Developing Standards Across the Scholarly Information Chain

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Against the Grain
“Linking Publishers, Vendors and Librarians”

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Developing Standards Across the Scholarly Information Chain

by Bev Acreman (BioMed Central, London, UK) <bev.acreman@biomedcentral.com> www.biomedcentral.com

The focus in this issue is on how an international organisation — the UKSG (www.uksg.org) — fulfils its remit to span the wide range of interests and activities across the scholarly information community of librarians, publishers, intermediaries, and technology vendors. One way we do this is through funding research projects which look to address issues that affect all players in the community. I am grateful to Ed Pentz of CrossRef and Sarah Pearson of the University of Birmingham, UK for gathering together such a solid collection of articles covering the topics of ProjectTransfer and KBART — a valuable research project looking at standardising the metadata for online resources by setting standards for knowledge-bases which underpin technologies such as OpenURL. To complement the KBART articles, Adam Chandler of Cornell University Library discusses the NISO IOTA project. This project looks to overcome the problem of incomplete or inaccurate OpenURLs which lead to an unacceptable rate of request failures. Both projects are critical for publishers and intermediaries to get right as librarians increasingly seek to put quality metrics into their negotiations with publishers.

I know from co-caretaking the lis-e-resources discussion list (http://www.uksg.org/serials/lis-e-journals) just how infuriating librarians find it when journals move publisher and platforms at short (or no!) notice. The series of Transfer articles within this issue explains the rationale behind the project, which seeks to bring order to the seemingly neverending movements of individual or entire lists of journals. Publishers need to sign up to the code of practice (30 have already joined since its inception representing 10,000 journals), and librarians need to insist that publishers comply with the code to limit the nuisance that sudden loss of access causes. As Nancy Beals states in her article, “the issue of titles moving from publisher to publisher not only affects patron access to the title on the user side, but the movement of an electronic journal title also plays a major role on the librarian and staff side.”

A critical part of the UKSG’s mission is education and training, and two articles outline the different approach we take to this. First, we have Graham Stone from the University of Birmingham, UK for gathering together such a solid collection of articles covering the topics of ProjectTransfer and KBART — a valuable research project looking at standardising the metadata for online resources by setting standards for knowledge-bases which underpin technologies such as OpenURL. To complement the KBART articles, Adam Chandler of Cornell University Library discusses the NISO IOTA project. This project looks to overcome the problem of incomplete or inaccurate OpenURLs which lead to an unacceptable rate of request failures. Both projects are critical for publishers and intermediaries to get right as librarians increasingly seek to put quality metrics into their negotiations with publishers.

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Rumors
from page 6

Something’s Gotta Give! What do y’all think of it? Comments welcome. Greg Tananbaum (lyrics) and Jack Montgomery (recording artist) are already on board. Comments?

And the 31st Charleston Conference CALL FOR PAPERS is already up and we have several submissions already! Come on down. http://www.katina.info/conference

Was just talking by email to a first time attendee at the XXX Charleston Conference last November — Judy K. Schwartz (Director of Library Services, Trocaire College in Buffalo, NY). Did you know that Judy’s profile is posted under First Time Attendees Profiles on the Conference Website? This was an idea we had at the last minute last year so we didn’t get everyone’s profile but stay tuned for more this year now that we have some lead (i.e., pester) time. http://www.katina.info/conference

East Beach in Autumn
Piping plovers run like track stars ceaselessly foraging, working in platoons, their sandy petite forms barely ahead of tumbling surf. Finding tiny crustaceans as waves retreat along the barrier beach’s foamy edge. Lifting away, skimming the crests of breakers, flying in an ellipse to another wash of sand on a sea level stage overlooking Block Island Sound. Riding ocean swells a solitary loon in winter’s plumage peering for menhaden beneath the ocean’s pistachio green surface. Diving for a few minutes chasing its prey. Truly ancient, and incredible swimmers who zoom through the sea like sleek, web-foot, black-white torpedoes — Rhode Island’s splendid winter guests.

