December 2009

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Recommended Citation

Pelikan, Michael P. (2009) "Pelikan's Antidisambiguation: What fools these mortals be!," *Against the Grain*: Vol. 21: Iss. 6, Article 26.
DOI: <https://doi.org/10.7771/2380-176X.2371>

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Pelikan's Antidisambiguation — What fools these mortals be!

by **Michael P. Pelikan** (Penn State) <mpp10@psu.edu>

If you subscribe to publishing / bookseller industry observer mailing lists, you may have noticed an uptick of late in the apparent panic level. The Publishing and Book Selling Worlds are in Decline, Dying, or already Stone Cold Dead — and the sooner they wake up to the fact the faster these observers will be out of work — so you'd better not pay attention: just stay away from all this doomsday stuff! The Prophets earn their living this way! There's good money in carrying signs proclaiming that there is no future: The End Is Near! Beats working for a living (about which, more later...)

OK — enough. I call Baloney! And I'm going to reveal this doomsday nonsense for the baloney that it is by taking a look at a few other Big Content Provider-types and their well-documented machinations, strategic moves, missteps, downright slapstick pratfalls, and certain death — and yet, here they still are, like the prototypical singer of the endless operatic death aria, betrayed, stabbed, poisoned, collapsed, but still singing his fool head off.

Where to start? For brevity's sake, I'll leave aside Planetary convergences, Mayan calendar End-of-Days, the Club of Rome, and other True-Believer exercises in apocalyptic malarkey. I mention these only to point out the perennial human trait for each generation to believe that to

itself has fallen, uniquely, the role of The Final Penultimate Generation. Really. Check it out. It must be in our DNA: we've been doing this for dozens of centuries. And yet here we are, singing our fool heads off.

And we really take this all very seriously. And it's not funny! Really! And it's time we woke up to it! Everything hinges on what we've already failed to do! And we told you so — so don't you forget that either!

Sigh. What fools these mortals be!

Alright — some homework. Take a look at the **Wikipedia** article entitled "Compact Cassette." I'll have a cup of coffee until you come back...

Hello again! Why'd I send you there? Well, part of the whole social change aspect of the audio cassette was to renew and heighten deep anxieties in the recording industry about stolen, bootlegged copies of their content. The cassette was the beginning of the end of the Album. The recording industry counted on the radio stations to play the single (the 7 inch 45 rpm record, with the Hit on the A-side and something else on the B-Side {there's a whole study to be made of the fascinating role of the B-side in the musicians' promotion of their non-hit material, but that's for another time}). The single would drive you to the record store, where you'd either buy it (the single) or better

yet, the Long Playing (LP) Album. Big — 12" — enough space for that beautiful album art. The term "album" was first applied back when 78 rpm singles were collected into a boxed set — like a photo album, see? The LP was the epitome of the content providers being in control of the content. There was no way to duplicate the thing, short of having a **Scully** Record Lathe sitting in the corner of your listening room. (Go ahead, **Google** "Scully record lathe." There used to be one sitting in the corner of the master control room of the radio station I started at back in '72. **Aardvarkmastering.com** has some nice photos of these wonderful old machines.)

Back to the story — the Compact Cassette was the beginning of the end of the Album. Why? Well now, people began to record their own compilation cassettes (folks today would call it a play list). They'd pull their favorite songs off of any ol' LP albums they pleased and put them all together — in the order they chose — on a cassette bound for that most subversive of devices, the **Sony Walkman**. (Kind of like a Course Pack, ain't it?)

To make the long story short, the recording industry (as opposed to the musicians) believed this technology would be their doom. Suits were filed. Copyright was asserted. Fair Use was thrown about. Somehow, musicians kept making music, folks kept making cassettes, and everybody was happy except the recording industry and the record sellers, who thrashed

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around for a technology to save them from this awful predicament.

They tried Quadraphonic. What a deal! Stone Age Surround Sound: four speakers — twice the circuitry in the amp, all new tape decks and even quadraphonic LPs. Expensive to produce. Expensive to buy. Difficult to bootleg (not everyone had a **Teac** four channel reel to reel in their living rooms). Well, nobody bought 'em.

So the impasse continued until the advent of the optical compact disc. Now that was really something! A reassertion of the album — and so much better technically that even if folks made a cassette copy, it was clearly inferior in quality — and nobody'd be able to make a duplicate of an optical disc: the very idea: a writable optical disc in the hands of the masses? Hah! Not in our lifetimes!

Well, even our younger contemporaries have some idea how this turned out. Not only did writable optical discs become ubiquitous, but multiple formats for the re-sampling, transport, and storage of the content became ubiquitous as well — and with them, a new meaning for a couple of old words: Ripped, and Burned.

And there's the End of the Album once again. But musicians are still making music, music lovers are still listening to music and everybody's happy — except Big Content.

