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Lost in Austin -- You Are What You Read

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with busy lives to find time to read works of literature by fitting the book into their daily routine. It changes the delivery of the book to fit what the reader needs, and that's valuable. The idea could be adapted to articles, entire magazines, etc. Not necessarily emailing it in sections, but in adapting serials to meet the users' needs. A researcher could begin by studying how the users access information, and then work on developing new ways of making the information accessible depending on how the readers desire for it to be made available; even though they may not realize that that is how they want it, yet when it is offered that way, they will use the new delivery method and gain more frequent and valuable use of the resource.

Do E-Journals Narrow or Broaden Science? — Presented by
Carol Tenopir (Professor, University of Tennessee);
Michael Kurtz (Astronomer, Harvard-Smithsonian
Center for Astrophysics)

Reported by: **Ramune K. Kubilius** (Northwestern University,
Galter Health Sciences Library) <r-kubilius@northwestern.edu>

Tenopir first clarified that her co-presenter, **Kurtz**, was mistakenly listed as presenting in a Friday session. She identified that he is a working astronomer who also studies scholarly communication issues. The two presenters discussed the controversial **James Evans** article, "Electronic publication and the narrowing of science and scholarship" (*Science* 321(5887):395-9, 2008). **Kurtz** discussed problems seen in the methodology, based on his own work, particularly in the astrophysics arena, and the work of **Vincent Lariviere**. **Evans**'s model is overly complex, **Kurtz** contended. **Tenopir** critiqued the findings of **Evans**, based on her 30 years of reading pattern studies, done by self-reporting subjects. Reading is broadening, not narrowing as **Evans** indicates. Citation linking and relevance ranking give confidence. Citations are not limited to fewer papers or journals. During the

Q&A session, it was mentioned that some journals have reduced the number of permissible references in articles, but one publisher (**Sage**) indicated that was not so, and if anything, the number of references in papers has increased.

Using Usage Data to Support Collection Management Decisions During An Economic Slowdown — Presented by **Gayle Baker** (Faculty, The University of Tennessee Library); **Virginia R. Kinman** (Electronic Resources Librarian, Longwood University)

Reported by: **Amelia Glawe** (SLIS Student, University of South Carolina) <GLAWEA@mailbox.sc.edu>

Many libraries are feeling the effects of the poor state of the current economy. **Baker** and **Kinman** discussed how they collected and analyzed different type of data to help in their acquisitions budgets. Since **Baker** and **Kinman** were from two very different universities, they provided an interesting look at how to collect and analyze user data in each unique situation. Both speakers explained at great depth the lengths to which they perform research, which assisted in collection development and acquisition decisions. Some methods included were; polling faculty, collecting user statistics, analyzing costs, and other various forms of investigation specific for their institution. This session was so full of information that the speakers seemed to have a difficult time including everything in their limited time frame. Overall, both speakers described similar methods performed on different levels to collect data, analyze said data and attach meaning to these findings in order to help them better address the issues their individual libraries were facing in the wake of an economic slow-down. 🌱

*That's all the reports we have room for in this issue, but we do have more reports from the 2008 Charleston Conference. Watch for them in upcoming issues of **Against the Grain**. You may also visit the **Charleston Conference Website** at www.katina.info/conference for additional details.*

Lost in Austin — You Are What You Read

Column Editor: **Thomas W. Leonhardt** (Director, Scarborough-Phillips Library, St. Edwards University, 3001 South Congress Avenue, Austin, TX 78704-6489; Phone: 512-448-8470; Fax: 512-448-8737) <thomasl@stedwards.edu> <http://www.libr.stedwards.edu>

In 2001, **Simon and Schuster** published **Harold Bloom's** *How to Read and Why*. What reader would not be curious about such a title? First one thinks, how to read? I know how to read. Oh, that kind of how, the kind of reading that **Clifton Fadiman** had in mind when he wrote his *Lifetime Reading Plan* (1st ed. Cleveland: **World Pub**, 1960).

