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ATG Interviews Tom Richardson

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research library down to \$565 for a two-year college library.

ATG: *Given this fee, how would you describe the value proposition here to the librarian?*

RN: One thing that librarians are keenly aware of is the value of meta-data. Catalogs, indexes, bibliographies — these are among the key tools that librarians use to serve their patrons, and **Crossroads** is in a very real sense an extended form of metadata, a potent one that has the power to reveal hidden facts about millions of historical documents. The tagging and annotation features of **Crossroads** create an organic, self-indexing system, which is particularly needed for the millions of items that exist online but have not been cataloged at all. Newspapers are a prime example of this. The **Archive of Americana** contains more than two thousand of them and is growing, and it provides some title-level metadata, but true item level indexing for newspapers is not issue-level indexing but article-level indexing, and the sheer number of articles in the **Archive of Americana** — one hundred and ten million to date — is too vast to ever be indexed by any single institution. They could be indexed in the long run, however, if the thousands of users of **America's Historical Newspapers** could tag and annotate to the article level, and that is what **Crossroads** enables them to do. It won't happen overnight, but it will happen. By providing their patrons with this ability, librarians are contributing to one of the largest indexing projects ever undertaken. They are also, of course, providing their patrons with access to the thousands of annotations that will be created, and with a way to communicate with the contributors. 🌱

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there, but with 200,000 titles and no inventory there is definitely a shot at profitability. **Parker** is already producing many other types of books including crossword puzzles, annotated foreign language books where his algorithms can translate the harder words in the margins, and he is even moving into video production with animated figures controlled of course by...algorithms. His next project is to crank out romance novels. I guess they are formulaic enough to succumb to **Al-Khwarizmi's** blandishments.

P.S. If you have never seen the episode "The Obsolete Man" from the **Twilight Zone**, treat yourself to it on **YouTube**. As usual, **Burgess Meredith** plays a great librarian. While you're on **YouTube** be sure to check out "Ghosts in Libraries." There seem to be quite a few of them around. 🌱

ATG Interviews Tom Richardson

Director, Institution Sales & Service, The New England Journal of Medicine

by **Katina Strauch** (Editor, *Against the Grain*) <kstrauch@comcast.net>

ATG: *Tell us about NEJM. When did it begin? Was it always a publication of the Massachusetts Medical Society?*

TR: We began publication in 1812 as the *New England Journal of Medicine and Surgery, and the Collateral Branches of Science*. We've also published as *The New England Medical Review and Journal* and the *Boston Medical and Surgical Journal*. The **Massachusetts Medical Society** purchased the *Boston Medical and Surgical Journal* in 1921 and changed the name to the current *New England Journal of Medicine* in 1928.

It's been interesting looking through some of the older journal issues, as we're in the process of digitizing all of our content back to 1812. We expect that this will complete sometime in 2009.

ATG: *Are your subscribers mainly institutional or are they mainly individuals? What type of advertising do you take and do you see this continuing?*

TR: We have always been a publication with mainly individual subscribers. Nearly 90% of our subscriptions go to individuals. That's the main reason why we were late in understanding library needs for online access. Now we have a group that focuses on institutions every day.

We accept advertising relevant to physicians such as pharmaceuticals, medical devices and educational institutions, along with physician recruitment advertising. I expect that to continue, but we're in a slow market right now for pharmaceutical advertising.

ATG: *When did you start a Website and how has that effected your advertising dollars and subscription base?*

TR: The **NEJM Website** went online in 1996, with full-text access available to subscribers beginning in 1998. The shift to online communication creates challenges and opportunities for all of us. The mix of revenue sources is different than when everything was about print.

ATG: *Is your main model a subscription model? Do you provide any open access material? How is this determined?*

TR: Our main access model is the subscription. We do make original research articles freely available on our Website, six months after publication; this has been our policy on research articles since 2001. From time to time, we also make articles with important public health implications free to all at initial publication. Video interviews, images, podcasts and audio summaries are often available for free. Our editors make that determination. Our weekly content alert and Resident E-bulletin are also free with registration.

ATG: *There has been a lot of controversy over the "politicization" of the NEJM. What*

were the more questionable articles? In hindsight should they have been handled differently?

TR: The *Journal* does not shy away from accepting cutting edge or controversial scientific papers, which often generate coverage in the news media. The editorial process for acceptance of papers, however, is based on merit through peer review. Papers are evaluated on the basis of the data submitted by the authors — on occasion we have had to publish corrections when we learned from the author that data was missing or incorrect. This is part of the scientific publishing process.

ATG: *Tell us about the NEJM Beta Website. What is it and why did you do it? When did you start it?*

TR: The **Beta Website** (<http://beta.nejm.org/>) gives us an opportunity to experiment with presentations of articles, images, audio, and video. This way we can test ideas to find the good ones before we integrate them into our main Website. We launched it in July 2006.

ATG: *The Beta Website is pretty cool. What projects have you done there that have been implemented on the main Website?*

TR: Some of the projects we have tested and implemented include a new search interface and engine that reflects community opinion; lists of most popular, downloaded, blogged, news cited and emailed articles; **PowerPoint** slides for more types of articles; and *NEJM* for a handheld device.

