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Bet You Missed It

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Against the Grain

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Bet You Missed It

Compiled by **Katina Strauch** with a LOT of help from her friends
— Hey, does anybody out there want to help with this on a regular basis???

Where Will the Dust Settle? —
“From Copyright to Copycat: Open Season on Data,” by Baila H. Celerdonia in *Publishers Weekly* for August 16, 1991, pages 34-35.

More on the Supreme Court's recent decision in the *Feist vs. Rural Telephone* case (see *Against the Grain*, v.3#3 June, 1991, pages 32-33). This case, which seems to have changed copyright protection for “facts,” will haunt the courts for many years to come. This article is by a lawyer with a New York City law firm specializing in copyright, trademark, publishing and computer law.

Lyman Newlin
(Book Trade Counsellor)

A New Household Word — “Playboy” Interview: Robert Maxwell,” in *Playboy*, September 1991, pages 65-84.

“A candid conversation with the publishing magnate about friends in high places, archrival Rupert Murdoch and his new toy, New York's *Daily News*.”

I want y'all to know that when I was in New York in June at the American Booksellers Association Convention, I personally bought a copy of the *Daily News*. I wanted to see what it was like, and I'll tell you one thing, it is most definitely not like any Pergamon journal I've ever seen! This interview with the new owner of the *Daily News* (among other things) reads like a screenplay and you'll chuckle more than once. “I intend to make money immediately. I have no money to lose and I don't belong to the Salvation Army,” Maxwell says. When asked: “What do you think it is like working for you?” Maxwell said, “I would hope it is exciting and demanding. If you survive the first few months.”

Katina Strauch
(College of Charleston)

View from the Front Row —
“Librarians' Chapter in History,” by Roxanne Roberts in *The Washington Post* for August 22, 1991.

This piece was written during the 57th annual IFLA Conference, held this August, 1991, which had the theme, “Libraries and Culture: Their Relationship.” Not on the agenda of the conference was the coup against Gorbachev or the tanks. Still, it must have been an experience to be there. Some of those quoted in this article are Karen Muller, the executive director of ALCTS, and James Billington, the Librarian of Congress, two of the Russian speakers in the group. The main people who were worried were those back home as the only communication was often by fax or e-mail.

Corrie Marsh
(George Washington University)

To Publish or Not to Publish —
“Back to Academia? The Case for American Universities to Publish Their Own Research,” in *LOGOS*, v.2, issue 2, 1991, pages 106-112.

Since taking on the Directorship of the Office of Scientific and Academic Publishing of the Association of Research Libraries, Ann Okerson has been indefatigable, vocal, and always articulate. This article points up the current dilemma of the scholarly publishing system and the fact that universities originate 70% of scientific journal articles. “In the US in 1991, university-based publishing is receiving significant attention as well as tremendous revitalization from the university-linked networks. . . . Many issues remain to be resolved, but it is the right time to attempt an old solution to this new problem: the unaffordability and diminished access to the ‘body of knowledge.’ The old solution is academe's vital participation as a

publisher of its own research results.”

Rick Heldrich
(College of Charleston)

British Scientists Loathe Citation Rate Comparison — “No Citation Analyses Please, We're British” by Alun Anderson in *Science* for 1991, pages 252,639.

While the scientific community in the United States seems to accept (for now at least) citation rate as a valid criteria of indexing the relative importance of the scientific contributions made by a laboratory, the British scientists are actively poo-pooing the thought. The British scientific community was the recent (1985 & 1989) subject of governmental auditing to make sure that pounds spent on scientific research were fruitful. The Royal Society addressed the issue of citation rate comparisons through a Science and Engineering Policy Studies Unit (SEPSU). SEPSU surveyed most of the 45 universities in Britain and found deep misgivings over the citation index as a criteria of scientific importance. One is not sure if the British scientists were chastised by their governmental audit for low citation rates, but they list several problems with using citation rates. Those problems include equating “high impact” science with high incidence of citation; self serving citations by “teachers, colleagues, and friends merely to improve their citation count”; misidentification of bad science, which is cited as an example of what to avoid, as good science; bias that arises from the use of short-term citation rates to elevate rapidly evolving disciplines (i.e., molecular biology) over more controlled disciplines (i.e., Chemistry); bias toward English journals as opposed to multilingual journals where European Community projects are apt

to be published; and the failure to cite the senior author unless the senior author is the first author listed for a publication. So what does SEPSU

find its members want to use as a yardstick for measuring scientific quality? A group of twenty or so quantifiable indicators, called "esteem indicators", was less popular than the tried and true method: Peer Review! Despite the apparent dissatisfaction with citation rates, it is a quantifiable measure and at least one SEPSU respondent said that it "will be used whatever we say".

Rick Heldrich
(College of Charleston)

Here are some brief tidbits because we don't have much more room

Maxwell Communication Corp -- "Coming Apart" in *The Economist* for July 20, 1991, pages 82-83. A brief note on the MCC from the view of Wall Street and London investors.

"Humanities Journals Ten Years Later: Practices in 1989," by John M. Budd in *Scholarly Publishing*, v.22, no. 4, for July 1991, pages 200-216. Quite an extensive benchmark study by a library school type. Concludes that the humanities literature is much the same as it has been and humanities journal subscriptions have not moved substantially up or down in the period studied. Notes increased concern regarding the peer review system.

"Going Dutch" by Gayle Feldman in *Publishers Weekly* for June 21, 1991, pages 19-26. Quite a fascinating look at Wolters Kluwer and Elsevier post Pergamon. Includes statements on the future of scholarly publishing from people like Cor Brakel (Kluwer), James Kels, Michael Boswood, and Pierre Vinken (all from Elsevier).

Publishing -- "Hold the Drinks and Shrimp: Book Parties Are Waning" by Roger Cohen in *The New York Times* for July 29, 1991. A brief look at the era of the "accountant-publisher" when publishing is not as much fun and expenses for parties aren't as lavish.

1991 Charleston Conference flyer (new) is in the mail. Look for it!

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