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Lightning Visits / Becky Lenzini

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Lightning Visits — Becky Lenzini, President of CARL Systems, Inc.

Talk about role models! I was first impressed by Becky Lenzini when I heard her speak at a workshop held by Marcia Tuttle at UNC-CH. Then I called her up (I am known for my nerve if nothing else) and asked her if she would room with me at a NASIG meeting in Ohio. I think she was co-chair of NASIG at the time. We have been friends ever since. And it is especially interesting to interview a friend...

ATG: What exactly is UnCover?

BL: UnCover is an article delivery service and periodical index database for over 14,600 English language titles and over 5 million citations. We have filled orders for 75,000 articles. Approximately 3-4000 citations are added each day. Table of contents information is entered into the database as the journals are received from the publisher, so issues are indexed online at about the same time that they arrive in libraries or on the newsstand. This makes UnCover the most up-to-date index available anywhere. Most important, almost every article cited in UnCover can be ordered online and delivered to your fax machine within 24 hours.

ATG: CARL has just made some big announcements — free and open access to the UnCover database and a name change. Can you tell us about them?

BL: Okay. This is definitely a scoop for ATG! We are changing the name of the company to **CARL Corporation** and will be introducing it formally to all users before the end of the year. CARL is more than just systems. We have delivery tools like UnCover as well as other products like *The Kids' Catalog*. We also have a fully integrated library system. This name change will clarify the distinction between the company itself and the CARL System which is our main product line.

On September 1, we introduced open access to the UnCover database via the Internet. From the beginning, it has always been our intention to allow

UnCover to be available free much like, for example, the L.L. Bean catalog. Those who have already paid to subscribe to the database on password or gateway will pay \$6.50 per article for delivery plus the copyright fee. Those who want to use the database more casually will be allowed open access over the Internet and will pay an extra \$2 per article deliv-

ered, or \$8.50 plus the copyright fee. In the first week of September, 2,000 people registered for open access!

ATG: What is this going to do to the competition? Will they do the same?

BL: I hope it inspires them to stop service charges which are barriers to individual use. UnCover will be one of the many, many tools that librarians and individuals can use. I want UnCover to be the starting point, the most comprehensive tool that is always consulted first.

ATG: That's very noble, but are you going to make any money?

BL: We can afford to be noble. Seriously, yes, we can make money. The key to profitability in document delivery is volume. Services like UnCover make a small amount of money on each docu-

ment retrieved from a library shelf, and a larger margin on documents supplied from optical images (which have no labor requirement). We want to increase the document ordering occurring on the system so that repeat use and supply from optical images increases.

Over the past two years, we have delivered 75,000 documents with a repeat rate of 15%. We have a strong upward trend. Between April 1992 and April 1993, the number of articles we delivered tripled. We still aren't at the staggering 3.3 million level of the British Library, but it's not bad. If we can secure rights from publishers to scan and transmit the optical image, use should get even better.

ATG: How did you come to have the idea for CARL UnCover?

BL: I credit **Ward Shaw** with the idea. He came up with the name also. As for myself, having been in the position of the middle person between libraries and publishers and having monitored the ever-upward trend in journal prices, it was clear to me that the subscription bubble would burst eventually and that some sort of article-based delivery would need to fill a void. UnCover, as it is structured currently, is definitely a tool of the print-based traditional journal world and, therefore, it should be regarded as an interim solution. UnCover will need to evolve as the entire electronic information delivery world evolves.

ATG: Can you elaborate on that statement?

BL: Recently, at NASIG, I predicted that print-based publications would continue to exist, but that electronic publications would become more prevalent because ultimately they are cheaper to produce. There will be a trend toward having "publisher servers" to hold electronic publications or "personal servers" for those who want to retain the rights to their own publications rather than working through publishers. Tools like UnCover will store the address of the

appropriate electronic server and rather than sending a runner to the shelf to retrieve a hardcopy, the system will retrieve the information in question from the appropriate server as well as handle financial and other record-keeping automatically. I think this can happen in 3-5 years so it's not that far away. In fact, right now the publisher John Wiley is doing a small experiment with us. They have a server location for some articles. Our computer automatically sends requests to the Wiley server. As another example, if you had back issues of *Against the Grain* loaded on your computer at home, you could actually transmit an article over the Internet for a piece of the delivery fee plus the copyright fee.

ATG: How many people work at UnCover?

