Rumors

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by Frances C. Wilkinson (Interim Associate Dean of Library Services, General Library, University of New Mexico, Albuquerque, NM 87131-1466; phone 505-277-4241, fax 505-277-7288), <fwilkins@unm.edu>
and Linda K. Lewis (Director of the Collection Management Department, General Library, University of New Mexico, Albuquerque, NM, 87131-1466; phone 505-277-7828, fax 505-277-4446), <llewis@unm.edu>

The past several interview-style columns for the reference issue of Against the Grain have dealt with such issues as the proliferation of reference materials, the increasing array of format choices, the impact of the Web on reference publishing, and the growth of products that combine traditional indexing and new full-text features. It has been said that libraries now exist in an ambidextrous universe — equally print and electronic. Is the world of reference publishing metamorphosing into a universe where electronic products are quickly eclipsing print? Will we ever catch the wild electron or are we merely stalking it?

Electronic reference resources are becoming an increasingly greater part of reference publishing and reference collections. What proportion of the library reference collection is now in electronic format? What proportion of reference titles are published in electronic format? As publishers drop print editions of their works in favor of electronic ones, how are librarians responding to this change? To what extent are publishers abandoning print versions of reference resources? Some publishers are marketing electronic resources containing core existing resources along with expanded or updated materials and links. What impact is this having on reference collection development and reference publishing?

How important are usage statistics for electronic resources to librarians and publishers? What types of statistics do librarians need? What types of statistics can publishers provide? To address these issues, the authors conducted an interview.

If Rumors Were Horses

So much has happened over the summer, it's hard to know where to begin!

WOW! Lee Ketcham Van Orsdel was appointed Dean of Libraries at Eastern Kentucky University on July 1, 2000. She came to Eastern as Director of Libraries on August 1, 1999 after having been Director of Libraries at the University of Montevallo (Alabama) from 1991 through July 1999. Before that, she was Director of Account Services, Southeastern Region, for EBSCO Information Services. We all remember the fantastically upbeat Lee from many, many Charleston Conferences. Let's send her our congratulations at <libvanor@acs.edu>.

Another wow! Barbara Winters—the fabulous—is the Dean of Libraries at Marshall University (Huntington, WV) as of August 1, 2000. Unfortunately, Barbara will not be doing Group Therapy in Charleston in 2000, but she will be back in 2001! Congratulations to you, Barbara! <http://webpages.marshall.edu/~brooks>.

Sandra K. Paul <Sandy@skpassociates.com> http://www.bisg.org - home page <Sandy@bookinfo.org> is the new Executive Director of the Book Industry Study Group—continued on page 8

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Sponsor of BISAC, SISAC and BASIC! Such a big title for such a little woman! Amazing! Congratulations, Sandy!

Joyce Ogburn (Assoc. Dir. of Libraries, Resources & Collection Management Services, U. of Washington) <jogburn@u.washington.edu> sends word that Jacqueline Coats has just been appointed Head, Monographic Acquisitions Section, University of Washington. She starts October 1, 2000. Congratulations!

Well, the Ryan v. CARL Corporation lawsuit originally filed in 1997 has been settled for an estimated $7.5 million. The settlement requires UnCover to obtain permission from authors who hold copyright as well as publishers before copyrighted articles can be distributed individually. In the past, it was assumed that publishers could control this distribution. A Website for authors to submit their claims for a share of the settlement is available at http://www.uncoversettlement.com. See Newsbytes, July 26, 2000, for more information. http://www.newsbytes.com

The Library Corporation (TLC) has acquired CARL Corporation. The combination of TLC and CARL brings together two well-established companies that share a common vision, yet historically have served considerably different market segments. CARL, founded 26 years ago, is a well-recognized leader in information services, cataloging and customer service. The company’s flagship product, Library-Solution, is among the fastest growing library automation products anywhere—now contracted for installation in more than 1,000 libraries worldwide. CARL System, originally created 18 years ago, is also installed in more than 1,000 libraries, including such large and well known libraries as Chicago Public Library, Los Angeles Public Library, Phoenix Public Library, Broward County Public Library, San Antonio Public Library, Atlanta-Fulton Public Library, Denver Public Library, and Baltimore County Public Library. TLC President and CEO, Annette Bakhitari, points out that TLC and CARL have worked in partnership for several years on development projects and that both companies already share office space in Singapore. Current plans call for CARL to maintain a major presence at its Denver location and to continue many of its activities under the CARL brand name.

