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Bet You Missed It

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Bet You Missed It!

Abstracts from the recent literature by a growing few!---compiled and edited by Mike Markwith (Faxon)---still no order, so don't look for it.

Who says Americans Don't Care About Culture?

"An End to the Yellowing Pages," in *Newsweek*, March 20, 1989, 80.

Around the Ides of March, at a conference at the New York Public Library presided over by Vartan Gregorian, publishers such as Simon and Schuster, Random House, Doubleday and Bantam "agreed to publish the first printings of quality hard-cover trade books on acid-free paper." Barbara Goldsmith (link between preservationists and publishers) is credited with authorship of the "declaration." "Now, during the next year alone, acid-free paper production will double, and experts estimate that within three years virtually all trade books will be printed on it. Says Goldsmith: 'This moral act of commitment will affect the entire future of our cultural heritage.'" On to computers?

Katina Strauch
College of Charleston

Will There Be Life After Journals?

"Science Libraries at a Crossroads," in *American Scientist* for May-June, 1988, vol. 76, no. 3, 268-272.

This paper presents a broad-ranging discussion of the factors influencing changes in collections and services in science libraries. It discusses the balance between current and future needs in collection management, the use of various selection methodologies and tools, the effect of increases in journal prices on the distribution of library materials budgets between serials and monographs, and the impact that the cancellation of subscriptions has had on the publishing industry. The description of changes in services to researchers focuses on the advent of the high-tech library, including online searching, reference publications on CD-ROM, and publishing on demand.

This article is too general for either acquisitions or science librarians. Its strength lies in the provision of a broad analysis of the issues and problems facing science libraries. It is a suitable handout for those faculty members and researchers who want to know "why . . ." or "why not . . . ?"

Julie Nilson
Indiana University Libraries

To Net or Not to Net? "In My View," by Tim Rayment in *Sunday Times*, 28 January 1989, 84.

The arguments go back and forth in Britain as to whether to maintain the Net Book Agreement which carries with it the lovely phrase of "price maintenance." This arrangement essentially fixes the prices of books and disallows the option of discounting by booksellers. Those in

favor of the Net Book Agreement contend that some specialty bookshops will close due to the lost sales from the higher volume dealers and that "poetry, first novels, short stories, and literary criticism are all at risk. World class writers might not reach print without the help of price-fixing."

Rayment and others contend that these arguments exaggerate the situation. He points out that the abolishment of Net Book Agreement did not harm the Australian book trade; in fact, according to one publisher, the result of killing the Net Book Agreement was a "massive non-event." Three questions are posed: Will books get cheaper if the Net Book Agreement is abolished? Will I be able to find the book I want? Where will I find the book I want? Rayment's forecast: "Although some prices could go up and the choice might narrow, little of significance will change."

Stephen Clark
College of William & Mary

Some other cites from Julie Nilson:

"Increasing Costs Affect Geosciences," by Michael M. Noga and Julie F. Rinalde, in *Geotimes* vol. 33, no. 11, November, 1988, 7-9.

"What's Wrong With This Library?" by N. David Mermin, in *Physics Today* for August 1988, 9-11.

"Assessment and Prestige and Price of Professional Publications," by Paul H. Ribbe, in *American Mineralogist* for 1988, vol. 73, 449-469.

*The Net Agreement:
One More Time*

"A Growing Business With a Dwindling Customer Base," by Rachel Johnson in the *Financial Times* for Thursday, April 6, 1989, 23.

The caption says "Rachel Johnson explains the paradox of Britain's book wholesalers." We've heard some of this before. "Publishers produce beautiful lovely books," says Timothy Melgund, marketing manager of Heathcote Books, a paperback wholesaler, "but they are shooting themselves in the foot by distributing so badly." . . . "Wholesalers say that the service they offer makes their price worth paying." . . .

This article is about the age-old tension between the publisher and the wholesaler with the bookstore thrown in instead of the library. Apparently, in England, the smaller bookstores are using wholesalers more than their larger counterparts, who may only use wholesalers to "top up stocks of fast-moving titles." Some bookstores don't want to go through wholesalers because it costs them more money. "The obvious problem is their expense, which retailers consider prohibitive. Even the major players like Dillons do not relish paying a premium for fast service, which is vital for the health of the small independents.

"Terry Maher, chairman of Pentos, says that Dillons, which it owns, only uses a wholesaler in an emergency; otherwise Dillons relies on the publisher to get books onto the shelves." As well as lobbying for an end to the Net Book Agreement, "the Pentos group is winning itself a reputation for 'aggressive credit management,' which in turn is hurting the wholesalers. According to the industry's publication, *The Bookseller*, this amounts to taking longer credit periods than almost any other leading bookseller." Still, the wholesalers are optimistic though the tension remains.