BL: UnCover has 40 FTE (full time equivalents), and 55 actual people. CARL Systems itself employs another 63

"... you can have the greatest product in the world but if your timing is off, it is a problem."

people. In 1988, when I joined CARL, I was the seventh employee and UnCover didn't even exist!

ATG: *The Kids' Catalog* is pretty spectacular. How did that come into existence? Where will it lead?

BL: The story behind *The Kids' Catalog* is wonderful. It is the result of the work of a group of three staff members from the Denver Public Library who received an Apple Library of Tomorrow grant. They joined forces with programmers (1 spectacular programmer in particular) from CARL Systems and, using Apple hardware, they designed *The Kids' Catalog*. Basically, *The Kids' Catalog* is a way that young children can search for specific books in a library using "touch screens" and great graphics to pull them into the library experience. This is encouraging for librarians. They can create partnerships that allow them to become entrepreneurial.

The Kids' Catalog is taking off and is being used by children with access to CARL Systems, Dynix Systems and other systems. Using Z39.50, we are in

the process of designing other interfaces. I have even gotten a call from CNN which wants to do a national spot on it and they are filming, Monday, September 13 at the Atlanta-Fulton Public Library!

ATG: Tell us about the agreement with Blackwells that was effective just over a year ago. How has that changed your mode of operation?

BL: On March 1, 1993, the UnCover Company was incorporated, but a year ago the two parties (Blackwells and CARL) signed a letter of intent. As anticipated, it is working out to be an incredible partnership. In the last month, Blackwells has secured a contract with the National Library of Australia and with IRIS, a national consortium of Irish academic libraries including Dublin City University, Eolas, Trinity College University College, Dublin, University College Galway, and the University of Limerick, to use and contribute to the UnCover database. This will allow UnCover to expand and have a greater international reputation.

Also, UnCover is a companion service to other BNA services like BNA's monographic TOC (Table of Contents) service. Though there is no plan to deliver material in the same way as UnCover does for journals, TOC is being offered for loading on local databases. Many libraries will have menu choices for UnCover (for serials) as well as TOC (for monographs) on their local systems. Another side benefit of the CARL/Blackwells partnership is that Blackwells has reached more publishers than we could have reached by ourselves.

ATG: What about CARL's financial condition?

BL: Excellent. I am proud of it. We are privately held by the non-profit Colorado Alliance of Research Libraries (CARL) and three individuals, Patricia Culklin, Ward Shaw, and myself. The UnCover Company is a partnership owned 50% by BHB and 50% by CARL Systems Inc. We are an example of the small business America thrives on. UnCover and CARL Systems together have created over 100 jobs in Denver. We are profitable and we have no debt.

ATG: What can you tell us about optical storage? What proportion of your

material is stored optically? Is any of it delivered optically?

BL: Technically we transmit optical images over the Internet right now. They are transmitted from the point of scanning to our central optical jukebox over the Internet. The image is then sent through fax modem so that the end user gets the fax.

It is our understanding that we need permission from the publisher to do onward transmission of material on the Internet. At the very least, we need to advise the end user of limitations on receiving a document electronically. We are currently working with Carol Risher of the AAP (the Association of American Publishers) to devise language to be transmitted with an electronic copy to explain rights to the end user.

Right now, for example, we don't transmit to Ariel workstations. It is technically do-able, but we want to be very clean about copyright observance. Later this fall, assuming that we have worked out a statement with AAP, we should be able to transmit electronically to Ariel workstations. We are also working with public domain transmission software for users who don't have access to an Ariel workstation. It is obviously in our best

"... the profession has to add value to the retrieval process which has now become automated."

interest to make it easy for people to receive our articles.

Currently, we have optical storage rights from a couple hundred publishers. The percentage of articles optically stored at present is small (about 10%) and is likely to remain small at least in the immediate future.

ATG: When you do supply articles, what kind of information do you supply to publishers?

BL: We send a detailed analysis of every article ordered through UnCover either to the Copyright Clearance Center or to the publisher. I don't know if publishers are using this right now, but they will over time. The greater the volume, the more useful the report will be. We pay copyright to 1500 publishers.

ATG: *What proportion of your dealing is with the CCC?*

BL: Five hundred of the 1500 publishers work through the CCC.

ATG: *What's next? What is happening to CARL? What new ideas are you spinning up out there?*

BL: Work on the graphical interface has currently caught our fancy. We are convinced that the massive amount of information available over the networks has to be presented with a friendly, inviting, even seductive face. And that the profession has to add value to the retrieval process which has now become automated. There is no chance for personal interaction so the interface becomes more important than it ever was. The creation of outstanding graphical interfaces is where much of CARL Systems research is going right now.

