowlands and Dave Nicholas reported in Charleston. (quote: “Researchers use generic sources; they don’t focus on the bells and whistles.”) Watch for the final survey results that are currently under review and will be published shortly. As well, I found John Sack’s talk in Charleston equally enlightening. John reported on another survey of researchers at Stanford, quote: “For the end user or researcher, reading is an opportunity to get away from the computer.” http://www.katina.info/conference/video_2010_observatory.php http://www.katina.info/conference/video_2010_sack.php continued on page 38

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Long time ago, Celia and I were talking about writing books and I gave her anecdotes from my husband’s and my experiences. Can’t wait to see this book! Will keep y’all posted. Celia wrote me on LinkedIn. I have to tell y’all that I am retro! I prefer info/conference/video_2010_observatory.php in Charleston equally enlightening. As well, I found survey results that are currently under review and will focus on the bells and whistles,”) Watch for the final survey results that are currently under review and will be published shortly. As well, I found John Sack’s talk in Charleston equally enlightening. John reported on another survey of researchers at Stanford, quote: “For the end user or researcher, reading is an opportunity to get away from the computer.” http://www.katina.info/conference/video_2010_observatory.php http://www.katina.info/conference/video_2010_sack.php continued on page 38
As you might have gathered, many of the videos from the 30th Charleston Conference plenaries are up for all to see!! Go to www.ka
tina.info/conference. Many of the powerponts and presenttations are also up at slideshare. I tell you what! The Charleston Conference (most notably my great staff!!) has gotten their (not my) act together and they are almost out of control with all their innovations!

One of the great Conference videos stars the lovely Athena Michael playing you-
know-who during the skit on Friday afternoon. Check it out. In her spare time, Athena tells me that she and her daughter Juliette are participantind in a local Greek bake sale. Mmm good! Juliette loves to bake. Next year she will be going to college and her number one choice is Sweet Briar, a beautiful school that has a subscription to ATG!

I have to confess that I agree with Professor Nardini about eBook devices. I think eBook readers are great if you have too many books to carry, have a bad back, like gizmos, don’t want to advertise what you are reading (did you read that Romance is experiencing an upsurge with ereads?), have a good battery and/or access to electricity, and travel a lot. But, au fond, I do NOT think that the eBook will replace all readers; you own the book on that column this time (see p.86), when you buy a Nook or Kindle, you can read a book on it. So, I went to several and even bought a color Nook for my husband for Christmas (don’t tell him). It is way cool! Problem is, though, as the astute Michael Pelikan points out in his column this time (see p.86), when you buy a book it is tied to the device so you don’t re-
ally own the book. You own the book on that device. Michael seems to have one of each (for his research, no doubt) – three generations of Kindles, a Sony eReader, an iPad, etc. Michael wishes for a personal unique identifier that would allow us to read the same book on

But it was the holidays and I just couldn’t help myself! I always buy books for presents. What else is there? And much as I love Amazon (my family must be keeping them in business!) there is no place like a real bookstore! So, I went to several and even bought a color Nook for my husband for Christmas (don’t tell him). It is way cool! Problem is, though, as the astute Michael Pelikan points out in his column this time (see p.86), when you buy a book it is tied to the device so you don’t re-
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Measuring Sustainability with Our Ecological Footprint

by Whitney Bauman (Florida International University)

The ecological footprint (discussed in terms of the library profession on page 28) is a measure of how much land and water area a human population (or individual) requires to produce the resources it consumes and to absorb its wastes on an annual basis. The result of this assessment — a simple quiz — provides the number of Earths that would be necessary to support a given lifestyle.

The concept of the “ecological footprint” (EF) was developed in 1996 by Mathis Wackernagel and William Rees and outlined in Our Ecological Footprint. It suggests that in order to tread lightly on the Earth, we must measure our true footprint, which includes energy and resource consumption. Wackernagel and Rees developed a measurement tool — a quiz, available at http://www.myfootprint.org — that calculates the ecological footprint of individual humans and organizations (such as businesses, communities, cities, and countries). At the end of the assessment, one is told how many Earths would be needed if everyone on the planet lived a certain way. The concept of the ecological footprint depends upon the theory of limited resources or a limited carrying capacity (the limit to how much human consumption of resources is possible without some sort of eco-systemic collapse) of the Earth. The measurement is based upon the acres of biologically productive area it would take to sustain a population that uses X amount of resources.

