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At Brunning: People and Technology-At the Only Edge that Means Anything/How We Understand What We Do

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A Book with a View

Let’s Vook.

Founded in 2008 by Brad Inman, Vook’s goal is to blend story-telling with words to story-telling in video, connecting author and reader through words, image, and social networking.

Vook’s idea is to create a new media experience. Books are not books anymore but a reading experience. Take the Kafka Stories Vook. Vook commissioned two European film-makers, Michel Franchetti and Adad Warda to write and direct thirteen video documentaries that accompany each story. Stories like Metamorphosis are accompanied with documentary detail in iPhone, iPad, and Web browser format.

The e-commerce part is easy — can we imagine otherwise? Vook takes the major credit cards, has you fill out the pertinent information as you set up MyVook. Once submitted, an email confirms your purchase, and you’re good to go.

Text displays on the right, and the first video is on the left. You click thumbnails to advance videos. You can watch, read, mix (watch and read), or connect to social networking — mostly reading groups.

The Kafka Vook’s first video introduces us to modern Prague street scenes. Soon, with the voice over of a Professor of Kafka, we learn about Kafka’s childhood, upbringing, and education. The style is the familiar documentary — expert talks over still and moving images — mostly reading groups.

Users expecting links between text and video — or content and explication de texte — will be disappointed. In the text there are links from words or concepts to Wikipedia entries.

Papa Abel Remembers

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in the late 1960s, I made the first of several strategic errors, which badly hurt the firm. Increasingly, my time and attention were turned to matters of finance, personnel, and similar “executive housekeeping” concerns. I was far more interested in dealing with books, ferreting out internal and library problems, and developing systems to solve them. As I became aware of my growing disinterest and diminishing involvement in the “executive” things, I should have sought a first-class manager, who enjoyed and was good at “executive” responsibilities. I should have fallen back to a bibliographic and systems (manual and software) research, design, and implementation position. I failed to do this because I saw so much developmental work ahead and thought it the role of the “executive” rather than a staff member to carry out that development. In retrospect: too bad.

This won’t go unnoticed by literature teachers. Still, the videos inform sort of like the History Channel meets the library. Production values are high; this is not YouTube.

Vook’s catalog is small. Subject categories are similar to the Book of the Month Club — Self-Help, Entertainment, Romance. And the catalog gets even smaller when you consider that Vooks are often divided up into mini-Vooks — a guide to fifteen minute Pilates exercises is sold one Vook for each exercise. Each of these is sold for $4.99 so that to Vook the entire original book would cost about $24.00.

In many ways a Vook is a DVD. It is a multimedia book production. It adds to the information and entertainment value of the original content at a quality price point that doesn’t cause you to flinch.

Or better not. You can probably read Kafka in one hand and enjoy added information from some other source — like your library. Or wait for Kafka to appear on the History Channel.

Your Links:
http://vook.com/

Where the Wild Things Are

eBooks December 2010

Sshh! After a hungry 2009 where a mighty appetite for all things “e” couldn’t be satisfied, 2010 slowed down. Time to digest.

Kindle — New Kindles — smaller, trendier, cheaper, appeared on the market. At $139.00 you can buy a wifi model, thinner and sexier than version 2. $189.00 will buy a standard 3G/ wifi model. The marketing angle: you can read with this one anywhere, the beach, the subway, in the air. The bigger story: the Kindle Store dominates eBook market despite Barnes and Noble E Book Store and eBooks for the iMachines. And the Kindle app brings Kindle to almost any device.

iPad — Millions have sold since the April 2010 debut. 300,000 sold in the U.S. in the first month clearly outing all the early adopters and clearing the way for the followers. The big question: will it deliver major newspapers and magazines back to profit? Major publications have jumped on board with fantastic apps that deliver enhanced versions of print editions. Clearly, the iPad is more fun than the dedicated readers. On the Kindle you can only read about drag racing; on the iPad you drag.

Google Book Settlement — All is Quiet on the U.S. front as His Honor, Danny Chin, failed to rule on GBS. The groundbreaking
Visit Choice at the ALA Midwinter Conference in San Diego, CA - Booth #1533 - to see a demonstration of the new features on Choice Reviews Online, and enter for a chance to win an Amazon Kindle!

Everyone who comes to Booth #1533 will receive a free 2011 Choice desk calendar. Hurry to the Choice booth while supplies last!

For more information visit www.cro2info.org.
The 2010 SALALM Annual Conference was hosted by Brown University in Providence, RI, from July 23rd to the 27th. This year's theme was "The Future of Latin American Library Collections and Research: Contributing and Adapting to New Trends in Research Libraries." In his welcoming address, Richard Snyder, Director of the Center for Latin American and Caribbean Studies at Brown, remarked that when he looked at 20 years of SALALM themes, the words Change, New, Adaptation, and Transformation have been a steady feature of SALALM programming.

