February 1991

Bet You Missed It

Mike Markwith
Yankee Book Peddler

Katina Strauch
Against the Grain

Follow this and additional works at: <https://docs.lib.purdue.edu/atg>

Part of the [Library and Information Science Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Markwith, Mike and Strauch, Katina (1991) "Bet You Missed It," *Against the Grain*: Vol. 3: Iss. 1, Article 12.
DOI: <https://doi.org/10.7771/2380-176X.1067>

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.

Bet You Missed It

Compiled by *Mike Markwith* and *Katina Strauch*

B
e
t

Y
o
u

M
i
s
s
e
d

I
t

The De-Greening of Libraries—Point of View: "Librarians Must Have the Authority to Cancel Subscriptions to Seldom-Used Journals," by Richard M. Dougherty in *The Chronicle of Higher Education* for January 9, 1991.

This point-of-view piece points out many of the things that we have been hearing about for the last ten years or so: strained library budgets, spiraling journal costs, the need to cancel subscriptions, and the sometimes strained relationships between librarians and their faculty colleagues when favorite journal subscriptions are cancelled. Pointing out that "little

connection[may] exist[s] between the perceived value of 'essential' periodicals and the actual use they received during their first year on library shelves," Dougherty says that "[e]ventually, electronic communication will play a more important role in how research is disseminated." Though librarians complain about journal prices, many publishers know that these same librarians often don't have the authority to cancel journal subscriptions. "Campus administrators should give librarians clear and direct authority to cancel subscriptions on the basis of actual use of a journal, once effective and prompt interlibrary delivery systems are in place. Librarians should be the ones making such hard decisions, not faculty members or administrators; it is librarians who must exercise judgment on how to develop and maintain collections and enhance their utility."

Katina Strauch (College of Charleston)

Stop, Look, and Watch - -Manager's Journal: "ROMing Your Corporate Library for Job Leads," by Ronald F. Dow in *The Wall Street Journal* for Dec 31, 1990, page 6.

The author of this article (Dow) is the former director of libraries at Shearson Lehman Hutton Co. And this article is soothing for those of us who may be wondering if libraries will be needed in the next century. Well, it appears so. Dow points to several CD-ROM business information products vendors like Disclosure, Inc., Lotus Co., Dun & Bradstreet, and Standard & Poors and in so doing how many corporate librarians are using these sources to help patrons look for jobs. Downloading information can help those who have lost positions because of the current economic gloomsayers get a handle on other jobs and gain information which will help in interviews. Sounds good to me.

Lyman Newlin

(Book Trade Counsellor)

Mirror Mirror On the Wall — "How to Manage Older Workers," by Walter Kiechel in *Fortune* for November 5, 1990, pages 183-186.

This is an informative and timely subject since so many of us are trying to re-train our staffs as we implement new or different automated acquisitions systems, and because, as the article reminds us, by the year 2001, baby-boomers start turning 55. Mr. Kiechel addresses 5 cliches about the aging worker, the first being that they are slower than the younger worker. He reminds us that deterioration begins at age 25, so beware. Older workers (30 years and older) actually learn to compensate for a decline in functioning, so that slowness becomes a non-issue. It is also possible to teach older workers new strategies, if managers alter their approach to the way they teach. Studies show that it is better to give the older employee lots of information on why the old ways no longer work, rather than order them to alter their ways. Let the employee proceed at his/her own pace, and provide lots of examples. This will increase productivity, and decrease

turnover. Another cliché is that older workers are not as creative as the younger worker. This is also disproven in the article. In fact, Mr. Kiechel states, brainstorming sessions usually work best in senior peoples groups.

The truest of the clichés, he states, is that older workers are not adaptable, and are unwilling to adopt new ways. Their capacity for extensive planning diminishes because older workers have a tendency to ignore incoming information. Rather than listen to new ideas, they are more interested in comparing ideas with peers. Finally, the cliché that they resent being managed by younger people is discussed. Mr. Kiechel insists that we draw on the older worker's considerable experience, and treat them with the respect they so often deserve. All will go best if they sense that type of working relationship.