Though there has been some controversy over what “carrying capacity” is, it has aided in the development of methods for offsetting carbon emissions for activities such as flying and driving. Though there are environmental justice issues related to offsetting emissions, the tool is effective for use in many communities. (Carbon offsetting does not take into account the distribution of environmental ills: one power plant that does not use all of its pollution credits could sell credits to another plant so that it could pollute more than its allotted credits. Some communities would then have to deal with higher amounts of pollution than others.)

The tool assumes a certain level of resource use, but the question remains whether or not that level of resource use is necessarily conducive to human and nonhuman progress and whether or not a specific level of resource use can or should be used for all 6-plus billion people on the planet. Does sustainability, according to the ecological footprint measure, smuggle in some normative assumptions about what “the good life” is that fails to take into account the diversity of peoples and environments on the planet?

On the one hand, the ecological footprint is a valuable yardstick for measuring the absurdity of the consumer lifestyle. On the other hand, the tool is rife with scientific and ethical lacunae. For example, there is no doubt that Vice President Al Gore has huge footprint, given that he travels all over the world to deliver his message about global climate change. But is not this very message intended to change people’s lives toward living in more sustainable ways? The EF does not take into account these complexities. As another example, would the very development of the EF by Wackernagel and Rees be within the “one planet” scenario of sustainability? Probably not, given that the idea and tool were developed over several conferences, and its very dissemination depends upon the energy necessary to run a computer with an Internet browser and connection. In a sense, the legacy of the EF still remains to be seen, but its message is clear: We must stop living as if there is more than the one planet upon which we live. 🌍

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different devices. I agree. How many numbers and passwords can a person remember? And how many times do we need to buy the same book regardless of where? I need to remember? And how many times do we need to buy the same book regardless of where? (the limit to how much resource consumption can or should be used for all 6-plus billion people on the planet. Does sustainability, according to the ecological footprint measure, smuggle in some normative assumptions about what “the good life” is that fails to take into account the diversity of peoples and environments on the planet?

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Adapted from the Berkshire Encyclopedia of Sustainability, Volume I. (Berkshire 2010.)

Something to Think About — Anything Goes!
Column Editor: Mary E. (Tinker) Massey (Serials Librarian, Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University, Jack R. Hunt Library)

N o matter what things you choose to do at the Charleston Conference, it is always a winner. From year to year I have planned my activities carefully to be able to interact with vendors, give presentations, hear others present, and take in a few special events. I also try to leave time to visit small shops in the city around Francis Marion Square. Most years I have been able-bodied and have sprinted from venue to venue in the various hotels where sessions are happening.

This year I was a little concerned because I had a fractured knee. Knowing the area fairly well, I tried to choose my paths to coincide with elevators and very few steps or uneven passages. It was an ADA adventure! Unless you have a power chair, there is no advantage to being disabled. The whole time is like a slow motion film where you are trying to catch up with the speeding train and looking for someone to run over you. Needless to say, I got to sessions too late for a seat, and chivalry is virtually dead, folks. I am now dancing through a myriad of email addresses to locate Powerpoints or other information to help me. We are all looking to fill the gaps in our information banks.

I did find that most of my conference life was built around stationary pauses, and people were able to find me better. Friends from earlier conferences spent good conversational time with me, and I had some nice discussions about cutting edge problems, as well as offering new ideas about special registration charges for retirees, talking with editors about changes in the writing processes and plans for future meetings. I was able to find more of the “First-Timers” and help them through a few logistics. That always pleases me. I learned a great deal about libraries that were unfamiliar to me, and that also filled my brain with new information. Each conference is very different from the others and is marked by very meaningful events. This year I renewed old acquaintances and found some new ones. It was exciting! The theme rang true for me — Anything Goes! How was your adventure? Something to think about? 🌍

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Undoubtedly, this will place pressure on database and Web discovery providers to manufacture online tools to draw attention to linkouts to supplemental materials that exist beyond the confines of the controlled search environment. Right now, some providers offer value-added features on their sites to expose data within their depths, such as Elsevier’s SciVerse platform. Retrieving results outside of the provider’s site will require user-designed engines to crawl content. Historically, publishers and vendors have looked unfavorably upon Web crawlers due to additional stress that such traffic can place on a system, temporarily shutting down a school’s Internet Protocol address to cease crawling activity. Can standards change this, forcing publishers to create sites that allow content to be crawled so users can unearth supplemental materials that reside within the publisher’s online environment?