I've always seemed to know what to read but I have not given much thought to why I chose a particular book.

Early on after learning to read when I was six years old or thereabout, I began to read books in school libraries and books my **Grandmother Leonhardt** would occasionally send on birthdays or for Christmas. I remember four titles that she sent me and one she sent to my sister: *The Lone Indian*, *The Story of a Bad Boy*, *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*, and *Pinocchio* were sent to me and

Black Beauty was sent to my sister. There may have been others, I don't recall.

I read many chapters in *The Lone Indian* and fewer in *Black Beauty*. As I would finish a chapter, I would place a + before the chapter number in red, indelible pencil that I would first moisten despite having heard that indelible lead was poison and we weren't to put the pencils in our mouths. All I knew was that if you wet the pencil first, it would turn a purplish red when applied to paper. Silver nitrate, one of the ingredients in this pencil invented as a substitute for pen and ink, may be toxic in certain forms and amounts, I really don't know, but its medicinal properties apparently outweigh any deleterious effects of the chemical.

I could not really get interested in a book about horses but I tried to finish it because I had started it.

I doubt that today I would get as far because I am even less interested in horses unless a Triple Crown race is on television or I am watching an oater and wondering how the horses can fall as if shot and then regain their feet with apparently no harm done. How do they do that?

The Lone Indian excited my imagination enough for me to extra illustrate the volume (these were cheap hardbacks sold in dime stores for less than a dollar in the 1940s) with my crude drawings of pistols, holsters, rifles, tomahawks, and log cabins. But I never finished it and am not certain that I still own it. If I do, it is in a box in the garage and if I find it, I will finish it fifty odd years after beginning it.

Pinocchio I read but recall little about it and if I try, I fear that I will recall scenes from the wonderful **Disney** version so I won't try. Note: Re-read *Pinocchio*.

The two books that I enjoyed the most

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were *The Story of a Bad Boy*, by **Thomas Bailey Aldrich** and *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* by **Mark Twain** although my copy may have been by **Samuel L. Clemens**. Years later I read somewhere that **Mark Twain** did not think much of either *The Story of a Bad Boy* or **Thomas B. Aldrich**, at least as a writer. I believe that they were amicable colleagues and fellow writers.

I enjoyed **Mr. Aldrich's** story of **Tom Bailey** of Rivermouth, New Hampshire and recall a chapter about building a snow fort and having snowball fights but that is about it.

Tom Sawyer, on the other hand, became my first favorite book and **Mark Twain** became my favorite author although I read, as a boy, only *Tom Sawyer*, *Huckleberry Finn*, *The Prince and the Pauper*, and *Tom Sawyer, Detective*.

Those books came to me, the ones from my **Grandmother Leonhardt**, so I read or tried to read them because I could read and I liked to read. My reasons for reading more **Mark Twain** was because of my namesake, **Tom** (also an attraction in *The Story of a Bad Boy* and later, *Tom Brown's School Days* by **Thomas Hughes**) and the coincidence that each of us had an **Aunt Polly**. My **Aunt Polly**, rest her soul, was my favorite aunt and I miss her. But I digress. Let's return now to **Harold Bloom's** treatise on reading and admit that I did not read that book either, not in its entirety so it does not appear in my little 3x5 inch loose-leaf notebook containing the titles and authors of books I have read beginning in

1962, the year before I joined the Army. But there are notes in another notebook that tell me that I did spend some time with **Bloom** and I remember reading a couple of chapters about novels and novelists. Some writers he recommends are **Flannery O'Connor**, **Ernest Hemingway**, **Chekov**, **Turgenev**, **Maupassant**, **Borges**, **Nabokov**, **Mann** (Thomas and not Heinrich), **Kafka**, **D.H. Lawrence**, and **James Joyce**.