But now even Big Content is learning to cope. Let me do a shout out (so popular these days) to the **Zune** Pass. Have you checked it out? It's DRM, but it's DRM that works, and works great.

For \$14.95 per month membership, renewed every three months, I have access via my **Zune** HD player to the entire **Zune** music catalog. Everything. Download it, listen to it on any of

three devices registered to my account, keep it as long as I like, as long as I'm a member. In addition, each calendar month I have ten credits good for individual track purchases. The application of one of these credits to a track already downloaded has the result of removing the DRM.

Once purchased through the application of a credit, my rights associated with that track (visible in the properties box) change from "DRM: Yes — license expires xx/xx/xxxx (has sync rights, no burn rights)" to "DRM: No".

If I quit the Pass program, sell my **Zune**, and move to Igiagik, I still have personal Sync, Play, and Burn rights to that track. If I tire of the track while it's still under DRM, I can simply delete it from my Collection. If I don't renew my membership in the **Zune** Pass program, the DRM system simply lets my rights expire in place — the track just melts away.

The most surprising thing about this system is the way it has increased the diversity and amount of music I'm discovering through the catalog. For example, if I'm listening to the FM radio on the **Zune** and hear a track I like, I can hit the shopping cart on the player's little touch screen, and the next time the player has Internet access (either through the sync function with my personal computer or via its own Wi-Fi capabilities), it will download the track, if available, from the **Zune** catalog and add it to my collection. I don't even have to know the name of the artist or song — I just have to say, in effect, "I kind of like that one..."

In short, the **Zune** Pass system is increasing the number of tracks that I'm discovering, downloading, and, yes, purchasing. The range of musical types in my collection is becoming more diverse. I'm hitting more and different neighborhoods in the corpus of the world of published music, and buying more music — directly as a result of the enlightened combination of openness, ease of access, and try-before-you-buy DRM.

It should be readily obvious that such a system would work perfectly well in the arena of the published word.

So here's the recipe:

Instead of taking the Neanderthal, ossified subscription models imposed by Big Content on our schools and libraries and trying to make it fit on the small screen of the **Kindle** or the **Sony Reader** or the **Nook**, or whatever player-dejour comes along, look at it from the individual customer's perspective. He/She would like to browse. Give them the digital equivalent of the comfy chair in the bookstore. Let them read. If they like it, make it easy for them to buy it.

If they subscribe, let them read anything they like. Let them keep what they want and return the rest. Give them an onscreen button to say, "OK — I really like this one: please send me the hardbound edition. You have my credit card. Just send the book, please, and I'll love you all the more for making it so nice and easy. Thanks."

Offer students textbook subscriptions, complete with updates and embedded hot links to related content.

Finally, make this whole system work through the libraries of the world. Let the readers browse. Let them borrow, and give the individual library they've associated a reader with a small commission for serving as the middleman. If they buy the hard copy, give the library a cut of that, too. If they want to "return" the book, just tell the DRM system to let it expire in place; just melt away.

Just do all this, please, and don't listen to anyone who's running around saying Authorship is Dead, Publishing is Dead, Reading is Dead, etc, etc, etc. Here's where we get back to working for a living.

Dry your eyes, pick yourself up, dust yourself off, and try again. 🐼

Standards Column — Journal Article Supplementary Materials: A Pandora's Box of Issues Needing Best Practices

by **Todd Carpenter** (Managing Director, NISO, One North Charles Street, Suite 1905, Baltimore, MD 21201; Phone: 301-654-2512; Fax: 410-685-5278) <tcarpenter@niso.org> www.niso.org

The notion of what constitutes a journal article has traditionally been fairly straightforward. When we think of an article, many of us picture that linear text item found in a magazine or journal. As articles are increasingly distributed in electronic form, however, the opportunity arises to easily provide additional content and data supporting what we have typically considered an "article" — opening a Pandora's box of management issues. With print journals, the occasional additional content was first provided on CD-ROM disks. With the transition to electronic journals, these materials — which are lumped into the overarching term "supplemental ma-

terials" — can include items as diverse as presentation slides, supporting data sets, data analysis tools, dynamic visualizations, videos or animation of experiments, or audio. Even the term "supplementary" may be inaccurate, since in some fields this additional material may, in fact, be critical to understanding the article, such as in fluid mechanics where visual representations are often the best way to convey experimental results.

One of the practical limitations on print journal content has always been page count — that is, the number of cumulative pages in an issue — which has the most direct impact on a journal's production cost; more pages equate

to increased costs during the review, editing, layout, printing, and distribution stages. In an electronic environment, the costs of distribution are seemingly negligible and the costs for storage of extra bytes of information are increasingly minor. Supplementary materials also require less production since they are frequently used in their original formats (e.g., CSV file, JPEG graphic, MPEG video, etc.), without any need for the traditional editing or layout work. By including these materials in the electronic journal collection, added content and value are obtained at relatively limited

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