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Drinking from the Firehose -- Fun With Facebook

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ties reveal the vendor geek in me, a badge I am happy to wear. Approval vendors create valuable, original metadata, but we normally isolate this information. Often it does not travel past our proprietary end-points — **Collection Manager**, **GOBI**, **OASIS**, etc... When we deliver this data in vendor-created provisional records and enhanced cataloging records, its use is largely limited to acquisitions processes. Additionally, we store transactional data and user activity data to facilitate business with the vendor, but individuals and institutions could share this data. I believe we need to explore how this information can be utilized in other environments. This complex topic requires vendors to engage in community discussions about metadata standards and carriers, viable business models, and issues of personal and institutional privacy, to name a few. Nevertheless, vendors could make valuable contributions to **Web 2.0** information tools and bibliographic databases beyond the acquisitions functions of our data facilitates. There are opportunities for delivering and exchanging more information directly with libraries, cataloging agencies, and union catalogs to facilitate more robust social discovery tools. Vendors classify content using taxonomies of non-subject parameters, for example. We describe the content level, the type of book, and the nature of the publisher, to name a few. Metadata about an information object's inclusion within a collection, as described above, would also help end users evaluate content. I think, for example, of products such as **LibraryThing** and **LibraryThing for Libraries**, which we could enhance with such vendor tags, selector and institutional recommendations, and purchasing activity. Meaningful data such as circulation statistics could also flow back to the vendor from libraries and end users.

The **Library of Congress** has endorsed the majority of the Working Group's recommendations and has begun work to move some of them forward. This is exciting and risky for approval book vendors, in that what we do is built on inefficiencies along the supply chain. We are reliant on the **Library of Congress's** current **MaRC** production model, and we produce valuable metadata that does not travel down the supply chain to library users and other information seekers. As the library community cooperates to evaluate the Working Group's recommendations and achieve desired outcomes, approval vendors will need to participate actively and thoughtfully. We must take part in evidence gathering projects, such as the **Library of Congress** and **R2's** work to map bibliographic record creation and distribution. We will have to evaluate and evolve what we do to ensure our services are not redundant, but offer added value. The evolution of content, description, selection, and access presents opportunities for approval vendors to offer new benefits to our customers and community while improving internal workflows. *On the Record* emphasizes collaboration, decentralization, and the greater use of data along the supply chain. As vendors, I hope we will review what we contribute that is new and valuable, expand these contributions, harness increasingly efficient methods for receiving and delivering the descriptive metadata important to our services and customers, and experiment with sharing our data in new environments and new applications. 🐦

Endnotes
1. **Denton, William**. "What we talk about when we talk about FRBR." [Weblog entry.] *The FRBR Blog*. **York University**. 6 March 2009. (*http://www.frbr.org/2009/03/06/what-we-talk-about*). 7 March 2008.

Drinking From The Firehose — Fun With Facebook

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Social networking sites such as **Facebook**, **MySpace**, **Orkut** and **LinkedIn** are all the rage these days. I enjoy this type of interaction although it's important to find a niche and stick with it. We cannot all be active on all these sites, nor would we want to be.

Those of us who work in academia can find plenty of kindred spirits on both **Facebook** and **LinkedIn**. I have professional colleagues, however, who are not ready to take the plunge. There are a variety of reasons for this sentiment. Some people are worried about the invasion of their privacy. Others are not interested in this sort of interaction online, just on principle. One big difference between a social networking "interaction" and the kind you experience with email or texting, is that most of the time the social network post goes to all your "friends" at the same time. Or that is what people assume. It doesn't have to be that way. There are a number of ways to close yourself off if you wish. Many people use their **Facebook** accounts as though it were email. It's up to you how you want to use it.

All these different types of ways of communicating are getting a little hard to manage for some people. It is completely understandable that there might be some doubts or paranoia about how this works.

There are a couple of key issues to think about. One is this: Is your life an open book? Do you have reasons to care what people know about you? If you have issues with this concept, social networking may not be for you. For numerous reasons, you might want to lay low. Or, if you do decide to sign up, be choosy about those you allow into your circle of "friends."

I have "friended" a number of people with whom I work. Some of these folks, frankly, are not, in "real life" people I hang out with in any way. Some of them I hardly know. But I have allowed them into my **Facebook** page anyway. This includes an administrator above me and several of my direct and indirect reports. My Library Dean and one of my favorite AD colleagues have both decided to keep their **Facebook** pages closed to just family and personal friends. That's OK, I can respect that choice. The couple who rents our house back in Boone for example, are not "friends" since they use **Facebook** for professional connections to their students in a very directed fashion. It makes sense that they don't want to be "friends" with their landlords.

