

June 1998

Bet You Missed It

Sarah Tusa

Lamar University Library, tusa@almark.lamar.edu

Follow this and additional works at: <https://docs.lib.purdue.edu/atg>



Part of the [Library and Information Science Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Tusa, Sarah (1998) "Bet You Missed It," *Against the Grain*: Vol. 10: Iss. 3, Article 34.

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.7771/2380-176X.2809>

This document has been made available through Purdue e-Pubs, a service of the Purdue University Libraries. Please contact epubs@purdue.edu for additional information.

Bet You Missed It

Press Clippings — In the News — Carefully Selected by Your Crack Staff of News Sleuths

Column Editor: **Sarah Tusa** (Lamar University Library) <tusa@almark.lamar.edu>

Virtual Education?

by **Phil Dankert** (Cornell University)

As more universities are becoming involved in distance education they are discovering an interesting phenomenon. Instead of tapping solely into a new market (i.e., adult learners who live too far away to come to campus), they realize that many students who are already enrolled in regular classes are eager to ease their schedules by taking courses online. Why would these students elect to take courses over the Internet when classes are just a few minutes away? The overwhelming reason cited is convenience. Giving students such an option does raise concerns. Some critics say that

those who choose online courses over in-person interaction are not getting the education they are paying for. In addition, academic departments are attempting to figure out how to balance teaching loads for professors who teach online and in the classroom. Perhaps one of the most important questions that needs to be answered: "As universities put so many resources into online education, are we going to take away from our efforts in the traditional classroom?" See -- **Guernsey, Lisa**, "Distance Education for the Not-So-Distant," *Chronicle of Higher Education*, (March 27, 1988), P.A29-A30.

Going Cerebral

by **Sandra Beehler** (Old Dominion University)

A three-part series (Mar.-May 1998) defines the terms of a new economy: "a world in which people work with their brains instead of their hands." A dictionary rather than an encyclopedia -- most terms are described in a para-

graph or two -- this guide may give you a handle on words that have not yet reached the standard reference works. See -- "Encyclopedia of the New Economy," *Wired* v.6. (March 1998), p. 105.

Defending Innovation

by **Bruce Strauch** (The Citadel)

In this editorial by **Bill Gates**, we have a cogent defense of **Microsoft's** position re the **DOJ** recent lawsuit. In fact, this edition of *The Wall Street Journal* has many related articles which are worth reading if you want to be up on this new lawsuit. Gates argues that **Windows** is a product of consumer demand and **Microsoft** is constantly altering its product to meet the new tastes and desires of the American public. Once separately sold features — file sharing, fonts, memory management, network support, fax utilities, Web browsers — were put in one box with much greater speed and power than the original **IBM PC**. Government forcing a company to sell a competitor's product

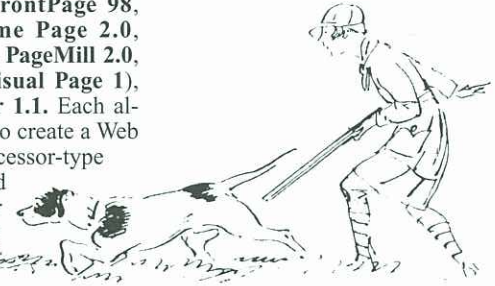
(**Netscape**) — particularly when that product is free on the Internet — is unheard of in our history and has no basis in our anti-trust laws. See — **Bill Gates**, "We're Defending Our Right to Innovate," *The Wall Street Journal*, (May 20, 1988), p.A14. Also in the same *WSJ*, see A15 the op ed page for **Holman Jenkins'** essay ("On Microsoft, Standard Oil and Trustbusters") with the developing anti-trust theory that big brings economies of scale and big never lasts because it's supplanted by big competition. He makes an interesting case for **Standard Oil** and shows the long-wave growth in autos, plastics, pharmaceuticals and cosmetics that grew out of Big Oil.