The burden remains for libraries, publishers and online indexing services to be able to point the public to supporting data that produced the published manuscript. How data is being shared, especially among research communities, may require a significant change to longstanding practices. As authors willingly share their scholarly output, and make their research more visible, they must also guard their rights on how their data is exposed to deter any lost income from potential inventions. Librarians can be the gatekeepers who can help to preserve, protect, and make available supplemental data, creating an increasingly open research environment where sharing rather than locking data is the norm.

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ging to maximize profits from this fast-growing digital sector. Inefficient print production processes are hampering scalable, affordable digital output. c) Only 7% of publishers are implementing enhancements on their eBooks. Suggesting that most publishers are not aware of the EPUB standard’s inherent support for content enhancement, including audio and video.

d) 61% of trade/consumer publishers support the EPUB standard. 18% more than any other publisher type. e) 64% of all publishers are offering titles in eBook format. Up 11% from the first survey. To find out full results of this survey: http://www.aptracorp.com/ebook-survey2/?elq=b7da85dde36544b8a1ed469c3c163609

So – you may have noticed their schizophrenic nature or these Rumors – between print and e! Reminds me of the 2002 Charleston Conference theme – TWO FACES HAVE
changes did not affect the principal structure and format of the scientific article, and this is where JoVE wants to make a difference.

A number of new initiatives were made in the scientific community information space. For example, there were a few attempts to create science-oriented Facebook-like social network sites (e.g., Epernicus.com and Labmeeting.com) and YouTube-like community video sites (e.g., Scitec.tv and DNAtube.com). We are yet to see how much these initiatives will be adopted by the scientific community.

From my experience, to be adopted, any new offering in science communication has to align with current professional incentives of scientists and students: getting grants, publishing in scientific journals, finding the next job, or receiving better grades. Otherwise, it will not work.

**ATG: Please speculate on the future for the journal.**

**MP:** I am optimistic since the JoVE receives more and more acceptance among scientists, students, and librarians. We will expand by increasing the scope and rate of the video publication. Specifically, we plan to establish new JoVE sections for major areas of biomedical research such as Oncology and Bioengineering, in addition to Neuroscience and Immunology that are being built now. We should consider expanding to other areas such as Psychology.

I think that sooner or later, following the JoVE growth, big STM publishers will try to massively integrate online video into their products, although it will require significant technology developments and organizational changes on their part. From this point of view, JoVE serves as a pioneer and a catalyst of change for the entire industry. In the end, video will become an important component of the STM publishing.

Enhanced reading. We will see sentences from many different articles brought together. This is the power of the computer technology. Still, the artifact must remain for future generations. Our New Title Selection Plan is just another way we’re working to make your book purchasing fast, efficient, and fun.

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Welcome to the circumspect Alex Holzman (did you see him in Charleston?) who is the new editor of the University Press column in ATG! Bringing up words and all, I was interested in the column in this issue, p.61, by Richard Brown which talks about the need for librarian/university press collaboration, REAL collaboration. Brown points to the use of casual metaphors (e.g., university press as dinosaur, printed books as relics). He urges that we be more careful with our language. Books/Words are more than bits and bytes. They are expressions of an author’s/writer’s/groups’ thoughts.