The marvelous Steven Rhind-Tutt, once of Chadwyck-Healey, has resurfaced! He has formed a new company with several of his friends. Alexander Street Press, LLC was founded in June 2000 by former executives of the Chadwyck-Healey Group. Alexander Street Press is a privately held electronic publishing company based in Alexandria, Virginia. Here are some of the key employees: Stephen Rhind-Tutt, President; Eileen Lawrence, Vice President of Sales and Marketing; Pat Lawry, Vice President, Production; Janice Cronin, Chief Financial Officer; and Don McCrae, Financial Advisor. Alexander Street Press wishes to bring together the skills of traditional publishing, librarianship and software development to create quality electronic collections. In July, Alexander Street Press announced its first collection—North American Women’s Letters and Diaries. Says, Stephen Rhind-Tutt: “The collection will provide new materials and new ways of studying them. It will be comprehensive, adhere to the strictest standards, and provide an exceptional index. If you have materials that you would like us to include in the project, we want to hear from you!” North American Women’s Letters and Diaries will be published in five volumes. Volume 1: 1600–1850 will contain more than 30,000 pages and is scheduled for release in January 2001. Hey ya’ll, while I was working on this, who should I contact me by email but the wonderful Eileen Lawrence <lawrence@alexanderstreet.com> (talk about ESP; do they still call it that these days?). She tells me that the University of Chicago will host the Web version of North American Women’s Letters … and that libraries are already buying it. For more information contact: Stephen Rhind-Tutt, Alexander Street Press, 38 Alexander St, Alexandria, VA 22314; phone: 800-889-5937 Ext. 1; fax: 501-423-7500; email: Information@alexanderstreet.com <Rhind-Tutt@alexanderstreet.com> www.alexanderstreetpress.com

Ingenta has acquired privately-held Publishers Communication Group, Inc. (PCG). The company provides marketing services to publishers, negotiating electronic licensing arrangements and helping them promote sales of individual titles to library markets in the US and Europe. The acquisition complements Ingenta’s existing strength of re-search services. PCG, which is located close to Ingenta’s offices in Cambridge, Mass, supplements Ingenta’s current service offering to publishers by adding a subscription sales, marketing and consulting element. PCG’s client list includes publishers such as John Wiley, American Institute of Physics and MCB University Press. Says Doug Wright, vice president and general manager of PCG, “By adding PCG’s services to Ingenta’s current service offering, we will be able to offer publishers a wider menu of programs, from marketing and sales right through to digital content management and online delivery. For more info, visit http://www.ingenta.com or http://www.pcgplus.com. Remember when we first interviewed Charles Germain back in 1994 when he had just started PCG? (see ATG June 1994 p.23)

