

November 2013

## Save the Date: NASIG 29th Annual Conference

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**Rumors**  
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National Approach to Scholarly Communication — will outline what this means for the UK library consortium in supporting members in terms of containing the on-going cost of gold open access while maintaining journal subscriptions and in the practical issues of implementing the Research Council's policy.

**Lorraine's** presentation is a "Neopolitan." After the **Charleston Conference** is over, y'all have to tell us what you think of the Neopolitan format this year. It's something different that my intrepid team of Conference planners came up with. In the afternoon, we will even have ice cream as a side benefit. And be sure and read **Estelle's** article in this issue of *ATG* — Lessons Learned: Jisc's Experience in Acquiring Multimedia Resources.

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**Save the Date: NASIG  
 29th Annual Conference**

**Fort Worth, Texas, May 1-4, 2014**  
**"Taking Stock and Taming New Frontiers"**

**NASIG** delivers outstanding programming for everyone involved in the serials and electronic resources information chain. Join us downtown at the Hilton Fort Worth in May 2014. Between sessions, enjoy Sundance Square, the Fort Worth Cultural District, and the Stockyards.

Watch our Website for program and registration announcements: <http://www.nasig.org>. Questions? For more information, contact <conf-plan@nasig.org>.

**Pelikan's Antidisambiguation — Oyster and McLuhan's Most Important Quotation....**

Column Editor: **Michael P. Pelikan** (Penn State) <mpp10@psu.edu>

**A**t the time of this writing, in September 2013, the announcement by **Oyster** (<http://www.oysterbooks.com>) of their new service offering "Unlimited books, just \$9.95 a month" is gathering quite a bit of buzz in the popular technical press. Most of the coverage seems to have picked up the phrase "Netflix for books..." It's essentially a streaming service for eBooks, a rental library (about which, more later).

If you visit **Oysterbooks'** site and click on "About," you'll find some of the details about the service they're introducing. Along with an impressive gallery of faces, who I can only assume represent either **Oyster** persons themselves, or, the target demographic group for the service, we find the following words...

"We created **Oyster** to evolve the way people read and to create more of the special moments that only books can offer. From anywhere a mobile device can go — a bustling subway car, a quiet coffee shop, or lost at sea with a Bengal tiger — our mission is to build the best reading experience, one that is both communal and personal, anytime, anywhere."

But what is a streaming service for books, one that is "both communal and personal," I mean, what is it really?

When you look at their privacy policy, listed under their Help section, you find that it's not merely Netflix for books; it's more something like "Netflix met FaceBook at a stylish coffee shop over 'a half-double decaffeinated half-caf, with a twist of lemon' (Thank you, **Steve Martin**) and thus began an **Oyster**."

Phew! Where do I sign up? Oh, wait... It says, "We are currently rolling out invitations for iPhone and iPod Touch."

Without wanting to dip even so much as a toe into the bottomless rat hole of accurately determining market share for such devices, I think we may be able to agree that there are at least a dozen or more persons in the world, and maybe several hundred, who are still using mobile devices that didn't come from **Apple**.

But let's leave aside the question of for whom this new service is intended. It may well be that by the time these words are published, **Oyster** will have rolled out offerings to a broader market. It only makes sense that they do so —

for just as in cable TV, ad-supported magazines, and "free" apps in the App Store, the Customers, I expect, are actually the Product.

Again, from **Oyster's** Privacy Policy "... if you choose, you can use the Services to locate other people with Services accounts, and add them as your friends, either through (i) your contacts list (e.g., address book on your device), or (ii) through a search of email addresses on the Service. If you chose to find your friends through your device's contacts list, then we will access your contact list to determine whether or not someone associated with your contact is using the Services.... If you do not want **Oyster** (sic) to have access to your contacts' email addresses, do not connect your contacts to **Oyster** using the "find friends" feature."

Hold on. Suppose I'm in your contacts list, but I don't want to offer myself to **Oyster**, even if you're willing to offer yourself to **Oyster**. Do I have any say over whether you connect your contacts list to **Oyster** using the "find friends" feature?

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