June 2011

@Brunning: People & Technology

Dennis Brunning
Arizona State University, dennis.brunning@gmail.com

Follow this and additional works at: https://docs.lib.purdue.edu/atg
Part of the Library and Information Science Commons

Recommended Citation
DOI: https://doi.org/10.7771/2380-176X.5913

This document has been made available through Purdue e-Pubs, a service of the Purdue University Libraries. Please contact epubs@purdue.edu for additional information.
of both young and older patrons drawn by this new atmosphere. Libraries in K-12 and higher education are now getting into the act, first by supporting increasing research and courses on game design and the use of games in education, and then more directly — public library style — by facilitating gaming events and even collecting and circulating the games themselves.

Libraries need to become what Neiburger calls “platforms for the community.” They need to “reinvent themselves…by providing unique user experiences.” Patrons (young and old) require interactive engagement and should see the library as an active place for involvement. Games do this. Academic libraries, with their unique positioning and perception as curriculum support, can use expertise in game techniques and research for teaching and promotion. They can become the “go-to” source for teaching faculty and students. Interactive engagement is the key to maintaining and improving relevancy.

When I walked into that hotel lobby with my stylish Russian hat, I was as excited as I had ever been in my life. I anticipated learning how to immerse myself in library gaming and be paid for it. How cool is that? Incredibly, the experience taught me much more than I expected. Turns out this gaming and libraries phenomenon is emblematic of a cultural paradigm shift for libraries. It’s about the future of what libraries are and what they do. Who knew? Gaming is just the biggest (multibillion-dollar) example of how they are going (or should be going) about it.

I think I owe that cabbie a bigger tip.

**Postscript**

Two years ago the Metropolitan Library System’s groundbreaking Symposium on Gaming, Learning, and Libraries the American Library Association took over the reins (still under the able direction of Jenny Levine), and the conference became the ALA TechSource “first annual” Gaming, Learning, and Libraries Symposium — last two such conferences were still held in Chicago, though in a western suburb at a much easier-to-pronounce hotel name and in a much warmer month. For the record, I attended without my Russian hat. 🐯

Starting in the September issue of Against the Grain, I will begin writing a column entitled: “Engaging the Incubator: Media Minding a Library.” The concept is to consider, explain, rant and rave (and even review) all types of non-print media as to collection development, deployment, utilization and effect on and from the library. An issue to be addressed is the general library—paradigm shift” that is becoming necessary as a result of engaging this media. I am using the term “media” to basically mean anything that does not require ink as an interface. This includes videos, streaming technology, games, audio-books, eBooks, e-anything, blogs, social media software, mobile devices and anything that lights up, beeps, or uses electricity to power its interface or make it work. See you again in September. Viva La Revolution! — JS

__Your links:__

http://www.converttocover.com/support/
http://bondidigital.com/

__Google Observed...__

There is no shortage of books about Google. Early reports included John Battelle’s insider look, “How Google and Its Rivals Rewrote the Rules of Business and Transformed Our Culture” which was all roses and no thorns. “What Would Google Do?” by Jeff Jarvis, along the lines profiled Google as not only a new technology but a new way of doing business — even of thinking. Ken Auletta, the New Yorker writer and reporter, took a more measured approach to the behemoth, agreeing with Battelle and Jarvis but cautiously suggesting the “end of the world as we know it” brought about by Google may not be the total deliverance we thought. But it wasn’t all bad either; we are “Googled.”

Recent times have not been as good for the company. Google just lost its case against copyright as we know it by Judge Denny Chin’s ruling against the settlement. Google is now in just about every court in the world waging one form of litigation or another on privacy, data security, and search equity. It’s taking some lumps that weren’t recorded in the Battelle, Auletta, or Jarvis.

Three books in the last year or two set the tone and outline the shape of things to come for Google. Nick Carr, who keynoted at the recent SLA conference in New Orleans, writes in the “The Shallows: What the Internet is Doing to Our Brains,” the Internet, led by Google, is filtering how we think at the neurological level. Because Google is all about immediate relevant results in a sea of data and information, it has promoted, with its ingenious algorithms that reward popular pages, a sugar high when it comes to what we want to know and consider knowledge. There is no depth to researching on the Internet — only information spread shallow across a huge sea surface of data.

A more comprehensive social, historical, and cultural analysis shows up in Siva Vaidhyanathan’s Googleization of Everything: Why We Should Worry. Vaidhyanathan’s, a media studies professor at University of Virginia and noted Google “Gadfly,” got an inside look at Google through interviews with employees but he also interviews everyone else who writes about Google. For librarians his analysis is thorough — walking us through where Google fits in the scheme of what we do for a living — teaching, finding, and curating information in books, journals, and other important documents. He is especially concerned about the book project, whose impetuous scanning of millions of books and calling it the digital library for all time, ignores copyright, vetting information — all the achievements of publishing and its relationship to knowledge. Stay tuned, we hope to have an awesome interview with the author in at some point this year.

