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On the Road — A New Kind of Meeting Report

A glimpse at “Life in the Trenches” — “On the road again/ Just can’t wait to get on the road again....”

Column Editor, **Don Jaeger** (Alfred Jaeger, Inc.) <jaeger@ajaeger.com>

*The following story is another episode from the infamous Boulder NASIG board meeting of last October. I am sorry that there wasn't more column space to print all of the stories received from this meeting; however, **Jim Mouw's** episode is a fitting conclusion to this series. It is great to have so many librarian stories about their travels, but I'd like to receive other “On The Road” stories from those vendor and publisher reps that are out there 20-25 weeks a year. Feel free to fax me at (516) 543-1537 or e-Mail to jaeger@ajaeger.com. I would be pleased to include your story in the next available issue. By the time this column is printed we will be at the ALA and looking forward to seeing our good friends at the Washington, DC, conference in June. — DJ*

From: **James Mouw** (U. of Chicago)

<mouw@midway.uchicago.edu> (who is familiar with snow)

I was greeted by sunny weather Sunday morning and left Boulder for Denver with sun in my heart. (Does this make me the first one out???) The roads were passable, but not great — the funniest part was that Pena Boulevard was the easiest part of the trip. At the last moment I got stuck in the gas station lot right next to the rental car return, but a couple of most kind gentlemen gave me a push and got me going again.

Avis was a nightmare of confusion — they just pretty much said “park it anywhere, buster” and so I did. I was heartened by the fact that they did not charge me for the extra day rental — I guess they knew they would have rioting on their hands if they tried.

The airport on Sunday morning was in total chaos, as I suspect

it was for everyone. I kept looking for other NASIG-ites, but saw none. By the time I got through the bag check line my original flight should have left, but it turned out to have been canceled anyway. But, the 10:35 flight (this was at 12:30) still hadn't left and the agent said, “I can book you on it but there is an hour wait at security. How aggressive can you be?” I said VERY! and ran down the concourse to find the line much shorter than anticipated and got to the gate in plenty of time.

We then waited another hour for a flight crew to appear. They came, and we then sat on the plane for another two hours while the plane in front of us waited for someone to plow their gate so they could pull in. I couldn't believe that after all of that, United only managed to find half a plane full of people to send to New York. I think most of our confirmed passengers were still at the front desk trying to check baggage.

We did NOT get free drinks, but money flowed like water — I've never seen so much alcohol consumed on a single flight!!! The low point of the trip was when one passenger threw a fit because her special meal wasn't on board. I think if we would have taken a vote, she would have been tossed overboard.

Finally I got to Laguardia, and since my shuttle wasn't there, it took them another two hours to get me a shuttle, and then another hour ride to New Jersey. Oh, it was raining cats and dogs by then.

Total time in transit 5:00 am — midnight — Boulder to New Jersey.

I think I will never travel again! 🌧

Chaos

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to our vision is that the user will only want to learn once. If everybody does it differently, forget it.

A fundamental cornerstone going forward must be that a bookstore or library should not be asked to perform the same function differently on every Web site they go to. It doesn't make sense to expect them to do anything else. The key is to make it simple, affordable and enjoyable to do business. If every publisher and distributor creates their own solution, they will all fail.

Which brings us to **BookEasy**™. It offers such standards, functionality, and significant service functionally over the Internet. **BookEasy** is a partnership between **VISTA Computer Services** (which can access and understand publisher systems and information), **Whitaker**, the UK ISBN Agency, and **R.R. Bowker**, the US ISBN agency. In the UK, **BookEasy** also partners with the **Booksellers Association**, who own the UK industry payment clearance house. These are key partnerships that make up the trading landscape and we expect to expand to include many others. It is a true virtual industry and community service is being developed as such with all players in the in-

dustry sitting down and working together to make their businesses more efficient.

BookEasy offers central bibliographic search and discovery, central routing and security management, as well as central ordering facilities. At the distributed sites today it provides direct access to publisher operational systems that offer current pricing, availability, and ordering options, as well as the ability to check order status. **BookEasy** is not theory, it is real. It was developed in

Internet time-scales (weeks not months or years). It puts the book trade back to the vanguard of electronic trading, where it once was when it developed and implemented the ISBN. It shows where we get when we co-operate and do not compete. It starts to be the vehicle which can address a great deal of today's supply chain issues and build tomorrow's supply chain. It strengthens today's partnerships and enables them to

compete in the virtual world. It enables us to cast off yesterday's paper chain “baggage” and take advantage of today's Internet reality. 🌧

NB — The author, **Martyn Daniels**, joined Vista three years ago as Director of Strategic Development and is responsible for the management of Strategic Industry Initiatives, from research through to product delivery and also for Vista's marketing program. Previously, Martyn had over 26 years' systems, logistics, commercial and program management experience which had been gained at a Senior Executive level in blue chip organizations, within the automotive, oil and retail sectors.