He considers, as I recall, *Invisible Cities* by **Italo Calvino** (I didn't finish it) as the greatest modern novel (am I remembering correctly?) and lists the following as the greatest American novels:

As I Lay Dying (**William Faulkner**)
Miss Lonely Hearts (**Nathanael West**)
Blood Meridian (**Cormac McCarthy**)

I am sure that **Bloom** has his reasons for those four choices as books worth reading (two of them are not easy reads) but I am not convinced that he really believes that they are even near the top of the list of all the wonderful novels that have been written over the centuries.

Before going on, I must admit that I have never read anything by **Stephen King** but even so, **Mr. Bloom** seems a little harsh in a diatribe that appeared in our local paper in September 2003 titled "The horrors of what passes for literature." Here is how he begins his column: "The decision to give the **National Book Foundation's** annual award for "distinguished contribution" to **Stephen King** is extraordinary, another low in the

shocking process of dumbing down our cultural life. I've described **King** in the past as a writer of penny dreadful, but perhaps even that is too kind. He shares nothing with **Edgar Allan Poe**. What he is is an immensely inadequate writer, on a sentence-by-sentence, paragraph-by-paragraph, book-by-book basis."

I won't go on but I will note that the paragraph quoted above tells us all about **Mr. Bloom** and nothing about **Mr. King** nor does the rest of the column give us any indication that **Mr. Bloom's** criticism is anything more than an expression, without charity, of his own taste. As the French would say, *Chacun à son goût*.

And another thing, who associates **Poe** with penny dreadfuls? Not book collectors or antiquarian book people. That is a British genre long gone. **Poe** was not even a dime novelist, the American equivalent of the penny dreadfuls, also long gone. Pop culture, and apparently **Mr. Bloom** are using a recent notion of penny dreadful to include anything of a lurid nature. Besides, the lurid **Poe** considered himself a poet but his stories sold and even poets have to eat. And **Theodore Dreiser**, if his sentences and paragraphs were parsed by a school-marm, would come up short of **Mr. Bloom's** criteria for recognition and would also be undeserving of the **National Book Foundation** award for "distinguished contribution." But I digress.

Going back to the so-called best books, I find it difficult to confine my list of favorite books, regardless of literary merit. For one thing, books that were important to me, long books such as *Of Human Bondage*, *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, the **Studs Lonigan** trilogy, and **Thomas Wolfe's** nov-

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els, all read before I was 21 years old, would probably be tough going for me now even if I had never read them. But they were important books and I wonder about them even today and have a one-volume edition of **James T. Farrell's** masterpiece sitting on my nightstand waiting for me to get to it.

Just recently, I read two novels that I can imagine re-reading one day, *The Mosquito Coast* (**Paul Theroux**) and *The Poisonwood Bible* (**Barbara Kingsolver**). They just happen to have the same themes although I didn't know it until I had read one and, coincidentally, begun the other in short order.

In fact, I could find at least two books for each year's reading that could easily end up on someone's "greatest books" list. What's more,

I could give a reason or two for why I think my books are worth reading. But I recognize that what ends up being taught and being listed is the result of the times we live in and the prejudices and predilections we have acquired through education and experience.

There's another problem with anointing one's favorites with the title of "world's greatest," and that is the problem of comprehensiveness. Who among us has read all of the worthwhile books of last century or even this century? Would a book we did not like or could not finish forty years ago be accessible and even influential today? Of course it could. Maybe I'll try the *Forsythe Saga* again and remember the time in January 1966 when I tossed my paperback copy into the New York Harbor along with a pair of Army combat boots (I was getting out and it felt good). And of course no one can be comprehensive and neither can one be objective when it comes to reading books, fiction or non-fiction.

I will grant that **Professor Bloom** and all the other readers with doctorates in literature, have analyzed what they have read far more than I have or care to, but I will not grant that their favorite works (not necessarily those on their "great" or "syllabi" lists) bring them more pleasure than mine do or that theirs would necessarily win more readers or fans than my list or that are necessarily of greater merit no matter what the measure.