I have discovered old friends from high school and even elementary school on **Facebook**. That's been interesting, and fun. I did use **Classmates.com** and other reunion sites for awhile but they have an annoying tendency to want to charge you a fee when you're not looking so I have pulled out of those sites.

I am not much into "**MySpace**" because I don't think it caters to my age group or tastes, although I do use it to follow a favorite music group.

I've never used **Google's Orkut** and **LinkedIn** seems to lack any real fun to it — it's kind of dry. Of course, some of the features in **Facebook** are just silly and I ignore them. But what's the harm in sending people "Good karma?"

There are lots of librarians on **Facebook**, and perhaps that is because so many of us work in academia and so we want to be where the students are. **Facebook** started at **Harvard**, so it reflects the university culture. Students typically are not thinking very seriously about what they put out there. This has been a controversy for some time, but as students mature and start realizing that their **Facebook** pages might not reflect positively on them, they make changes to their profiles. This is especially true close to graduation — it has become a rite of passage for seniors to take down the fluff stuff in preparation for the job hunt — you don't want perspective employers to be viewing your spring break antics!

There are people on **Facebook** whose goal, it seems, is to have as many friends as possible. If that's their desire, so be it, but I will not accept you as a friend just because you are collecting them. I received a couple of friend requests from people who seemed to be in collector
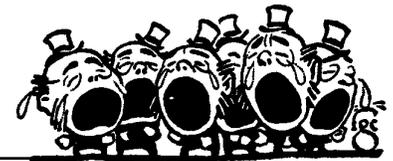
mode, and I eventually cut them loose. No offense meant — if I actually do meet you some day, perhaps I'll pick you back up. Also, I do not want vendors cozying up to me on **Facebook** if I have not already met their acquaintance.

One big concern has had to do with the kinds of behavior young people display by posting party pictures to **Facebook**. I would like to suggest that this is *nothing new* and we need to GET OVER IT. I could (but I won't) post a picture of my college friends and I in the 1970's — yes, we were drunk! And we were having a great time. I could also post pictures from **ALA** and other professional conferences that show people relaxing and schmoozing that are not so different. Okay, we're not in bikinis or pulling up our T-shirts, that's true (nor would anyone expect or want this). College advisors have focused on reminding their students that what is put out on **Facebook** can have an effect on how people perceive their university — especially the student leaders and athletes, for example.

The latest trend is for (helicopter) parents to sign up for **Facebook** so they can interact with their kids. Of course for some adolescents this is the kiss of death — ick — not our parents! Go away! But since so many of them are already texting and cell calling their parents every day anyway, why not? And for parents (or grandparents) who hardly know how to use a computer, **Facebook** is actually easier to navigate. For one, if you have access to an Internet connection, it's free; and you don't have to understand email set-ups or protocols.

In my collection of "friends," I have work colleagues, both from my current place of employment and my former jobs, people I know from the profession, family, friends, children of family and friends, my dog sitter, and a handful of people who don't fit any of the above categories. I expect to find other connections soon since so many people are joining **Facebook** these days!

For more information and opinions about Facebook:

According to an article in the March 10, 2009 *PC Magazine*, "Blogs and social networking are consuming more online time than checking and writing personal email." See: *http://www.pcmag.com/article2/0,2817,2342757,00.asp*.

Another nice discussion about privacy issues on **Facebook** can be found on the blog, *Library Garden*: *http://librarygarden.blogspot.com/2009/02/what-libraries-can-learn-from-facebook.html*.

And this: *http://www.nytimes.com/2009/03/08/business/08digi.html*.

And here is a more scary, paranoid, disturbing vision of what **Facebook** is really about: *http://www.guardian.co.uk/technology/2008/jan/14/facebook*. 🐷

Little Red Herrings — But a Whimper

by **Mark Y. Herring** (Dean of Library Services, Dacus Library, Winthrop University) <herringm@winthrop.edu>

In my last rustication, I opined the details of the 300-page **Google Book Deal** settlement made in late 2008 between **Google** and authors and publishers vis-à-vis **Google's** massive digitization scheme (those cases, viz., *Authors Guild et al v. Google* and *McGraw-Hill et al v. Google*). As pointed out there, the settlement governs the now more than seven million titles scanned so far, and the multi-millions more to go. At least two camps have emerged about this deal: one (and by far the largest group), those who see it as a bonanza for readers because of the (literally) millions and millions of titles to choose from; and, two (and a much smaller crowd but made larger by the presence of **Robert Darnton**), those who are somewhat suspicious of a cartel for books, a giant library of materials controlled by, for, and of the **Google** monopoly. Sadly, missing in action on behalf of libraries (and apparently unable to lift a finger to help them) is **ALA**. So, herewith, some heavy finger-lifting on behalf of libraries.

