June 2009

Something to Think About -- Where's the Journal?

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Recommended Citation

Massey, Mary E. (Tinker) (2009) "Something to Think About -- Where's the Journal?," *Against the Grain*: Vol. 21: Iss. 3, Article 30.
DOI: <https://doi.org/10.7771/2380-176X.2330>

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@Bunning: *Library instruction has gone in and out of style over the last two dozen years of my professional life. Unlike my stocks, it seems to be on the uptick. Any trend spotting comments?*

AE: During weeks two to six of the semester, I am very busy with library instruction. The college I support has 5,600 students spread across four campuses, and at my campus alone there are 1,900 students to reach. At the undergraduate level, I coordinate with the instructors of one particular course for library instruction (I am lucky that students must take required courses in sequence). In this course, I connect basic and important concepts to a particular assignment, a literature review. I teach students about finding and evaluating articles and other sources and they put that to use in their assignment. The trends are these: in order for library instruction to have maximum impact, you must connect the concepts you are teaching with an outcome. I am *not* a fan of stand-alone library orientations. Have you ever read a user's manual for a piece of electronic equipment that you do not own? Another trend is instruction as ambassadorship. Even if students retain 20% of what you teach them, they at least know where to go for help. In this day and age we need to market and promote the library and its resources. Instruction helps students (and faculty) see that the library is still relevant in the **Google** age.

@Bunning: *Open access, open source, open encyclopedias — technology has pried open what once was closed, guarded, and controlled by librarians, teachers, publishers, and corporations. In just a few words, SWOT this out for us from the point of view of a librarian focused on the literacy and teaching challenges these disruptive technologies create.*

AE: Your choice of words — disruptive technologies — is interesting. You're right, open-access *is* disruptive, but not in a bad way, in my opinion. Why should publishers, or librarians, for that matter, control information? Open access has subverted the dominant paradigm that only certain people are "qualified" to be experts. I believe in democracy, and the democratization of information is a positive step for librarians. It dramatically changes our role from gatekeeper and reference to instruction and teaching our users how to effectively evaluate information. I *love Wikipedia*. And I know that sometimes it is not a reliable source, but there is too much good stuff in there to just discount it because we don't know the authority behind the posts. Let's change our mindset about information and teach evaluation or resources. Bring on the revolution!

@Bunning: *Are library publishers and library technology companies providing us with the content and tools to accomplish your teaching goals?*

AE: In a word, no. There are too many proprietary platforms that don't talk to each other. Users (and librarians too) want federated searching. Why should they have to go to one database for one subject, and another database for a different subject? I'd like to see academic libraries, in particular, push for common database platforms that enable good quality federated searching.

@Bunning: *Are your students ready to learn what you have to teach them? Able?*

AE: I will teach anybody who walks through my doors. Honors students, English language learners, students with library anxiety, or those who are deficient in technology skills. I was a public school teacher for ten years, and we didn't have a choice about *who* we taught.

We had to teach them all! I feel the same sense of responsibility toward the students I serve here at **Arizona State University**. I work with future teachers, and I want to make sure that they know what they need to know so that they can impact future generations. So it's not really a question of whether students are ready or able to learn; it's about how I can differentiate instruction to meet the needs of all learners. I have a student-centered orientation.

@Bunning: *The Library Genie shows up and offers you three wishes (and he or she has TARP money or something like it), what would you wish for librarianship?*

AE: Wish one: that the stupid "shhhh — hair in a bun — bookworm" stereotype would die! I am *so* not like that! Wish two: that we, as a profession, become strategic-minded and proactive while focusing on our users. Wish three: that every K-12 school in the United States has a certified teacher-librarian. That teacher-librarians are not seen as "optional" or "a luxury."

Advice Column

From time to time @Bunning listens to readers and offers advice — consulting is extra...

Dear @B,

I'm a newbie librarian, just graduated with my MLS, and I'm frightened and confused. I can't understand all this talk about open access. It goes on and on and it is so strident and self-assured. The thing is I'm not so self-assured. As a newbie and it just seems to me that open access doesn't have much place for we librarians. I mean, if it is all free on the Internet and easy to search on **Google**, what am I supposed to do?