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Book Reviews — Monographic Musings

Column Editor: Debbie Vaughn (College of Charleston) <vaughnd@cofc.edu>

Column Editor's Note: Many thanks to this issue’s MM reviewers, Joey van Arnhem, Jerry Spiller, and Eleanor Cook. Season’s greetings and happy reading, everyone! — DV


Reviewed by Jolanda-Pieta (Joey) van Arnhem, M.F.A. (Instructor & Training Coordinator, College of Charleston Libraries) <vanarnhemj@cofc.edu>

and

Jerry Spiller, M.S.I.S. (Professor, Web Design and Interactive Media, Art Institute of Charleston) <yeri.spiller@gmail.com>

In American Shamans: Journeys with Traditional Healers, Jack Montgomery relates detailed personal accounts of working with shamans and magical healers in the United States. The research leading up to this book began with Montgomery’s undergraduate work in religious studies at the University of South Carolina in the mid-1970s. Many of his chronicles focus on healers in midland and Lowcountry South Carolina, near his hometown of Columbia and his alma mater. These detail encounters with root doctors or Hoodoo practitioners of African American traditions. His fieldwork also illuminates similar traditions of Powwow men or hexenmeisters coming out of German immigrant traditions in South Carolina and Pennsylvania.

Montgomery offers his firsthand ethnographic research, giving insight into classic ethnographic methodologies including journal writing, tape recording interviews for later transcription and analysis, and the tenuous process of building relationships with potential informants whose names may require disguising for their privacy and protection. The author himself works as a shaman and spiritual healer, and is often more a participant than observer in the tales. He spends some time remarking on the need for holistic approaches to societal as well individual strife. He asks the reader to keep an open mind with regard to his subject matter, calling for openness to the often different, even opposing, worldviews of science and the various faith healing traditions.

Research histories of traditions in South Carolina and Pennsylvania, given further context by Montgomery’s commentary, provide a cultural background for the author’s recounted fieldwork and numerous short anecdotes about noted healers. The reader will be entranced by such remarkable and charismatic figures as Doctor Buzzard, high sheriff James E. McTeer, Granny Slice, and Conrad Matthai. Perhaps the most exceptional and rewarding passages of his research are transcriptions of interviews with South Carolina Powwow man and retired professor Lee Raus Gancée. Montgomery’s own spiritual teacher, and a Virginia granny-woman whom we know by the pseudonym Sarah Ramsey.

American Shamans will be appealing to readers with interests in the magical and religious healing practices, as well those focused on anthropological fieldwork or local histories of areas covered. The book may be of particular interest to those researching American folk practices, especially the traditions explored by Montgomery: African American root doctors in the South and Powwow healers in areas of German settlement throughout the Eastern states. American Shamans, with its fascinating narratives, is a relatively quick read at 261 pages. The book includes an introduction by the author as well as an appendix of German Powwow terms. American Shamans is published by Busca, Inc.


Reviewed by Eleanor I. Cook (Assistant Director for Collections and Technical Services, Joyner Library, East Carolina University)

This book captures a moment in time and does a good job of documenting the evolving nature of eBooks. Unfortunately, because of the fact that the ground is constantly shifting, some of what is described here may already be out-of-date. One of the book’s strengths is that it collects information about how different types of libraries are experimenting with eBooks. It also covers issues related to eBook vendors, standards, and presents specific case studies. Preservation concerns are also addressed.

The case studies are of particular interest as they get at the thought processes behind the steps for actually circulating eBook readers at two libraries, one public and one academic. Much collaboration and a dose of “logistical ingenuity” is needed between departments in order to do this successfully. It would have been nice to have had more case studies included.

As an excellent follow-up, editor Polanka edits a blog with the same name as the book for further musings and developments with eBooks and e-readers: http://www.libraries.wright.edu/noshelfrequired/.

The blog received First Place in the Salem Press Academic Blog Award: http://salempress.com/Store/blogs/blog_home.htm.

The blog is a great place to keep up with everything about eBooks. Those of us struggling with how to incorporate eBooks into our library should definitely keep this blog on our list of must-reads!

Interview — Jud Dunham
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partners. These applications aim to improve researcher workflow and enrich content available to our users.

We are also exploring bringing other publishers’ content into SciVerse Hub in the future. Right now, our focus is on improving Hub and growing the Applications Marketplace and Developer Network ecosystem, to provide our current SciVerse ScienceDirect and SciVerse Scopus customers with some of the most comprehensive and innovative online discovery tools available today.

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But, not to worry, Sandy Thatcher, now retired from Penn State UP and so the university press column, will still be contributing a column from time to time. In fact there will be a Sandy column in the February issue of ATG! Stay tuned!