The following statement was issued jointly by the American Institute of Physics (AIP) and the American Physical Society (APS) on July 17 — “We are pleased that the French Court of Appeals in Paris has rejected a suit filed against us by Gordon & Breach and joined courts in Germany, Switzerland, and the United States in upholding our right to publish objective data on the physics of physics journals. The French Court found “no element of the [case] file leads one to doubt the trustworthiness of the results published by the APS, AIP and Henry H. Barschall.” This decision, while still appealable to the French Supreme Court, culminates 13 years of litigation in France on the issue of whether surveys were conducted by Barschall and published in Physics Today (December 1982 and July 1988) and the Bulletin of the American Physical Society (July 1988) constituted unfair competition by illegal comparative advertising. Barschall’s analysis was based on data on hundreds of journals that showed the cost per character, the impact (as measured by existing citation data), and the cost per impact. Gordon & Breach filed suits in four countries alleging various false and misleading statements as well as illegal advertising and disparagement. The French Court of Appeals pointed out that “the simple publication of given information displaying the high price of the publications of the Gordon & Breach group, in the absence of any acrimony or pejorative calculation, cannot be held to constitute disparagement.” Unfortunately, Professor Barschall did not live to see the final decision in the U.S. and Switzerland, nor this favorable Court of Appeals decision in France in which his estate was a co-defendant. It is gratifying, however, that the French Court took note of the June 12, 1997 testimony of a Gordon & Breach witness in the U.S. Court that “There was absolutely no doubt about the fact that Professor Barschall produced a good, complete work, with good intentions” and that Barschall’s results were trustworthy. The U.S. Court likewise found that: “Barschall’s methodology has been demonstrated to establish reliably and precisely the proposition for which defendants cited it—that defendants’ physics journals, as measured by cost per character and by cost per character divided by impact factor, are substantially more cost-effective then published by plaintiffs.” The U.S. Court also noted evidence that Gordon & Breach had engaged in “an aggressive corporate practice…to suppress all adverse comment upon its journals.” For more information, contact AIP Director Marc Brodsky at 301-209-3131 or AIP Treasurer Thomas McLinth at 301-209-3220.

It’s hard to imagine MCB University Press without the red-haired and determined Bev Bruce, but that is just what we are going to have to do! With MCB University Press continued on page 10
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for sixteen years in various roles, finishing up on the board of directors, Bev has left to start her own company called “iGOLi” (meaning place of gold; place of the positive) and she will be working with a friend in flowmeter instrumentation (similar to publishing ... flow of water, flow of copy, flow of customers ...). Bev sends us word that she wants to stay in touch with her friends and colleagues in publishing, many of whom she met at the Charleston conferences. Bev will hopefully be in Charleston in November and let’s track her down and ask her more, okay? Here’s her contact info: Bev Bruce (Director, “iGOLi” Ltd, Post House, Starbotton, Skipton BD23 5HY; phone: (0) 1756 761104; fax: (0) 1756 760407; mail: <ad311@diat.pipex.com>.

And more Wows! On Friday afternoon, July 7, 2000 Barbara Meyers <msmech@erols.com> and Richard Osborne exchanged marriage vows at the Annapolis Courthouse Chapel. After a two-week honeymoon, including a roadtrip down the coast of California, the newlyweds will settle back into their home at 1007 Presidential Towers in Annapolis, Maryland.

Effective September 1st, the incredible Rick Anderson, once of UGC, will be Electronic Resources/Serials Coordinator; University Libraries; University of Nevada; 1664 N. Virginia St.; Reno, NV 89557-0044; phone: (775) 784-6500 x.273; <rickand@umr.edu>. Hooray for Rick!

The fantastic Chris Filstrup is the new dean of libraries at SUNY Stony Brook. He began his new job August 21.

And the awesome Jack Walsdorf is back! Did you see him at the Alibris booth in Chicago? Alibris announced the addition of 35-year library industry veteran Jack Walsdorf to help develop the library relations program. Most recently, Walsdorf was the vice president of library relations at Blackwell’s Book Services, and was a librarian with the Public Library System of Oxford, England, and the Milwaukee Public Library. Walsdorf earned a Masters of Library Science degree from the University of Wisconsin at Madison and is a distinguished member of the library and book collecting communities. In addition, Alibris has recently hired two experienced library sales professionals, William Kane, with 12 years’ experience as an academic librarian, as central regional sales manager and Steve Sutton, most recently with netLibrary and formerly with Blackwell’s for 12 years, as eastern regional sales manager, New Library Service Initiatives. <www.alibris.com/library>.

Alibris has also recently acquired Libros Latinos, a leading supplier of scholarly Spanish-language titles to university libraries, and its collection of over 45,000 books. Alfonso Vilij, owner of Libros Latinos, will join Alibris and lead the acquisition efforts of Spanish-language titles sourced primarily from Mexico, Central America, South America, and Spain. The Libros Latinos collection was expected to be made available for one-day shipment from Alibris in August.

As a result of this partnership, Alibris will become a supplier of both in-print and out-of-print Spanish-language books. <www.alibris.com/library>.