Katina Strauch
College of Charleston

The Battle of the Budgets

"Budget Aids Education, Hampers Libraries," by Howard Fields in *Publishers Weekly*, January 27, 1989, 330.

One of Reagan's last acts before returning to his million dollar estate was to send a budget to Capitol Hill. Several items directly affect libraries and publishers. While Reagan asked for "modest" increases in most educational programs of interest to publishers (vocational education, block grants to the states, and literacy programs), he requested that federal aid to libraries and subsidies for U.S. Postal Service deliveries to non-profit institutions be eliminated. The FY 1990 budget includes an increase of \$15 million (\$478.7 million in 1989) to assist the 'block grants.' Congress, on the other hand, has accepted the role of champion for libraries. Ignoring Reagan's no increase request for federal libraries, Congress provided a \$20 million increase over last year's \$101 million.

Chris Desjarlais-Lueth
Brown University

To Net or Not to Net: Side 2

"British Book Industry Debates Elimination of Ban on Discounts," in *The New York Times*, March 12, 1989.

In a state-sanctioned practice dating back to the early 1900s, books in Britain must be sold in retail shops at the price established by the publisher. But now, some of the 3500 bookstore owners in the UK think this is a relic of the past. The so-called Net Book Agreement may be breaking down, as a large chain, Pentos plc threatens to begin discounting this year.

Supporters of the Net Book Agreement say that discounting will lead to price wars, and ultimately, to a reduction in the number of independent stores. They predict that the vast assortment of

titles, which is found in many larger independent stores, would no longer be affordable. The small "book of distinction" would become more difficult to publish. And British book-selling would become like "the wasteland of the United States."

Supporters of discounting say that their opponents blend "cultural elitism and business pessimism" in their fear of price competition. Cutting prices on bestsellers would, in the view of Pentos spokesman, stimulate public interest and bring more browsers into the shops.

The Thatcher government has not yet taken a stand, but it seems likely that they will side with the discounters. There is not much sympathy in the government for what they see as price fixing.

England is the last English-speaking country with price maintenance on books, but Germany does have such a system, and France reinstated it two years after allowing books to be sold at any price the retailer desired.

American book buyers do get a better deal on bestsellers than do the British. But on a broader range of books, the British pay an average of 15% less than Americans, even though the few bestsellers are about 25% cheaper in the U.S. A British economist says that book publishing is an industry in the U.S. and in Britain, it is much more a profession, "still a kind of gentleman's occupation."

Barry Fast
Scholarly Book Center

B & T on the Block?

"Will Peter Grace Call it a Day?" in *Business Week*, March 20, 1989, 146.

Peter Grace, the chairman of W.R. Grace and owner of less than 1% of the company, is seventy-five and, some speculators say, thinking of "selling the company which he has run for forty-four years. 'Grace, is an ideal LBO candidate given its excellent gross cash flow, steady and predictable growth, and the option of spinning off unrelated businesses and nonperforming assets' says Mark Gulley, a specialty-chemical

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analyst at Dean Witter Reynolds." For those of you who don't know, LBO is a leveraged buyout, and...W.R. Grace owns Baker & Taylor! Are you getting out your checkbook?

Katina Strauch
College of Charleston

The Book Will Rise Again?
"Are Books Holding Their Own?"
by Leonard Wood in *Publishers Weekly*, January 27, 1989, 445.

The results of the Gallup telephone survey conducted between October 24 and November 21, 1988, to sample adult entertainment activities are in! The question was "to cite the entertainment activities" those 1,005 adults polled had pursued the previous day. Some good news . . . some bad. Nine out of 10 Americans watched T.V. (91%). Eighty-nine percent had read something: 78% newspapers; 52% magazines; only 37% (i.e., less than four in every ten) read a book. That's the good news.

Asked when they had last read an entire book, 50% replied last month, but 4% (really 7 million people) have never read a book from cover to cover. Maybe Reagan's \$15 million for state literacy programs will help?

Chris Desjarlais-Lueth
Brown University

Age: Where is Thy Sting?
"Stubborn Patriarch," by Claire Poole in *Forbes*, February 6, 1989, 99, 101.