Please Help,

Darcie, Open Access Librarian,
University of Plano, Correctional Branch

Dear Darcie,

Take it easy hon...First of all, you will do alright. Us older librarians always doubted our profession but we got through it and now we are near retirement and all the better for it. Your youth and issues-based focus will make you smarter, wiser, and able to play the game. You have a lifetime ahead of you, the open access people to whom you refer, they average, what, 75 years old? They'll be gone when you assume managerial rank. Don't get me wrong, open access is here to stay but it's like that asteroid that may or may not collide with planet earth at some point in some future. It's fright is worse than its bite.

It does concern me, a tad, that you sign your letter "Open Access Librarian." This sort of typecasts you. Typically I'd expect you to be shriller, verbose, occasionally right, and leaning both right and left while you artfully skewer anyone and everyone who dares to challenge you.

But that isn't you. You've drilled right into the tooth pulp of the issue — you question purpose. Your purpose, should I be so bold, is to embrace open access and while you embrace away, just reach around the issue and understand your open access role has a grander goal — taking open access well beyond its emergent idea into its maturity, the blessed and highly compensatory world of co-option and business as usual in the high margin world of scholarly publishing.

Sincerely, **@Bunning** 🐼

Something to Think About — Where's the Journal?

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Last Thursday was one of those days that felt like a Monday. In fact, every day that week was a Monday! There was an endless trail of problems that started at 8:00 a.m. and didn't let up all day. Claims and problems were unceasing and each one became more of a struggle to solve. Finally,

near lunch, I had to track down a journal to try and find out why the check for renewal had been returned to accounts. Obviously the address was wrong. I confirmed the address that was used by us and accounts as the one on the Website. So what was wrong? I pulled the phone number off the same Webpage and

dialed...waited...and heard, "This number has been disconnected..." from the hapless recorded message. Well, perhaps one of the other numbers would do. **Google** searching is fun when it gives you lots of answers. This one had three sites with four different phone

continued on page 49

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Something To Think About from page 48

numbers and four or five addresses. Which was the right one? Where, oh where, had that little journal gone? I tried the next number... waited... and heard, "This number has been disconnected..." from a similar recording. It was nice to know that the voices were different. One more number dialed... waited... and heard, "This number has been disconnected." I started laughing uncontrollably. The more I thought about the situation, the funnier it got. Where in the world was that journal office? Having reached an end to the frustration, I went to the stacks and retrieved the latest issue, spring 2008. Wow! It only comes out twice a year? Where is the fall issue? Having returned to my desk, I started browsing the issue and found all the various addresses on succeeding pages, each describing different aspects of the organization producing the title. One talked about the main offices, some in one state and some in another with numbers of locating addresses. Another page turned and there was a description of a university

where the title was published. Ah ha! I swiveled my chair around to the computer and began searching for the university campus, and then the directory of folks working there. Oh my! One after another, the people weren't listed. I reread the names again, then began searching the departments. The first two listed didn't match any at the university, but the last one was close. I called up the directory for the Publications Department and there were two recognizable names. I emailed the person in charge and waited. In about thirty minutes, I received an answer from the subordinate regarding the fact that they were still publishing the journal title and I should email another person, the editor, for additional information. And, oh yes, they had just printed the fall issue and I should receive it next week. I emailed

the editor after taking a breath and began asking all the pertinent details. Could I order a renewal subscription? What address should I use? How should the check be made out? Another wait! And then a reply that everything was cool and we could get the magazine by writ-

ing and sending the money to the editor. Thanks for us searching them out! No mention about a promise to clarify the Website. Now, the other half of the solution began with accounts. Emailing them, we could use the same check just sent to a different address and that would take care of everything. Quickly, I flipped back to the order screen and listed the correct address and email for the group. Sure hope the renewal won't be as difficult next year! Two hours of work verified the title, amount, publisher, payee and hopefully the new subscription established as well as the last issue claimed. How can one question/problem be so tiring? I was so exhausted that I looked around and found everyone gone from their desks. Assuming the day was over, I turned the computer off, got my hat and bags, and walked down the aisle to leave. Oh yeah, I had to wait for **Kathy** who was riding with me that day. A quick goodbye to **Dawn** and I stood there a second. **Dawn** looked up and asked if I was leaving early. She told me it was four not five. I thought she was joking and I tried to brush the remark off. NO! It was four o'clock. Dejectedly, I went back to my desk, unloaded the bags and hat, and turned on the computer. All I could do was laugh. It had been a long day and I did find the journal. Had any days like this lately? You probably will, but don't stop to think about it — just go with the flow! 🐶