Let’s see. A couple of people have retired! The highly competent Richard Gedye has retired from Oxford University Press and sends his new email address <gedye@stm-assoc.org> and his snail mail address is: 26 Nuns Road; Winchester, SO23 7EF; UK. I remember way back when going digging at an archaeologi-
I write. I write that I am writing. Mentally I see myself writing that I am writing, and I can also see myself seeing that I am writing. I remember writing and also seeing myself writing. And I see myself remembering that I see myself writing, and I remember seeing myself remembering that I was writing, and I write seeing myself write that I remember having seen myself write that I saw myself writing that I was writing and that I was writing that I was writing that I was writing. I can also imagine myself writing that I had already written that I would imagine myself writing that I had written that I was imagining myself writing that I see myself writing that I am writing. “Salvador Elizondo’s words define the page prior to the title page of ‘Mario Vargas Llosa’s La tía Julia y el escrito’ (Aunt Julia and the Scriptwriter) and sets the reader up for the complexities of writing layered in a humor-spiced love story.”

The Swedish Academy awarded Mario Vargas Llosa the 2010 Nobel Prize in literature “for his cartography of structures of power and his trenchant images of the individual’s resistance, revolt, and defeat.” My introduction to Vargas Llosa was on a trip to Tampa to visit a good friend. The introduction was courtesy of this friend, who shares a passion for reading all types of literature and is also immersed in Latin American literature. She knew of my affection for García Márquez’s works and felt I could expand my horizons south of the Colombian border into Peru. An interesting recommendation, as Vargas Llosa’s works are considered more “realistic” than García Márquez and because there is an unresolved rivalry between the two friends. What began as a friendship ended with an argument and a black eye for García Márquez at the hand of Vargas Llosa in Mexico City’s Palacio de las Bellas Artes in 1976. So I read. I see myself writing about reading. Mentally I see myself reading on that trip to Tampa, and I type.

I am unsure why my friend suggested this particular novel by Vargas Llosa, as it has been almost 15 years since I first read the novel, for he is better known for his ability to blend social consciousness and political activism with literature. He even ran for the President of Peru in 1990 advocating privatization. Conversation in the Cathedral, The Feast of the Goat, and The Green House are more typical of this social/political blend. He has now left the political arena and concentrates on the writing: “Nothing better protects a human being against the stupidity of prejudice, racism, religious, or political sectarianism, and exclusivist nationalism than this truth that invariably appears, in great literature: that men and women of all nations and places are essentially equal.” This novel, however, takes a little bit different direction. It is a love story, a love for an older woman entwined with a love for the profession of writing.

The story begins: “I was very young and lived with my grandparents in a villa with white walls in the Calle Ocharcán in Miraflores.” The storyteller is studying law, but “deep down what I really wanted was to be a writer someday.” I had a job with a pompous-sounding title, a modest salary, duties as a plagiarist, and flexible working hours: News Director of Radio Panamericana.” His fascination with writers emerges with every word, sentence, and point of view on the page, and then he meets Aunt Julia, a recently divorced relative that is several years his senior. He hated her instantly. But this love story, based loosely on his own life, has all the elements of a soap opera: passion, family disgrace, May-December marriage, and melodrama as the story merges with his obsession for Pedro Camacho’s radio serials and the creative process required to tell a good story.

Rereading Vargas Llosa’s story about the scriptwriter’s journey into the creative world that places a story on paper is currently surreal for me. For the last year or so I have had the distinct pleasure of assisting a dear friend in crafting a story he needed to tell. To read a book in development has placed me on a sunny window seat with a voyeur’s view into this world of writing. Words, research, sentence structure, point of view (omniscient or close third person), dialogue, character development, read, discuss, more words. And the process continues until the story begins to dance on the page and I find myself living in the historic mystical world my friend is creating. When I emailed him this column for review he responded with a challenge that he had posed to his writer’s group: ‘Do books sometimes choose writers to bring them to life? Google ‘writers, writing’ and you will find a majority are about the books that ‘have’ to be written; that ‘demand’ to be written. One year ago I went to an annual writer’s conference with four book projects that I was working on. Three of the four got good critiques and encouraging comments and had the enthusiastic support of friends and families. The fourth had none of the above. In fact it had nothing going for it except that it demanded to be written. So I wrote it. I set aside the other projects, neglected family responsibilities and friends, and surrendered my life to this doubtful book just because it told me to. This year I went back to the same conference and found out that the book was right.’ Then he set out to discover quotes by famous authors about the profession of writing, the obsession of writing, the passion for writing. A fantastic dark comical foray into the minds of famous writers. I will leave you the quote he credited to Toni Morrison, another Nobel laureate in literature, which most addresses the point: “If there’s a book you really want to read, but it hasn’t been written yet, then you must write it.”