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Developing Standards ...
from page 1

of Huddersfield outlining the development of the Open Access E-Resources Management Handbook, (co-edited by ATG favorite, the inimitable Rick Anderson). Now in its fifth year, it is proving highly popular both as a practical manual and reference guide, including articles ranging from a beginner’s guide to working with vendors) to a treatise on the applications of RDF for e-resource discovery — both of which feature in the top downloaded chapters in 2010.

Many of us volunteer our precious spare time to serve on committees in the belief we are giving something back, or making a difference, to the communities we work in and alongside. Kate Price’s article will provide anyone in the position of chairing such a committee with a toolkit to underpin what she describes as a “root and branch” review of just how well the committee is meeting its aims. Additionally it will help to decide whether the committee is robust and diverse enough to survive the current tough times with reduced resources, fewer staff, and more pressure on our day jobs.

Finally, in addition to offering my heartfelt thanks to all of the authors, I would like to thank Katina for the opportunity to highlight the international projects that the UKSG is involved with — if you would like any further information on any of the issues raised, please do not hesitate to contact me <bev.acreman@biomedcentral.com> or Tony Kidd, Chair, UKSG <tony.kidd@glasgow.ac.uk>.

Bev Acreman is the Commercial Director at BioMed Central and Publications Officer for UKSG.

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as as sorry to learn of the death of Barry Lee, one of our long-time research editors for ATG. Barry was just 56, and died Sunday, January 23, 2011, at the Vassar Brothers Medical Center. His death was unexpected Barry was an amazing man, full of ideas, energy, and fun. He was always writing and/or editing something, be it business-to-business, religious publication, or a cutting-edge research report. In the 1990s, he won a directory publishing of the year award and at one time he was among the top five directory experts in the world. He is survived by his wife Judy and daughter Jamie who is in Chicago attending the School of the Art Institute. Judy is attending a paralegal studies program. All of our thoughts, prayers, and love are with Judy and Jamie. May Barry rest in peace.


Judy (above) has sure been busy. She tells me that she has been a first-time conference attendee three times in the space of thirteen months. When I asked her if it was snowing there in Buffalo, she told me that one of the local TV stations had a T-shirt contest some years ago about snow. The winner: It’s Buffalo!! It Snows!! Get over it!! She says it’s still cold there. It does get so hot here in Charleston that we think about snow…


Speaking about weather, while some people are digging out of snow (or sand castles) John Long is still participating in the Save the Bay Swims. And he still loves to write poetry. See one of his poems in this issue p.14. http://www.savethebay.org/Page.aspx?pid=1342&fcrlde=1

Got a note from Doug LaFrenier of the American Institute of Physics recently. Otherwise we all knew he said he was going to retire, but, you know, he actually went ahead and did it! Doug was a joy to work with and to have at the Charleston Conferences. We will miss him and hope that he will come back and visit. His new email address is: delafrenier@gmail.com.

Next time we are in New York City, let’s drop in and see him!

Speaking of retirement, you all know that my magnificent boss Bob Neville retired in June. He is now babysitting grandkids, visiting his place in New Hampshire, and rescuing turtles on Folly Beach! Doesn’t sound too bad. But I am NOT retiring. I cannot tell a lie. The powers that be talked me into taking the Asst. Dean for Tech Services and Collection Development position at the College of Charleston Addlestone Library in the meantime.

The indefatigable Mary Massey talks about retirement in this issue, p.43. She says she’ll be retiring for the third time! Third time’s a charm? Well, I am NOT retiring at least if I can help it. Not yet. Can’t resist this quote from Bette Davis — “I will not retire while I’ve still got my legs and my make-up box.”

Hear via the grapevine that Knut Dorn is going to retire end of this year. Knut has been a constant in my environment since I entered it! (Remember when I gave him a cactus plant as a present at the Charleston Conference many years ago? And he still came back!). ATG interviewed Knut back in February of 1995 (v.7#1) and Tina Feick and I are hoping for another interview sixteen years later. How about it, Knut?

And, just heard from Tina Feick that Harrassowitz is going to sponsor another scholarship for the 31st Charleston Conference! It’s great to know so early. We have several international travelers who would like continued on page 20