ATG: *We notice that you are making use of Google, Amazon and Yahoo! tools on the Beta Website. Are these also available on the main NEJM Website? How do these types of partnerships (is that what they are?) work? Is YouTube next?*

TR: These tools work on the main Website. They're not partnerships; we're working to provide our tech savvy users the new information tools they want to use. We have RSS feeds on **Google** gadgets and podcasts on **iTunes**; our videos have even found their way onto **YouTube**. We want to distribute our content to users through their preferred tools.

ATG: *Tell us about the NEJM Videos in Clinical Medicine in a new full-screen player. How are these made available to subscribers?*

TR: We launched our **Videos in Clinical Medicine** feature with the April 13, 2006 issue. They are a video form of *Review Articles* and they are indexed in **Medline**. We've worked with an outside company to develop the video player that you see on the Website. The full-screen option is our latest update to the player.

Like all of our *Review Articles*, the **Videos**

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<<http://www.against-the-grain.com>>

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in **Clinical Medicine** are available as part of a subscription to the *Journal*.

ATG: *What do you do for fun? Family? Reading? Tell us a bit about yourself and how you got into the business of medical publishing. What changes have you seen in your career? Any predictions for the future of the industry?*

TR: At heart, I'm a performing musician. It's a great pleasure for me that I'm a member of the world's first international, open access library rock band, **The Bearded Pigs** (www.beardedpigs.org). We perform at library meetings when enough of us are there, with the annual **MLA** meeting as our highlight event of the year. Also, my eight year-old daughter and I recently performed in a community theatre production of *The Music Man*.

I came into medical publishing totally by accident; I had been working at a direct marketing agency and wanted to move into a client side position. Seventeen years later, I'm still here!

My hopeful prediction for the future is that librarians and publishers will learn to work together to improve scholarly communication. I recently took part in a meeting that included **AAHSL** librarians and scholarly publishers representing various publishing associations; the goal is to establish a long-term forum for working together. It was a great session that we hope is the start of something special. 🐷

Rumors
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After fifteen years as Head of Technical Services and Head of the Contracts and Development Office at the **University of North Texas**, **Doina** retired as of May 2008! Then, guess what? **Doina** moved back to Jacksonville, FL and accepted the position of acquisitions librarian at the **Florida Coastal School of Law**. **Doina** says she always liked law libraries and worked at the **UNC-Chapel Hill law library** in the mid-late 80ties. She says she still has a few good years to contribute to the profession! I am sure that all of us agree! And, I have to identify with this because yours truly worked in the **UNC Law Library** once upon a time as a student worker. Gosh! Isn't it a small world. Glad to have you back, **Doina**!

And, I didn't tell y'all why **Doina** (above) was writing me, did I? Well – she wanted a subscription to yours and my favorite journal, **Against the Grain**! Like wow! Have you renewed your subscription? Well, if not, you won't be reading this issue right now. Maybe later!

As we go to press, I have just had the sad news that the wonderfully passionate, committed, and brilliant **Matthew J. Bruccoli** has died. **Dr. Bruccoli** succumbed at his Heathwood Circle home in Columbia, surrounded by his wife and children. **Dr. Bruccoli** was a workaholic on a mission and was said to work every day including Christmas and Thanksgiving. He worked up until about a month ago when he was diagnosed with a brain tumor. As we all know, **Matthew J. Bruccoli's** proudest achievement, among many, was the 400-volume **Dictionary of Literary Biography**. Says **Richard**

The American Economic Association Announces New Journals!

Four New Journals in 2009!

The AEA is launching four new
peer-reviewed field journals:

- **The American Economic Journal: Applied Economics**
will focus on empirical micro issues.
- **The American Economic Journal: Economic Policy**
will examine the role of economic policy in economic outcomes.
- **The American Economic Journal: Macroeconomics**
will feature studies of economic fluctuations and growth.
- **The American Economic Journal: Microeconomics**
will accept articles on microeconomic theory, industrial organization, and aspects of international trade, political economy, and finance.

Like the *American Economic Review*, the *Journal of Economic Literature*, and the *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, the new journals will be available in print and online. The AEA also publishes EconLit.

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Layman, Bruccoli's business partner for 32 years. "He was the most remarkable scholar of 20th century literature of his generation. Nobody comes close. He was a teacher above all." How lucky we all were to have **Dr. Bruccoli** speak at the last two **Charleston Conferences** and write his regular **Against the Grain** columns. May he rest in peace. I'll bet he is starting a publishing company up in heaven right now! See "Matthew J. Bruccoli: 'He was a teacher above all,'" by **Lee Higgins** <lhiggins@thestate.com>. www.thestate.com/local/story/425132.html

And just ran into this **thought-provoking article** that reminded me of **Dr. Bruccoli** and his devotion for the printed book. The article's in the July/August *Atlantic Monthly* and is called "What the Internet is Doing to our Brains: Is

Google Making Us Stupid?" by **Nicholas Carr**. Besides alluding to **Hal** in **Stanley Kubrick's 2001: A Space Odyssey**, the article, among many other things, talks about how the online world is changing/has changed our reading habits and changing the way we think, and changing the way we process information. Has the Web changed the way we focus? Our ability to concentrate? Are we allowing computers to take over everything to the point that we will become robotic? The article makes some statements from anecdotes and limited observational data. Still, it is worth a read especially since the last two issues of **ATG** have focused on **The Google Effect**.

www.theatlantic.com/doc/200807/google

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