This one's about John Wiley & Sons and its 78-year-old Chairman W. Bradford Wiley. Started 182 years ago in 1907 by Charles Wiley, it has published many noteworthies, including Herman Melville, Nathaniel Hawthorne, and Elizabeth Barrett Browning. However, Poole reports, "Wiley clearly needs new management and new blood. It is a good-size company, with \$241 million in rev-

enues in its last fiscal year (ended April 30, 1988). But earnings were down 60% to \$4.7 million, or \$1.10 per share -- a 2% net profit margin, one of the lowest in the industry. Bradford Wiley seems determined to hang on. But a family member confides to *Forbes* that the company's independence will probably end when the elderly chairman dies, if not before. So, the vultures circle."

Katina Strauch
College of Charleston

Micro: Wave of the Future?
"Frankly We Always Prefer Ours Simmered in a White Wine Sauce," in the *Wall Street Journal* for March 3, 1989.

Two researchers at the State University of New York, Syracuse, have come up with a way of eliminating insects from books! Cook the books in a microwave oven. One minute in the microwave can rid the book of bugs. This method does not work with books that contain theft detection strips. Some leather bound books shrink, and some glues melt. Some libraries prefer to freeze their infested books.

The researchers feel, however, that the microwave solution is the least expensive in most cases. "Besides, the microwave can be used to heat lunches or make popcorn."

Barry Fast
Scholarly Book Center

Mass Market Science . . .
"Accommodating Science: The Rhetorical Life of Scientific Facts," by Jeanne Fahnestock in *Written Communication* for 1988, vol.3, 275-296.

What happens to scientific information as it travels from reports designed for

scientific peers to accounts aimed at general audiences? Fahnestock examined the rhetorical changes in information that occurred between articles published for two AAAS periodicals -- *Science* and *Science83*. The changes are characterized by the shift from forensic argument (that which affirms the validity of past facts) to that of science accommodation, or epideictic argument (that which deals with the celebration of science). While there are important issues in the presentation of information in the articles on bees and bears -- the popular magazine presented information in order to solicit wonder and removed hedges and qualifications that conferred greater certainty on reported facts -- there are more serious consequences in articles reporting on the reputed mathematical inferiority of girls to boys. These findings are important to librarians as they weigh the relative merits of sources of information to acquire and access, i.e., all information is not equal. As well, it provides an intellectual base to make arguments for the acquisition of specific types of materials.

Alice Randlett
University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point

Your Bowling Ball is Watching You!!
"Hey Guys, Let's Keep Bowling Low-Tech," in *The New York Times* for January 14, 1989.

American Libraries managing editor Art Plotnik wrote an op-ed piece condemning smart electronics in bowling alleys. As a member of a blue collar bowling league, Mr. Plotnik enjoys the leisurely pace of a typical evening at the alleys. Brunswick Corporation is threatening this with the introduction of video monitors that provide an instant replay of a player's bowl, as well as a display of the ball's speed and trajectory. Now games are being invented, as well, where pins are set in a configuration different from the normal bowling arrangement.

This high-tech attempt to relieve a player's boredom is lamentable, because boredom is part of the game. "Just

Bet You Missed It! continued . . .

because a thing can be done with microchips, must we always do it." Mr. Plotnik writes that Brunswick is bringing high-tech "heresies to the last lowly sanctuary of play."

Barry Fast
Scholarly Book Center

Businessness is Next to Godliness

"Buying Binge in Business Books," by Christopher Knowlton in *Fortune* for February 13, 1989, 101-103.

The growing popularity of business books, now accounting for 1.8 billion dollars of publishing revenues, is discussed in this article. Sales of business titles in book stores last year increased 20-30%. Publishers such as The Free Press have doubled sales in the last five years without increasing their number of annual titles due to the new appeal of business books among consumers. No longer are business books considered boring; they have now apparently become the "stuff of fantasy." With the exception of *The Bible*, some cookbooks, and some reference titles, it appears as if *Iacocca: An Autobiography* has become the best-selling hardcover of all time.

What accounts for this increased interest in business titles? The answer is partially "greed and fear." Consumers are craving books that hold out promises of quick riches, and others who have endured the 1970s energy crises and 1980s recessions are interested in learning how to hold on to their jobs. William Shinker, publisher of Harper & Row's trade division, calls it "anxiety." "Whenever in book publishing you can tap into anxiety, the chances are you will have a book that sells very well and could become a bestseller."

Rosann Bazirjian
University of West Florida

*Tell Me Why a Hearse Horse Snickers Hauling a Lawyer's Bones?**

"Copyright Owners Press Congress for New Laws on 11th Amendment," in *Publishers Weekly* for February 10, 1989, 14.

Nicholas Veleotes, President AAP, and others are concerned that state-operated universities and other institutions may be able to reproduce copyrighted works without permission or royalties. The 11th Amendment states, "... judicial power of the U.S. shall not be construed to extend to any suit in law or equity, commenced or prosecuted against one of the U.S. by citizens of another state or by citizens or subjects of any foreign state." In other words, states (individually or collectively) cannot be sued by persons (individual or collective) of another state.