A pat on the back, request for the knowledge they possess, and recognition in terms of accomplishments is the best way to manage older employees. "A truly intelligent younger manager will discern what a sweet deal he has in the form of his older subordinates," Mr. Kiechel states.

The real managerial challenge is in keeping the older employee from retiring. Most people retire to gain greater control over how they spend their time. If we can offer the potential retiree an "arrangement," we have a better chance of keeping him in the job force.

Rosann Bazirjian (Syracuse University)

Talk About Age -- Keeping Up With the Whizzes — "Let Your Fingers Do the Research" by Geoff

Lewis in *Business Week* for August 27, 1990. pp. 91-92.

What better word power? Handheld electronic reference products which help you spell, translate languages, and find Biblical references have become hot items for retailers. Franklin Computer is credited with initiating this trend in 1986 in the U.S. with its Spelling Ace. The electronic handheld products have only improved with age but are more reasonably priced. Today's price tag ranges from \$40 to \$400, depending on the consumer's desire to have a talking or a display only version. Critics of the electronic language translator believe you may fare better with the ordinary handheld phrasebook if you are not familiar with the language. In 1991 handheld electronic encyclopedias are scheduled for release by two companies, Franklin and Selectronics, which already have versions of the Bible on the market for \$329 and \$300 respectively. Since removable cartridges are used for information storage, the consumer will be able to purchase the basic handheld model and exchange cartridges when skipping from scripture to encyclopedia knowledge. Other reference products on Franklin's horizon include *Bartlett's Familiar Quotations* and *World Almanac & Book of Facts*. Take heed, hypochondriacs, Selectronics is currently developing a handheld *Physician's Desk Reference* product!

Mary Ellen Elsbernd (Northern Kentucky University)

A Peer is a Peer is a Peer — "Just Printing Results Doesn't Validate Them" by Michael Friedlander in *The Scientist*, page 13, November 26, 1990, Vol 4, #23.

On the Role of Publications on Science: There are no arguments from scientists or publishers that communication of science is as vital to scientific progress as the scientific

discovery itself. What then, is the uproar in the scientific community over the publishing of science all about? This is the topic of Friedlander's article. His premise: *scientific facts are not synonymous with a referendum of scientific opinion but are the results of exchanged ideas, information, experimentation and calculation.* According to Friedlander, the major vehicle to convey facts is the professional journal. "Facts" from reports at conferences do not carry the same impact since they have not been digested with the rigor of the peer review system. "Peer review is the cornerstone of the integrity of scientific literature." The peer review

process includes a broad disclaimer, common to all scientific journals, that the facts are not warranted by the reviewers or editors, but are the sole responsibility of the author.

The problem, according to Friedlander, is the public use of the phrase "scientific fact." The concept embodied in the phrase "scientific fact" is of an emerged or emerging consensus of the contemporary scientific community, and is based on that community's analysis of published facts. In this context, a "scientific fact" today may be proven erroneous in the future. In the peer review system, the challenge is to avoid being over-critical of raw facts and/or an individual contribution to "scientific fact" while at the same time guarding against the inclusion of spurious, incorrect, and confusing "scientific fact" and raw data from irreproducible or fraudulent work. Despite the challenges that must be met by the peer review system, it has persisted for want of a better method.

According to Friedlander, history is replete with disasters that have come about when the peer review method has been circumvented or manipulated. He cites: the recent cold fusion uproar as an incident

where "scientific fact" was gleaned from the *Wall Street Journal*, not the peer review system; the Catholic Church's insistence that the earth moved around the sun; Nazi Germany's exclusion of the theory of relativity as an inferior Jewish product; and Stalin's failed agricultural policy based on his insistence that Lysenko had produced a hardened winter wheat.