Tools on Review

by **Sandra Beehler** (Old Dominion University)

Rapidly changing Web technologies have fueled the need for better Web authoring software. **IW** reviews ten such tools: **Composer**, **Dreamweaver**, **FrontPage 98**, **Fusion 2.0**, **Home Page 2.0**, **HotMetalPro 4.0**, **PageMill 2.0**, **QuickSite 2.5**, **Visual Page 1**, and **Web.Designer 1.1**. Each allows the designer to create a Web page in a word-processor-type environment, and all are designed for simple page layout rather than site

management. See -- "IW Labs Reviews Web Authoring Tools," *Internet World*, (Feb. 1998), p.74.



"Press"-ing Onward

by **Phil Dankert** (Cornell University)

What is the role of the university press in disseminating scholarly works (ones that commercial presses would not see as financially viable) about "America's geographic and cultural regions?" This is an issue that was recently debated by people from Arkansas when the decision was made by the chancellor of the university to shut down the **University of Arkansas Press** on June 30 of this year. Although the thinking was that it would be a prudent financial decision, it was one that was decried by faculty members, editors of other university presses and the

public in general and in April it was reversed. Although the immediate effect, had the decision not been reversed, would have been on one press, larger issues come into focus. For instance, what role do academic presses play in the life of the university? How much should universities spend on them (one university press director noted that "scholarly publishing is deficit publishing")? See — **Shea, Christopher**, "A Small, Respected University Press Fights Off a Push to Eliminate It," *Chronicle of Higher Education*, (April 17, 1988), p. A16-A17.

Digital Decisions

by **Pamela Rose** (SUNY at Buffalo)

"The devil is in the details." The world of scholarly journals is headed for seismic upheavals that must result in major alterations in the landscape. The increasing output of research papers driven by "publish or perish" mandates causes journal prices to balloon, librarians to cancel subscriptions, and publishers to raise price to compensate. Although digital publishing has advantages over print publishing, the question of who will design, build, operate, archive, and pay for these new systems is open. Publishers will likely handle the job themselves rather than opt

for paying document delivery providers, but libraries would serve as an interface with the archives and as service providers. Publishers must be willing, however, to open archives to pay-per-view via the Internet with or without printed versions. A standing committee of publishers, librarians, and information technologists should be formed to decide the best configuration for a network of multiple archival sites. See -- **Edelson, Alan M.**, "On the Future of Scholarly Journals," *Science*, v.279 (April 17, 1998), p.359.

Medic Alert

by Pamela Rose (SUNY at Buffalo)

The new semi-annual *Scientific Review of Alternative Medicine* aims not to "expose" alternative medicine, but rather to present accurate information, according to editor **Wallace Sampson**, Professor of Medicine at **Stanford University**. Proffered as an "antidote" to the **National Institute of**

Health's Office of Alternative Medicine (OAM), the journal aims to make distinctions between "the genuine, the questionable, and the fraudulent." See -- **Holden, Constance**, ed., "New Alternative Medicine Watchdog," *Science*, v.278 (October 24, 1997)

Mathematical Solution

by Pamela Rose (SUNY at Buffalo)

A new HTML dialect called **Math Markup Language (MathML)** developed by the **World Wide Web Consortium (W3C)** which sets Web standards, will allow mathematical formulas to be written, rather than pasted-in as images, in HTML docu-

ments. **MathML** allows formulas to be understood by screen-reading software, allowing visually impaired people to work with math "in a way that has never been feasible." See -- **Kaiser, Jocelyn**, ed., "Web Math Made Easy," *Science*, v.280 (April 17, 1998), p. 351.

Finding Frauds

by Pamela Rose (SUNY at Buffalo)

The **National Center for Biotechnology Information (NCBI)** has handed a powerful weapon to fraud police: **PubMed's** push-button "find related articles" feature. Cancer researcher **Marek Wronski** of **Staten Island University Hospital** in New York was able to unearth a trove of thirty

allegedly plagiarized medical papers using NCBI's free, easy-access gate known as **PubMed** to search **Medline**. See -- **Marshall, Eliot**, "Medline Searches Turn Up Cases of Suspected Plagiarism," *Science*, v.279 (January 23, 1998), p. 473-474.

Inside Pandora's Box

from page 77

the user and in particular user clients and agents to perform virtually unlimited searching.