A quick search of the Web will provide readers with a variety of viewpoints, but most fall into these two categories. Most interesting are those by librarians, provosts or deans who signed on with **Google** and subsequently turned over their millions of volumes to the mega-library, alias search engine. This group, originally the G-7 because only seven were initially involved, but now more than two dozen have emerged, has representatives of both camps. Some who signed on remain deliriously happy with the deal; others are less sanguine. The question remains, who's right?

It's too early to tell exactly, but we won't have to wait long. The case, as mentioned in my previous column, is on the fast-track for disambiguation, so to say, this summer. For now, I offer, ten reasons why I worry about this deal and why I fear for the longevity of libraries.

10. Intellectual Property Rights & Copyright Be Damned. **Google** is still in the business of dithering with rights not its own. Sure, it's paying $165 million now, but that's for 7 million titles. With additional payments, it may work out to $60 a book today, but later, after tens of millions of items are available, more like pennies on the spine. This is a very sweet deal for a company that willy-nilly took material not its own for an enterprise in which it alone stood to gain the most.

Ditto that with copyright, that (now) epigone law regulating both the created work and the creator. The rest of us mortals have to ask permission for extended use. **Google** merely asks for forgiveness, but they'll use it anyway if you don't grant it. For those who think copyright laws are too draconian, create something to be protected by those rights and then see how you feel. I suspect this is why **Mary Beth Peters** recommended that the **Library of Congress** stay our of the **Google's** digitizing scheme, uncon-

vinced that what **Google** was doing was within copyright (but see here *http://blog.librarylaw.com/librarylaw/2009/03/google-books-settlement-at-columbia-part-1.html*). Essentially. **Google** has given us de facto legislation for certain copyrighted material that may or may not be within legal bounds. Perhaps we'd prefer a system like China's where everything is open to all who want to use it whenever they wish. If we need a revision of our copyright laws — and not many think that's a bad idea — then why not send it through the courts?

9. Download a Book, Call Your Lawyer. The arabesque "terms of use" are such that no one knows what the rights are for the library and its users. It's unclear (see the explanation of the settlement in "Not with A Bang…" last month) if what users will be doing is or isn't within copyright restrictions. Are these the same as they've always been in libraries? Will copyright laws prevail, or will libraries have to police all its users *and* be responsible for what those users do while on site? If so, what will be the cost of infringement? If found in violation, who adjudicates on behalf of the libraries? On behalf of users? Since it is more likely that the library will have deeper pockets than the individual, what are those costs? I mean more than the range given in the settlement ($0 to $3,000,000). And what of libraries that are not part of the settlement?

8. Big Brother Is Watching. **Google's** ability to track what users read, when and how, is not the stuff for bedtime reading, unless you want to be awake all night. Because you have to log onto **Google** to read your downloads and track your other uses, what does this do to traditional library privacy, other than jettison it? Somehow, discovering that **Google** will have the ability to hold logs that read, "Patron John Q. Public entered the Main Street Public Library at 0900 hours. Viewed page 365 of **Miller's** *Tropic of Cancer* for 5.6 minutes. Downloaded *Steal This Book* …" is the fictional stuff of Hollywood, only this time it's real.

7. We're All Googlites Now. Participation in the plan means what, exactly, for participating libraries? What is the ultimate cost to sign up? Does anyone know? Does anyone really care? What are the future implications for monograph budgets? Budget Director: "Why are you asking for *any* book money when you already have access to 12 million titles?!" Librarian (Sheepishly): "Well, we have had requests for other titles." Budget Director: "Let them eat cake (or in this case, "read" it)." Will **Google** control the cost of access over time and increase the cost of participation at will? Is **Google** the next **Elsevier**?[1] If **Elsevier** is the great Satan, what does this make **Google**? Son of Satan? Antichrist?

6. A Riddle Wrapped in a Mystery Inside an Enigma. The **Google** deal is more complex and confusing than even copyright law. This means