From the Reference Desk
from page 55


The Corsini Encyclopedia of Psychology (2010, 978-0-470-170243, $700) is now in its fourth edition. Published by Wiley, the latest version of this four-volume set keeps the emphasis on psychology (there is no “and Behavioral Sciences” in the title of the new edition) while maintaining the set’s international flavor. Editors Irving B. Weiner and W. Edward Craighead mix updated entries from past editions with new articles commissioned for this set. As in past editions the entries end with a valuable list of references and/or suggested readings and “see also” references. This edition seems to have more emphasis on biographies with “63 of the most distinguished persons in the history of Psychology” covered in individual articles, and 543 others listed in a separate section of brief entries noting their dates, research interests, and areas of expertise. A sense of serious scholarship and a desire to inform, the cornerstones of past editions, are equally evident here. This new edition deserves full consideration from academic libraries whether they own prior editions or not. (It is also available from the Wiley Online Reference at: http://onlineibrary.wiley.com.nuncio.cofc.edu/book/10.1002/9780470479216/homepage/Order.html.)

Rumors
from page 55

CALENDAR! so he is not disappointing. Hooray! And Doug sent a great Holiday card from American Institute of Physics about the vortices created by airplane wingtips. The image from D. Harris, V. Miller, and Charles Williamson is from the January 2010 Physics Today.

http://blogs.physicstoday.org/

The vivacious Eleanor Cook won the ABC-Clio/Vicky Speck Charleston Conference Leadership Award this year! Eleanor has contributed so much to the Conference over the years not the least of which are the skits. Congratulations, Eleanor! continued on page 75
is available, and enterprising libraries have found it. But we need a privatized version of something like the old Library Services and Construction Act (LSCA), — say a three year start-up — for this to work on the scale that it must for all to benefit equally. Why three years? Most IR software is purchased on a subscription basis. The three-year start-up allows time for institutions to fold the cost into their current budgets with a proven track record of the software doing what it claims it can do. Three-year start-up funding would allow institutions to assign oversight of the repository to an internal entity.

I can think of no better oversight entity than the library, since it is, after all, about information and shared knowledge. With funding like that in place, libraries could arrange the repository in such a manner that would allow various levels of participation, secure the Creative Commons licensing, and organize — read catalog — the available resources in an easy-to-find and manageable way. With large, medium and small institutions contributing to scholarly communication, the pressure would be effectively applied to publishers to reduce pricing substantially or get left out altogether (as they are about to be with digital textbook publishing). I also imagine that the large-scale participation would in many ways legitimize the process for tenure and promotion purposes, if that remains a key ingredient in higher education in the future.

If these benefits were not enough, open access repositories also allow for more on-campus collaboration that simply cannot be done via the Web without it. For example, a math professor might log on and discover that a professor in art and design is painting fractals. They two might work together to create an interactive presentation. Students, too, would be able to see what faculty are working on and offer assistance on projects that truly interest them. It strikes me as a win-win equation.

Lastly, this addition would vastly improve the chances of bringing to reality Robert Darnton's National Digital Library (NDL) (http://bit.ly/b7PeWV). Darnton views the NDL as a “digital equivalent of the Library of Congress.” But it can’t happen without OA, or rather I should say it won’t happen as easily and quickly without it, if it happens at all.

Imagine the shared resources of all the world’s academic institutions online and at one’s fingertips! Some will argue that the quality of such offerings would be small compared to its vast size, but I would argue that they haven’t spent much time in academic publications already in print. I would further argue that it would at least rival what’s been printed and, quite possibly, be much better.