Let me conclude by listing just a few of the many requirements libraries should demand of any new system, whether brand new or just tweaked. This list is not intended to describe in any detail a possible new system, but to show the variety of considerations a good design will take into account.

- The first and foremost requirement is for simplicity. We librarians are notorious for making our work too complex. The new system should be simpler than the current one. Simplicity usually brings benefits regarding comprehensibility, reasonable cost, a low error rate, and easier training and maintenance. If the new system I am proposing appears to be complex, attribute this to my failure to communicate well, not any inherent difficulty in creating a simpler rather than a more complex system.

- User control of searching — a corollary of the simplicity requirement. Users should be able to search all the data in the catalog, not just the

indexes. This implies that data elements must make sense to the user, that all data should be accurate and "clean," not transformed or altered by libraries. Accurate data requires automatic updates — even if an item in need of updating has already been cataloged "correctly." It also requires that labels, operations, and displays should be readily comprehensible to users. Users for instance should not have to know the distinction between "monographs" and "serials."

- The new system should work in conjunction with the digital library. Users of the system should be able to search for digital materials as easily as paper ones. The design should accommodate progressive steps towards integrating the paper and the digital worlds.⁶

- Libraries should concentrate effort on development of standards for a broad variety of different search tools. Machines as well as humans should be able to use these tools. If these standards extend down to the software component level, they would be very useful in standardizing library software and influencing its development in a positive direction. Lastly, customizable and personal agent-based front-ends and user interfaces are urgently needed.

Chemistry Online

by Pamela Rose (SUNY at Buffalo)

The **National Institute of Standards and Technology's (NIST's) Online Reference Databases** constitute a rare source of free information on chemicals. NIST experts scrupulously assess,

reference, and update the data, which includes everything from melting points to half-lives. See -- **Kaiser, Jocelyn**, ed., "Hot Picks," *Science*, v.280 (April 17, 1998), p. 351.

TOC News

by Pamela Rose (SUNY at Buffalo)

The **American Chemical Society (ACS)** will unveil free access to TOC for all twenty-six of its journals back to January 1996, at:

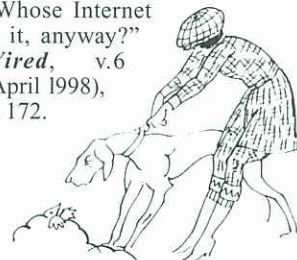
pubs.acs.org. See -- **Kaiser, Jocelyn**, ed., "Straight Dope on Chemicals," *Science*, v.280 (April 17, 1998), p.351.

Gatekeeping

by Sandra Beehler (Old Dominion University)

When a hacker named **Eugene Kashpureff** intercepted new domain name registrants on their way to the root server, he brought to attention the controversy surrounding control of the Internet's domain name system (DNS). Most agree that controlling the DNS is tantamount to controlling the Internet itself. The contract held by the current official keeper of domain names, **Network Services, Inc.**, is running out in September, and the fight is on to control this lucrative system. A variety of so-

lutions have been proposed, including privatization, globalization, and open competition. This article outlines the proposed solutions while it tells the tale of **Kashpureff's "stunt."** See — "Whose Internet is it, anyway?" *Wired*, v.6 (April 1998), p. 172.



- The new system should be designed to support local collection analysis, acquisitions, serials, interlibrary lending, and document delivery. It should at least support prepublication title and publisher's catalog number or other unique ID similar to the **Digital Object Identifier**. It should recognize subscriptions and the issues they cover as well as licenses for digital materials.

- The new system should increase library productivity and generate savings from old activities that could be used to pay for new ones. One way to do this is to standardize the objects libraries work on so that human editing and interpreting of local text fields is minimized or eliminated. Right now every library reviews the same **Library of Congress** cataloging copy for misspellings and other errors. If this duplication of effort were eliminated, library staff would be freed to do other, more important work, such as maintaining the new cooperative system, analyzing whatever is analyzable, extending item control to the article level, or digitizing their unique and important items.

- The new system should be designed from the ground up with full support for sharing and

continued on page 80