On August 9, 2000, Joe Branin (Ohio State University) announced the interim administrative appointment in the University Libraries of the amazing Carol Diedrichs as the Acting Assistant Director for Collection Management. In this capacity, Carol will be responsible for the overall development of the Libraries’ collections, allocation and monitoring of the acquisitions budget, and coordination of collection management and materials selection. This is in addition to Carol’s permanent assignment as Assistant Director for Technical Services. Copies of the new administrative organization chart can be accessed at: <www.lib.ohio-state.edu/Staff/orgchart.pdf>. The acting appointments begin immediately and are effective for one year.

On June 8, 2000, BMBC Ltd (one of the UK’s leading academic booksellers) and John Coutts Library Services Ltd (Canada and the USA) entered into an agreement to merge all three companies. James Gray is the Managing Director of BMBC Ltd, who will become the Group Chief Executive Officer: Coutts’ President, the fantastic Keith Schmiedt said “Coutts is delighted to be associated with such a dynamic and progressive company. Combining BMBC’s innovative approach to delivering service together with the ability to supply both North American and UK published books will benefit all our customers and create a key world player in the library market.” Initially the companies operated independently with orders being handled by existing contacts, but I just got word from the wonderful, I-wish-I-could-see-him-again-in-Charleston Jonathan Waring that it is no longer necessary for John Coutts Library Services to maintain a separate office and the Northampton premises closed on 25th August. Thank goodness that Jonathan <jonwaring@coutts-h.demon.co.uk>, in his new role as Area Manager will continue to look after Coutts’ customers and is also representing the British services offered by BMBC. Here’s his contact info: Via Geraldine Pearse, Personal Assistant, Sales & Marketing Department, BMBC Ltd, Headlands Business Park, Ringwood, Hampshire BH24 3PB; phone: 01425 471160; fax: 01425 471525; email: <sales@bmbc.com>.

Our friend and colleague, Barry Fast—who just became a grandfather for the second time—has left Blackwell’s Book Services to handle business affairs in the Americas for Deltabooks, a British book publisher and distributor. He’s also on the board of a new Internet startup based in the UK. I am sure that we will be hearing from him in the future. In the meantime, Barry maintains his address and phone number as always: Barry Fast; 186 Cross St #2; City Island, NY 10464; 800-326-3080 or 718-885-9563 <barry0112@aol.com>.

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Got an email from our illustrious Chemistry professor, Rick Heldrich <heldrich@cofc.edu> about “Librarians’ Index to the Internet”. http://lii.org, by Jenni Laidman, in CHEMISTRY Summer 2000, newsletter of the American Chemical Society, page 6-7. This is a certified safe site for chemically accurate information! Certified by whom? Why, who else, librarians!

The astute Sally Morris, Secretary-General, Association of Learned and Professional Society Publishers (ALPSP), UK sends word that the Association’s journal, Learned Publishing, is now online at www.learned-publishing.org. Learned Publishing is published quarterly in January/April/July/October and fulltext of articles is now available online from volume 10 (1997) onwards. There is currently no charge or registration requirement (until ALPSP sees whether this does them more harm than good). There is also a free Table of Contents Alerting service. Incidentally, y’all might also find www.alps.org a good source of links to publishing-related resources of all kinds! Check all these Websites out!

And speaking of ALPSP, it has selected CatchWord as its Internet publishing partner to produce the online version of Learned Publishing. For more information, contact Audrey D. Melkin, Vice President, Sales—North America, phone: 212 481 8484, ext. 336; fax: 212 481 9582; email: <amelkin@catchword.com> <www.catchword.com>

Another CatchWord publisher has been announced. Mary Ann Liebert, Inc will put its entire collection of STM journals online with CatchWord in 2001. For more information about Mary Ann Liebert, Inc contact: Tom Mulak, Vice President, Operations <mulak@liebertpub.com>

And, speaking of Mary Ann Liebert, did you catch the big story in USA Today (Thursday, August 3) about Mary Ann Liebert company and the person? Pretty slick! And, do you remember the ATG interview with Mary Ann in ATG June 1995 p.33 ff.