The latest entry into the Google slam is Steven Levy’s “In the Plex: How Google Thinks, Works, and Shapes Our Lives.” And it is less critique than a first-hand look at how Google got to where it is as a business — and what it may face, as we say, “going forward.”

Continued on page 69
We take your order, you take control.

TRACK YOUR ORDER, EVERY STEP OF THE WAY.

When it comes to the status of your purchase, Emery-Pratt is up-to-the-minute and always available. You receive the latest information on your order as soon as we do. You then decide how your order reports are arranged and supplied to you, either alphabetically by author or title, or numerically by your purchase order number. Last, you tell us whether you wish to receive your detailed reports via fax or e-mail each week. You can even check the status of your order 24 hours a day at www.emery-pratt.com at no cost to you. Then, if you still need additional information, just call our customer service department toll-free and let an Emery-Pratt representative give you the answers.

Where earlier insider looks focused on founders Sergey Brin and Larry Page, Levy broadens our understanding of the Dad role of Eric Schmidt, who just got relieved of duties this month, and the army of young engineers. Levy details what it was like to work on "Internet time" that characterized Google's steep ascent to world-class company and dictator of things online. He also suggests that Google had its share of luck — of being there at the right time — a time which may be running out for the company.

Tinged with irony and most fun is Levy's critique of Steve Jobs and Google. As we know, the warm fuzzies of Google and Apple, with Eric Schmidt on Apple's board, ended when Google announced it would compete with Apple's iPhone. As Apple quickly became Google's rival (and vice versa), Jobs summed up Google's mission "Do no evil" simply as BS.

Now Levy likes Google — you have to write about it from inside the Plex. But he couldn't write the real story without detailing how Google, like any competitive and driven company, did not deal "in an up-front manner" with its partners, rivals, and the little companies that got in its way. From those outside the Plex looking in the motto should be "Cave Google."

---

@Brunning: People & Technology
from page 68

Where earlier insider looks focused on founders Sergey Brin and Larry Page, Levy broadens our understanding of the Dad role of Eric Schmidt, who just got relieved of duties this month, and the army of young engineers. Levy details what it was like to work on "Internet time" that characterized Google's steep ascent to world-class company and dictator of things online. He also suggests that Google had its share of luck — of being there at the right time — a time which may be running out for the company.

Tinged with irony and most fun is Levy's critique of Steve Jobs and Google. As we know, the warm fuzzies of Google and Apple, with Eric Schmidt on Apple's board, ended when Google announced it would compete with Apple's iPhone. As Apple quickly became Google's rival (and vice versa), Jobs summed up Google's mission "Do no evil" simply as BS.

Now Levy likes Google — you have to write about it from inside the Plex. But he couldn't write the real story without detailing how Google, like any competitive and driven company, did not deal "in an up-front manner" with its partners, rivals, and the little companies that got in its way. From those outside the Plex looking in the motto should be "Cave Google."

Where the Wild Things Are — Always More on the eBook...

We’ve managed in the three years of Amazon's transformative Kindle, to have maxed several times the allotted devices to download books. The would be Kindle First Generation, Kindle Third Generation, Blackberry, iPad, iPhone, and desktops. That is, until the limit of five is reached. Add online management to the daily task of reading in these Internet times!

You’d have to be living under a rock — or have your own compound in the Northwest Provinces of Pakistan — to remain unaware of big changes in publishing. Kind of puts librarians in a spot so well described by our detractors and troubled in our own conversations. Wither books, wither librarians?

Developments in the industry and the courts suggest — not so fast, ye who would bypass the librarian. In New York’s Ninth District Federal Court, Judge Denny Chin ruled against the deal struck by Google, the Writer’s Guild, and the Society of American Publishers. To their question — can we digitally scan books out of print but in copyright and then distribute them without an author’s permission — the judge said, not on my watch. Go to Congress.

On the other end of the eBook who-gets-what spectrum is Amazon's Library Lending program. You can now check out some Kindle books from some public libraries. And on some Kindles you can enjoy special offers, perhaps from your own library?

Amazon took its sweet time — where is Internet time when you need it? — to come up with a lend-lease program for public libraries. Partnering with Overdrive, the book distributor e-jour for the public library reading public, you can now download books from participating (and paying) libraries for a period of time. Details are sketchy at the moment, but mere intent on Amazon’s part defines a company ready and able to exploit all its markets.