In two separate suits last year, Appeals Courts found that no suit could be brought against a state or its institutions for infringement under the 11th Amendment. Congressman Kastenmeier and Senator DeConcini, heads of Copyright Subcommittees, promised to hold hearings on the issue early this year.

Chris Desjarlais-Lueth
Brown University

(For further discussion of this issue, see
"The Nemesis" on page 13.)

*Quote from Carl Sandburg's poem "The
Lawyers Know Too Much"

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How to Succeed In Speed

"How Managers Can Succeed Through Speed," by Brian Dumaine in *Fortune* for February 13, 1989, 54-59.

Speed, or "time-based" strategy is the driving force behind many companies these days because "speed kills the competition." Quickly distributing products increases a business' market share because customers love getting their orders now. Although this article was speaking of such businesses as General Electric, Honda, and Hewlett-Packard, one cannot help but relate it to acquisitions and the desire of most librarians for speedy receipt of book orders.

Interestingly enough, this article by Brian Dumaine indicates that the business which makes speed its driving force will be more efficient because it will be forced to "do it right the first time." The business would also have more satisfied employees because they would feel that they are working for a more "responsive" and "successful" company.

Businesses are warned not to speed up operations simply by trying to do the same things only faster. That type of "stepping on the gas" will not work. A business must take the time to analyze and rethink its operations from scratch. So, book vendors are asked to remember Brian Dumaine's words, "speed is catching on fast."

Rosann Bazirjian
University of West Florida

Bet
You
Missed It!
continued . . .

Let There Be Cats. Part 2

"A Reverent Cat," from a correspondent in Kuala Lumpur, in *The Economist*, March 11, 1989, 38.

Cats obviously seem to catch the imaginations of news teams! This time there's a praying one in a Buddhist temple in Kuala Lumpur and the devout believe that it is "a reincarnation of a person who practised Buddhism in a previous life." But the temple is afraid of "sensationalism and emphasizes that the cat is also an everyday mother-of-three." So..have you hugged your cat today?

Katina Strauch
College of Charleston

FOR YOUR INFORMATION

Have you seen *Preview, Professional and Reference Literature Review* (ISSN: 0899-9821) from Mountainside Publishing, Inc.? Vol 1, No. 12 was published December 1988.

The Charleston Advisor

●●● *Answers to questions from the last issue of Against the Grain* ●●●

Regarding the purchase of foreign language materials by small colleges, says **Jane Baldwin**, North Carolina State University: Foreign language materials aren't hard to get if you know what and how to order. She also suggests that we form a group to discuss procurement of foreign materials for libraries. Is anyone besides Katina and Jane interested?

And about the contract regarding copying of materials, **Karen Schmidt**, University of Illinois, Urbana, comments: "Our legal counsel here on the Urbana campus advises us not to become entangled in these matters. We regularly cross this kind of statement out before we sign them. Some contracts even specify that the person signing will be held personally responsible for any copying (or whatever is forbidden). In any case, we will not agree to any indemnification clause. We have had only one problem so far, with a CD-ROM product. The publisher/producer protested at first, but later agreed."

And **William M. Hannay** of the Chicago law firm of Schiff Hardin & Waite in Chicago, Illinois, comments on the current state of the copyright law as it applies to libraries.

"The United States Supreme Court considered the general topic of library copying in the 1975 case of *Williams & Wilkins Co. v. United States*, but was unable to reach any consensus. Following lengthy debates in Congress, a special provision covering libraries was

added as part of the 1976 Copyright Act. That complex provision -- Section 108 of the Act -- authorizes copying by libraries in a limited number of circumstances so long as there is no 'purpose of direct or indirect commercial advantage.' In general, I would not expect a provision in a publisher's contract that prohibits 'copying' to be interpreted as prohibiting the type of conduct authorized under Section 108. Nor would I expect it to be interpreted as prohibiting an individual from copying selected pages to use in research under the well-recognized doctrine of 'fair use.' Libraries should familiarize themselves with Section 108 and consult counsel in case of any doubt as to its applicability."

Are y'all paying
attention??

*Do you have any other
Questions and Issues for
the Charleston Advisor*

And coming soon, I hope, a comment on "licensing agreements."

Some new issues:

Is anyone out there allocating serials money by departments and or allowing books and serials money to be divied up (is that how you spell it?) by departments? I know a lot of libraries do dividing up for book funds, but how about serials?

*See what you get when
you force me to use my
own questions?*