Still, he pointed out that he was impressed by SALALM's "truly new" activities: a "Smoothie Time" sponsored by the Libreros (Bookdealers) and a "Haagen-Dazs Ice Cream Social" sponsored by Gale-Cengage.

SALALM (Seminar on the Acquisition of Latin American Library Materials) brings together Latin Americanists, Librarians, and "Libreros" at an annual event, and keeps them connected through publications and electronic communications, especially business transactions, throughout the year. At the annual conference, the Libreros set up a large book exhibit, and librarians have the opportunity to discuss business with their respective vendors. Both groups are an integral part of SALALM and participate in discussions, panels, and of course, enjoy each other's company at the conference receptions.

We were fortunate to have Deborah Jakubs, Duke University Librarian, as the keynote speaker. Ms. Jakubs is a past SALALM president and was a very active SALALM member for many years. In a thought-provoking address, she discussed old worries, like area studies librarianship, and new worries — archiving full-text, diversity of models for digital dissemination and how digital acquisitions impacts print acquisitions. She outlined library goals — improve users' experience and understand users' research needs, provide digital content, and develop new research and teaching partnerships. Finally, she highlighted two major trends: the library's engagement beyond the walls of the library and an integrated view of collections, rather than print versus digital. This year, SALALM offered several types of programs: the usual panel presentations on a wide variety of topics, roundtable discussions on collaborative collection development and the evolving role of the Latin American Studies librarian, and a Pecha Kucha panel (i.e., Japanese term for quick presentations by several people to share ideas).

In his presentation “What’s Paper Doing in the Electronic Library?,” David Block from the University of Texas at Austin, saw 2005-06 as the tipping point for libraries’ preference for electronic publications, especially journals. While Latin America is still more print dependent than the U.S. and Europe, he showed us examples of Latin American university Websites for journals. He mentioned that libraries need to do the following: if possible, rely exclusively on digital content, do digital retocon or “procon” (since all print books today are born-digital — libraries should try to acquire these files), acquire digital data, and develop new models for acquiring print. He lamented that U.S. research libraries create a lot of duplication, whereas there is a need for more variety of Latin American materials. Dan Hazen from Harvard University gave an insightful picture of area studies programs from WWII to today. He emphasized how area studies librarianship has drastically changed and how bibliographers have lost the prestige they once had. Because technology plays a foremost role today, bibliographers are now one of the many players in research libraries. Cooperation with other research libraries, which is one of bibliographers’ crucial models, is in jeopardy because digital rights and restricted licensing go against the idea of sharing. He clearly delineated four levels of collecting: core materials to support the curriculum; a record of scholarship, such as materials published by university presses, think tanks, and scholarly associations (a huge body); blogs and popular magazines (a big universe); and raw data (measured in bytes). The cooperation thread was picked up by James Simon from the Center of Research Libraries. He presented data about collections from major U.S. research libraries which show that collaboration is selective and shallow and that ARL libraries only have holdings for a bit over half of Latin American imprints in WorldCat (57%).

Ken Ward and Patricia Figueroa, curators of the De Soto exhibition at Brown University, were part of a panel called “Challenges in Special Collections from the Inquisition to the Digital Age.” Ken Ward presented a paper on Melchor Pérez de Soto, Mexican astrologer and architect, whose collection consisted of nearly 1,600 books. He discussed De Soto’s collecting interests which got him in trouble with the Inquisition and which led to his arrest in 1655. Brown University Libraries owns half of the titles collected by De Soto. SALAMISTAS had a chance to view these books at the John Carter Brown Library reception. Paloma Carbajal from the University of Wisconsin at Madison discussed the “Cartonera” project at her institution. This publishing movement — a challenge to the publishing establishment — began in Buenos Aires in 2003. Cartoneras are books whose covers are different, while the content is the same; the cardboard covers of cartoneras are hand-painted by anonymous people or by known artists. Cartoneras are cheap and designed to be read by all — it is ironic that they are housed in special collection department in U.S. libraries. Andrew Ashton from Brown University brought the panel discussion into the digital age. He gave an enlightening presentation on how to engage students fully with digital resources. He discussed some interesting examples of how students and professors can add value to Brown’s digital collection of Latin American travel accounts.

The Pecha Kucha panel, which consisted of quick presentations by five people, covered what’s new at LANIc at the University of Texas at Austin, new tools for cross-campus collaboration at Tufts University, federated searching at HAPI and data visualization at UCLA, and bibliographic commons at Indiana University, Bloomington. Cataloging trends were also devoted a panel. John Wright from Brigham Young University discussed the shortcomings of cooperative cataloging which has not realized its full potential, the use of vendors for obtaining MARC records, and cataloging benchmarks at his institution. Ana Cristán of the Library of Congress gave a presentation on RDA (Resource Description and Access, the long awaited successor...