I Hear the Train A Comin' - Live

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WHAT CAN OUR READERS TEACH US?

Speaker: John Sack - Associate Publisher and Director, HighWire Press, Stanford University Libraries and Academic Information Resources

Reported by: Lettie Conrad (Lettie.Conrad@sagepub.com) - SAGE Publications, Inc.

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Based upon studies conducted by HighWire Press via interviews with Stanford University researchers, students, faculty, clinicians, and other scholars, Sack urged Charleston Conference attendees to find “the motivation to think outside the box” of publishing and librarianship. Their most recent studies, which spanned various disciplines, have shown that mobile is not yet a dominant tool for researchers. While all respondents indicated their primary use of laptops for online research, they Google searches too broad without good filtering capabilities, yet did not mention library catalogs or publisher portals among their web-based tools. Most found many journal sites littered with tools that did not fit their needs, often obscuring the editorial themes within issues. Sack concluded that our industry has been focused on various containers of research – such as the journal, the book, the web – but, to survive, he recommends we move beyond these to embrace a wider communication landscape, where we mobilize and integrate mainstream tools into the academic community we essentially represent.

I HEAR THE TRAIN A COMIN' - LIVE

Speakers: Greg Tananbaum - CEO, Scholarnext; **Joseph J. Esposito** – CEO, GiantChair

Reported by: Ramune K. Kubilius (r-kubilius@northwestern.edu) - Northwestern University, Galter Health Sciences Library

Previously reported in Against the Grain, v.23 #4 June 2011

Tananbaum (“Against the Grain” columnist and Charleston Conference regular) posed questions related to the scholarly communication crisis and how libraries will support the proliferation of resources. Is this an opportunity or a challenge? Niche publishers are an important part of the ecosystem-what happens if they go away? Does traditional scholarly publishing still matter and what is the tradition (is it a matter of form vs. function?). The future of scholarly communication can be exciting, different, vital, experimental, etc., and it’s a matter of moving from talk to action. Esposito asked what happens when the train stops? What will publishing be after the apocalypse? Quoting Niels Bohr (“Prediction is always difficult, especially about the future”) and reminding the audience that “disrupters do not disrupt themselves,” Esposito trend spotted through funding, library bypass, supply side publishing, direct marketing, proprietary systems. Co-opt the supply side of publishing, beware and identify who will profit in the new equilibrium. (The point of the “Big Deal” is to push out other publishers.) One Esposito pronouncement echoed the rest of the conference: a literate person can read about 7000 books in a lifetime. Another question he raised: Is the music industry a model for publishing? His

answer was “no,” since academic authors direct their work to the reader. Mathematicians, for example, do not feel that a publishers’ brand is needed.

CREATING A TRILLION-FIELD CATALOG: METADATA IN GOOGLE BOOKS

Speaker: Jon Orwant - Engineering Manager, Google Books)

Reported by: Anna Fleming (Northwestern University, Galter Health Sciences Library) <a-fleming@northwestern.edu>

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Google Books Engineering Manager Orwant discussed Google’s efforts to create and improve its metadata in order to increase discoverability within its growing collection. He showed examples of the challenges the team faces, including normalizing author names, fun with transliterations, interpreting FRBR rules, and disambiguating multi-volume or serial publications. Clearly, all this sounded familiar to the librarians in the audience. Factoid: as of 18 months ago, the collection included 15 million scanned books in over 480 languages. Orwant also described Google’s new Digital Humanities Awards to researchers interested in linguistic analysis projects. So far, 12 awards to 23 researchers at 15 universities support projects datamining the Google Books corpus. Steven Pinker (author of “How the Mind Works,” “The Stuff of Thought,” and “The Language Instinct”) is a recipient. Stay tuned.

EFFICIENT AND EFFECTIVE FUNDING OF OPEN ACCESS ‘BOOKS’

Speaker: Frances Pinter - Publisher, Bloomsbury Academic; **Sanford G. Thatcher** – Former Director, Penn State University Press; Free-lance Acquiring Editor

Reported by: Ramune K. Kubilius (r-kubilius@northwestern.edu) - Northwestern University, Galter Health Sciences Library

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Thatcher served as responder for this session during which Pinter provided examples and models of open access book publishing possibilities from her “previous life” with Soros, and her current work at Bloomsbury. With core humanities and social sciences funding, the book format would be brought to the public arena. Calling the European-based eIFL (www.eifl.net) a “whopper of a consortium”, she moved on to academics’ needs and desires: independence, branding, editing, marketing, selling, and, the “mother-in-law” factor (the magnum opus copy for family). Publishers are willing to experiment, see themselves as service providers, not gatekeepers, and co-creators of value. Books are similar to ice cream- “vanilla on HTML”, with a cone (print, e-book, Kindle, etc.), that can be a sundae (the “enhanced e-book”). Arguing that the Open Access STM journal funding model is not sustainable, she envisioned creation of the “International Library Coalition for Open Access Books (ILCOAB)”, to aggregate funds from the