ATG: *You are a young woman to have achieved so much. To what do you attribute this*

BL: Thanks. Good fortune. I have been in the right place at the right time.

ATG: *What is your average day like?*

BL: I spend a good deal of my time on the phone, or talking to staff or colleagues. I enjoy contact with customers and others; it helps me determine if we are getting our message across and if our products and services are really doing what they should be.

ATG: *Tell us about your background, schooling and family life as a child? Where did you go to college? What jobs have you held?*

BL: I was born in a small town in Virginia, but grew up in Southern Illinois. I went to college at the Univ. of Illinois at Champaign-Urbana where I had originally planned to be a guidance counselor or teacher. Instead, I got degrees in English and French Education. I went on to get my Masters in Library Science because it was a good deal since I was working at the Library.

When I graduated from library school, **Hugh Atkinson** had just arrived at Illinois and he was looking for willing victims to work in data conversion and automation. I volunteered because it seemed more exciting than gifts and exchanges

where I was then working. The rest is history. I joined Faxon in 1981 when DataLinx and SC10 were brand new products and they needed a products manager. From 1984-88, I was P&L (Profit & Loss) manager for Faxon's Academic Division which at the time was well over 50% of Faxon's business. Eventually, I was promoted to Vice President at Faxon. In 1988, I joined CARL Systems with a chance to be part of a very small and dynamic group and to take the role of part owner.

ATG: *What is your philosophy of business?*

BL: Hmmm. In 1987, I went to the Certificate Program at Harvard Business School for small and family-owned business which satisfied my craving for an MBA (something I have wanted to do since 1974 when I graduated from Illinois). I believe in the classical definition of marketing — that you should PAY ATTENTION. Look and listen for the needs of the people you serve and create products and services to meet those needs. Present your products and services in ways that those same people can understand. We were taught that you can have the greatest product in the world but if your timing is off, it is a problem. We have been very lucky with UnCover. It was the only product of its kind designed in 1988 for the networked world. Internet was just gearing up in our environment. It was a fortuitous combination of meeting needs at just the right time.

ATG: *What do you like to do for fun?*

BL: Hiking, camping, skiing, breathing in the Rockies, enjoying my children. This is my fourth year as Girl Scout leader. I was a gung ho Girl Scout as a kid and Scouts taught me a lot. Annie, my youngest, is eight and Sara will be 16 in a week. She just got her driver's license and is having fun in a Cabriolet.

ATG: *Any anecdotes to amuse us?*

BL: Well I guess I am semi-famous for falling off the stage of the Charleston Conference four years ago. Even now, people still walk up to me and talk to me about that. I think this the closest I will ever be to Chevy Chase. Maybe they will offer me a late-night slot.

ATG: *You are a librarian. Pretty*

great. What librarian role models have you had? How about other role models?

BL: I do believe I have been very fortunate to work for many dynamic people. And among the librarians who have served as role models for me are **Hugh Atkinson**, former director at the Univ. of Illinois and now deceased. The other librarian is **Jerry Lowell** who is now director of libraries at UC-San Diego. Hugh was a man of real vision, yet remained in touch with the individual. **Jerry Lowell** is one of the best managers I have ever met.

Of course, it was a real pleasure to work for **Dick Rowe** in my years at Faxon and he granted me fabulous opportunities for growth and personal challenge. I feel fortunate today to be working with **Ward Shaw**, who is also a librarian. Ward has that rare combination of technical, leadership, and business ability.

A woman who had a huge effect on me early in my career is **Charlene Renner** who was head of technical services at the University of Illinois when I was there. Charlene really introduced me to librarianship as a profession as opposed to just a job. It was she who pointed me out to **Hugh Atkinson** and who took people like **Bill Potter** and me to ALA and showed us the ropes.

ATG: *What's your favorite reading matter these days?*

BL: I just finished Michael Crichton's *Rising Sun* and enjoyed it. I think that I would like to go read what's on my bedside table right now.

Guess what? The UnCover Company has chosen Charleston for their fall Board Meeting because so many of their people go to Charleston. Wow! This means that we will see Becky and many of the UnCover crew soon! ☺

UnCover may be accessed through the Internet by telnetting to database.carl.org. It is also possible to dial directly to UnCover at (303) 756-3600. After you select UnCover from the menu you are prompted to enter your access password, if you have one, or to enter UnCover's Open Access service. Password users receive a \$2.00 discount on each article they order.