There is no way to prove my points but I can at least praise some of the books and authors that have meant a lot to me over the years and that are still part of who I am and so in future columns, I intend to pay tribute to writers who have enriched my life, have made me think beyond my own small world, and who have let me go on adventures, albeit vicariously, that I could not afford or would not dare on my own. 🍷

Issues in Vendor/Library Relations — The Data Train: Can We Share the Track?

by **Robin Champieux** (Director of Sales and Customer Experience, Blackwell) <Robin.Champieux@Blackwell.com>

Column Editor: **Bob Nardini** (Group Director, Client Integration and Head Bibliographer, Coutts Information Services) <bnardini@couttsinfo.com>

At the **2008 Charleston Conference**, **Paul Lightcap**, Head of Monographs at the **University of Florida**, and I moderated a Lively Lunch, "*The Data Train: Can We Share the Track?*", where we explored the possible implications and opportunities presented in *On the Record: The Library of Congress Working Group Report on the Future of Bibliographic Control* (2008). We specifically wanted to discuss its call for increased collaboration among everyone involved in the process of creating, collecting, and maintaining bibliographic data. We engaged a panel of those groups — vendors, libraries, and publishers — to explore how we as a community might extend our collaborative work while protecting and positively redefining the interests of each party, including user needs, profit, data standardization, and accuracy. Participants shared with us new and imagined business models that could grow from the maximization of bibliographic data along the supply chain. In this short article, I will present some ideas from the vendor perspective.

Approval book vendors create surrogates of content to enable automatic and mediated selection. Experienced, well-educated staff, many with advanced degrees, create nearly all of the metadata we produce. The timeliness and accuracy of our work is critical to our credibility and the efficiencies and cost-savings we deliver to our customers. This work is largely manual, always expensive, and often slow to change. We create metadata that is new and valuable, but we regularly reproduce, not recycle, metadata our publisher partners, commercial entities, and libraries have previously created. Moreover, the new and valuable meta-

data we create does not travel down the supply chain to be made available to end users.

Description is king in the approval book business. I do not think this need will decrease over time, but there will be an increased emphasis on human-driven, intellectual, qualitative description to enhance computer-driven description and discovery. Under our current business models, it will be difficult to meet this need. We cannot support this work in addition to the metadata we are currently creating using existing workflows. Vendors will have to increase usage of metadata provided by publishers and networked resources rather than reproducing this information. We will need to identify the metadata we produce that automated, computer-based processes can create more quickly and more accurately. As a result, we can devote more people and capital to human-driven, intellectual bibliographic control.

For example, **Blackwell** is in the process of launching a new version of our selection and acquisitions database, **Collection Manager**. The new interface reflects some FRBR group one entity relationships, which we manage in our internal bibliographic database. We believe this will allow our users to find and select the content they are after far more easily. Nevertheless, we know we have only skimmed the surface. Conversations among colleagues, competitors, and librarians about the possibilities of expressing the fuller complex of FRBR relationships in vendor interfaces and even approval profiling "rules" have been

stimulating for everyone. **William Denton** and **Jodi Schneider** gave a talk at **Code4Lib 2009** which compared how vendors currently talk about and use FRBR to **William's** and **Jodi's** meaning of FRBR: "When vendors talk about FRBRization they usually mean grouping manifestations into works. When we talk about FRBR, we mean something far richer and rewarding."¹

It is this "far richer and rewarding" stuff that I find so interesting, but most important to vendors is not the ability to display strong FRBR relationships in our interfaces, but rather the tools and services we can provide that will rest on this architecture. My colleague **Eric**

Redman envisions the ability to display content in the context of other "like" information objects. System users might create collections around specific purposes, which would then become the context for the information objects within these collections. A sense of trust could be derived from an object's inclusion in a collection or collections. However, to move in this direction and build the tools made possible by deeper description of content, vendors will need

to heed the calls of the Working Group, by taking fuller advantage of the metadata others create, by engaging with partners to ensure fuller standardization and better quality control for the data we receive, such as publisher **ONIX** feeds, and by spending more time on the creation of unique metadata.

Sharing. This subject and its possibili-

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