Can open access save us? I think it can, but it’s going to require something like this — if not this exactly — to make it work. Without it, academics will remain the indentured servants of the publishing world, while academic libraries are held hostage to their high prices. 🅀

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Rumors
from page 36

And, we had nearly 367+ first-timers in Charleston this year among our over 1,300 registrants! For the first time this year, we published profiles of the first-time attendees (online and some were printed). The profiles that we received are loaded on the Conference Website. http://www.katina.info/conference/

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Endnote
1. Published simultaneous in Against the Grain and at http://dacuslibrary.wordpress.com.

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Forgot! Be sure to vote for Xan Arch who is running for ALA Council.

Also — be sure to look at the magnificent Don Hawkins’ blog, www.theconferencecircuit.com

I have run out of room for this time. Be sure and visit the ATG Website for updates. In the meantime, Happy ALA Midwinter and Happy New Year!

Much love, Yr. Ed.  

continued on page 79
some of the developments in both CD hardware and software that will make them difficult to use, but concludes that “the creation of standards for compatibility...will result in some very innovative and very exciting new products available to the student, researcher, the homebody, the scholar, and the business professional.” In other words, who won’t be thrilled by the possibilities just beyond the horizon? (In hindsight, such optimism seems strangely misplaced.)

At the same time, Eleanor Cook’s take on developments in the pre-Web Internet is eerily prescient. Comparing the Internet’s ever-increasing integration into daily life (through functions like bulletin boards and distribution lists) to such mundane circumstances as wet laundry and overflowing toilets, Cook hints at the coming revolution (and ensuing banality that follows). Rather than optimism, however, there is concern: delayed emails, busy signals, and Cook even notes another user’s “real concerns about using the Internet for so many things.” Though the Internet seems ready to take its place alongside other routine and unpleasant household chores in a way that the CD-ROM is not, it is the complexity and, perhaps, intangibility of the former that makes it harder to see the Internet as the technology that would truly revolutionize information access in a profound way.

In the summer of 1992, I was a microcosm of the confusion preventing the future from moving forward, being even less aware of the Internet than average. My favorite song that summer turned out to be the Cocteau Twins’ “The Spangle Maker.” While the song has an admittedly ridiculous title, obscured lyrics, and some rough edges, it is still a gem of early Cocteau Twins innovation and really quite good (once you get past the primitive drum machine that drives the beat, which was not so conspicuous in the ‘early 90s). It had originally been released on vinyl in the UK as an EP, but was not distributed (as far as I can tell) in the U.S. Its transcription to CD did not help much: it was included on the freakishly expensive Pink Opaque compilation, available in the U.S. originally as an import only (assuming you could find it), and later included on the 2-disc Lulliput compilation of 4AD artists. The latter recording might have also been import-only. Matters improved somewhat with the release of the Cocteau Twins boxed set (“all the singles in a box,” I believe the sticker said) — improved, that is, as long as you wanted to buy all ten CDs that came packaged together (and assuming, of course, that you could find the set for sale in the first place — good luck with that).

Now you can search “The Spangle Maker” in about five seconds on iTunes and make a purchase by way of The Pink Opaque, Lulliput, or a third compilation, Lullabies to Violaine, Vol. One. And you only have to buy that one song, not the whole compilation. In 1992, I was not at all aware of the Internet, but I was already frustrated with the limitations inherent in the CD. Yet I, like many others, considered the CD a breakthrough and could not imagine what might be beyond such a development. The idea of searching, buying, and downloading music through an interactive, computer-mediated interface was well beyond the realm of imagination. I saw the CD as the future, and felt secure that I had arrived there.

And so we have a snapshot of a strange technological crossroads in the middle of 1992: despite the inherent limitations with CD-ROMs, this technology was seen as very promising; at the same time, the ever-expanding Internet was seen as uncertain, even overwhelming — which might have resulted in artificial limitation. I hypothesized in my previous column that — at least as based on scholarly communication as read in ATG — CD-ROMs were actually a red herring that distracted from investment in and, perhaps, development of the Internet. I am still not totally convinced that this is true. But it does seem that CD-ROMs, at least at this point, were riding on expectations that they could not meet while the Internet was failing to generate expectations that it would eventually fulfill.

Was this crossroads a setback or just part of the evolution? 🌍