And the Kindle with Special Offers? What Amazon means is advertisements. For a WIFI Kindle and less than 25 bucks, you can pay forward to Amazon and its retailers with your clicks on ads or your participation in crowd-sourcing all sorts of things. For example, you can experience various “start” pages and vote for the ones you like, the winner playing on your Kindle whenever you are within a WIFI range.

continued on page 70
Oscypek is my favorite cheese. Crafted from salted sheep’s milk by the farmers who reside in the Tatra Mountains of Poland, this cheese has been part of the region’s culture since the 15th century. The cheese is hard, cuts like a firm butter, and has an exquisite design stamped into the smoky rind. Sprinkled along Krakow’s Rynek Glowny Central Square are the vendors. Their carts are decorated with stacks of this delicious delight. When I visited Poland 18 years ago, I believe I consumed my weight in oscypek. It was difficult to pass up any cart without a purchase. When Avondale Wine and Cheese opened in the Avondale Point area of West Ashley, Charleston, SC, the owner had an oscypek-like cheese made in New Jersey. In 1929, I was transported back to the summer of consumption, but not completely, for the cheese made in Poland draws its unique flavor from the use of unpasteurized milk. Not an ingredient that is recommended in modern cheese making. Although the debate is renewing among current cheese artisans.

The connection of oscypek with a Nobel Laureate in Literature might not be immediately obvious, but is not as far afield as one might think. When I began sharing my goal of reading works by each Literature Nobelist, I received a copy of Independent People as a birthday present from a dear friend. An elegantly poetic, 482-page story about sheep and the life of Bjartur of Summerhouses who tends them. Most people equate sheep with the counting process of sleep, but this rich novel about owning and tending sheep in the harsh, bitter Icelandic climate kept this reader in a constant state of page-turning. No sleep while Laxness’s words envelope you in the minutia of housing sheep, tending sheep, searching for lost sheep. Till this day I find the words difficult to explain how the grit and grime of a shepherd’s life, the life of his family, and the conflict between Bjartur and his daughter Asta Sollilja make for fantastic reading.

“Damn me if I’ll have names that are bound up with spectres of the past farm.” The name Summerhouses is born, and his future as an independent man on this small knoll begins. “Size isn’t everything by any means,” he said aloud to the dog, as if suspecting her of entertaining high ideas. “Take my word for it, freedom is of more account than the height of a roof beam. I ought to know; mine cost me eighteen years’ slavery. The man who lives on his own land is an independent man.” But the spectres are not exorcised by the renaming of the land and come to haunt every aspect of his freedom.

Although independence is an obsession with Bjartur, it is not shared by his first wife, Rosa, who was also a servant in the Bailiff’s family. pregnant with the Bailiff’s son’s child, her parents wed her to Bjartur to hide the growing secret from both Bjartur and the community. Rosa abhors the roughness and longs for the life in the “luxury” of the Bailiff’s home that she traded for this marriage. Autumn brings the annual sheep roundup. Bjartur joins the men of the district for the ride into the mountains, leaving Rosa at Summerhouse with a gimmer, a young female sheep, as a companion. Rosa, heavy with child, hungry for meat, alone, and frightened by the elements, becomes convinced that the gimmer is possessed. Thus, she kills and eats the young sheep. Upon his return, Bjartur cannot find the sheep and is convinced that Rosa has set it free. He once again goes in search of his valued possession. Winter has now set in, and a blizzard delays his return. Rosa has gone into labor and dies in childbirth. The baby girl has clung to life warmed by the二

With Kindle books going online for public libraries, how goes it with academic eBooks? This world, as usual, is much more complex, including in its definition of eBooks everything from textbook to interactive educational module or whatever Pearson wants to call its wares. Academic publishers, out of habit, expect huge margins in an economic environment of scarcity. Read few readers, higher per-unit costs, and so forth.

The big news on the academic eBook front where the e-thing is started is that ProQuest bought ebrary. Presumably, they bought it to counter EBSCO’s purchase of OCLC’s NetLibrary. A better explanation: library vendor buses come in threes — the first picks up the early adopters, the second, the rest of us, the third, to make sure no one can figure out the real price.

Your Links:
http://www.nyssd.uscourts.gov/cases/show.php?db=spec&kid=115
http://tinyurl.com/3qppfd7
http://www.nysd.uscourts.gov/cases/

@Brunning: People & Technology
from page 69

I discovered while researching this book that it was a bestseller in the U.S. in 1946. And yet it was out-of-print in English for over 50 years. The speculation is that Laxness’ Communist views ran afool of the McCarthy era — not unlike another Nobel Literature Laureate, Gabriel Garcia Marquez. Even Leithauser connects the two authors, likening Laxness’ Communist views ran afool of the McCarthy era — not unlike another Nobel Literature Laureate, Gabriel Garcia Marquez. Even Leithauser connects the two authors, likening Laxness’ Independent People to Garcia Marquez’s One Hundred Years of Solitude. I delight in this connection as Gabriel Garcia Marquez is one of the “authors of my life,” and I share a passion for his work in a way that is not too dissimilar from Leithauser’s for Laxness.