Friedlander's conclusions: "scientific facts" cannot be forced by societal will, legislation, or the crush of media attention. The current peer review process works, because it allows for the evolution of a new idea, provided that scientists are given enough time for cogitation. The bottom line is that peer review journals serve as the herald of "scientific fact."

Rick Heldrich (Chemistry Professor, College of Charleston)

The Postman Only Rings Twice—"Magazines, Papers See Postal Rate Rise and Turn To Private Delivery Concerns," by Patrick M. Reilly in *The Wall Street Journal* for December 4, 1990, page B5.

Competition is what it's all about. Enter Alternative Postal Delivery, Inc. (APD), "one of the leading private mail deliverers." APD has signed agreements with Times Mirror, Gannett Co, Capital Cities/ABC, Inc., and Landmark Communications, Inc., to

distribute to their markets. Given the fact that postal rates are on the increase ("[m]agazine publishers face paying millions more in postal costs, should the [postal] service pass an average 23% rate increase for delivery of second-class and third-class mail."), many publishers are looking at alternative methods of delivery of their products. And given the fact that you can't negotiate with the post office over what they charge you to mail

something, some of the publishers are doing this with companies like APD, thus "creat[ing] new profit areas."

Bruce Strauch (The Citadel)

[Editor's Note: Feb 3 is D-Day for the Post Office to decide on this rate increase. Stay tuned.]

The Luck of the Dow —"Critics Try to Cast Bad Spell on Harcourt," by Glenn Buffenach in *The Wall Street Journal* for Friday, November 16, 1990, p.B1.

Though Halloween 1990 is long gone for most of us, "Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Inc., finds itself bedeviled by witches, goblins, trolls and things that go bump in the night." Apparently, these visions have to do with HBJ's Impressionist reading series, "a collection of fifteen elementary-school books that has become one of the most controversial education programs in the country." There are some religious and parents' groups who don't like the material in these books and even say that some of the texts are "nothing less than primers on witchcraft, Satanism, and the occult." And there seems to be a trend which some say is "a growing offensive against school materials." As if HBJ didn't have enough troubles.

Katina Strauch (College of Charleston)

One Person's Junk is Another's Gold—In *The Wall Street Journal* for Tuesday, November 13, 1990, over the World Wire, p.180.

It's reported that books by Soviet leaders are "no longer guaranteed space on store shelves, and that those that don't sell are reportedly being shredded." This includes books by Mikhail Gorbachev, Eduard

Shevardnadze, and Nikolai Ryzhkov. But, not Lenin. Those are "stored in basements where 'they rot, they grow moldy and fall apart.'"

Lyman Newlin (Book Trade Counsellor)

All the News That's Fit for CD —"CD-ROM Disk Selection and Evaluation" by M. S. Foulds and L. R. Foulds in *Reference Services Review* volume 18, number 2, pages 27-38 and following for 1990.

The authors discuss various options to be considered when choosing CD-ROMs for a library. Coverage includes a discussion of printed directories of available CDs, an annotated list of product reviews that have appeared in professional literature, and an examination of CDs available for use in technical services and on PACs. The Fouldses also include a section on evaluating CDs.

L.K. Carr (Boston University)

Evaluation is the Best Policy —"Choosing CD-ROM Products," by J.J. Haar, S. Clark, F. Jacobs, and F. Campbell in *College & Research Libraries News* volume 51, number 9, pages 839-841 for October, 1990.

The authors discuss the guidelines for CD-ROM selection developed for use at Virginia Commonwealth University. Selectors there must respond in writing to forty questions when requesting funds for the purchase of CDs. The criteria include acquisition, coverage, software and hardware considerations, vendor support and documentation, and in-house service requirements of CDs. In seeking answers to such practical and philosophical questions, the librarians gain a better understanding of the CD marketplace and of the university community in which they work.

L.K. Carr (Boston University) ☞