Heard from the knowledgeable Marilyn Geller <marilyn.geller@mindspring.com> who is no longer at Faxon, but is busy getting her number two child off to college. I’m right behind you, Marilyn! Good luck!

In July, RoweCom Inc. (Nasdaq: ROWE) reported financial results for the three and six months ended June 30, 2000. Second quarter revenues were $38.9 million compared to $2.0 million for the second quarter of 1999. Gross profits almost doubled on a percentage basis, increasing to $4.0 million or 10.3% of revenues, compared to $113,000 or 5.7% of revenues a year ago. Adoption of RoweCom’s e-commerce platform by former Dawson clients continued, with 82% of the U.S. client base, measured by revenue, now online. Total transaction volume increased 19 times to approximately 247,000 compared to approximately 13,000 for the second quarter of 1999. The company reported an operating loss of $13.9 million for the second quarter of 2000. Before the effects of a $4.1 million one-time extraordinary item related to the conversion and redemption of convertible notes, the company reported a loss of $15.1 million or $1.34 per share. Net loss for the second quarter including the extraordinary item was $19.2 million, or $1.71 per share. As a result of the note conversion, the company issued approximately 1.5 million common shares. RoweCom announced that it has retained the services of J.P. Morgan, the lead underwriter of its March 1999 IPO, to assist in evaluating several financing proposals that management has received to date. Revenues for the six months ended June 30, 2000 increased to $90.6 million compared with revenues of $3.7 million for the six months ended June 30, 1999. Gross profits increased to $8.5 million, or 9.3% of revenues, compared to $286,000, or 7.8% of revenues recorded during the same period a year ago.

For the six months ended June 30, 2000, the company reported an operating loss of $26.9 million, compared to an operating loss of $8.2 million in the first half of 1999. Net loss for the six month period was $34.2 million, or $3.16 per share, compared to a net loss of $7.2 million, or $0.82 per share for the first six months of 1999.

RoweCom has also announced the appointment of Andrew Borg to vice president of knowledge resources, and Paul Hands to vice president of sales for the company’s corporate market. The move is designed to fortify RoweCom’s position in the corporate market by expanding its sales efforts and growing its leadership position in knowledge services and content management.

The Wall Street Journal for Tuesday, August 15, has some interesting information which is another chapter to the UnCover settlement of the Ryan case (see above) and the Tasini case (see ATP February 1999 p.51). A group of freelance writers has filed a federal suit arguing they should get part of the fees that online publishers charge customers for downloading articles on the Internet. The group is targeting Bell & Howell Information & Learning Co., Northern Light Technology Corp., Thomson Corp. and its subsidiaries, Gale Group, Inc. and Thomson Business Information. David Seuss, chief executive of Northern Light, is quoted in the Wall Street Journal article as saying that the company will delete copyrighted articles from its database.

And, along these same lines, this from Chuck Hamaker (UNC-Charlotte) <chahamake@email.uncc.edu> and MediaWeek and Reuters <http://www.mediaweek.com/dailynews/print/dnprint20000825-094657.asp>. A freelance writer, Ruth Laney of Baton Rouge, LA, has sued Dow Jones & Co. and Reed Elsevier Inc. in the U.S. District Court of Delaware, for including her copyrighted work in electronic databases without authorization. In her lawsuit, Laney alleges that the defendants reproduced without authorization or prior permission at least two of her copyrighted articles: “A Lesson Before Dying” and “Art Accidents.” Dow Jones spokesman told Reuters that the articles were originally published in Baton Rouge’s The Advocate and republished in Factiva, a joint venture of Dow Jones and Reuters Group PLC.

AdobeSystems, Incorporated (Nasdaq: ADBE, news, msgs) and Barnes & Noble.com (Nasdaq: BNNB, news, msgs) continued on page 14

<http://www.against-the-grain.com>
Bell & Howell’s (NYSE: BHW) Information and Learning division will expand its offerings with the addition of historical Canadian newspapers from Cold North Wind. Through the agreement, Bell & Howell has been licensed by Cold North Wind to distribute its digital historical content (principal newspapers) exclusively to the education market (K-12 schools, colleges/universities, and libraries) and non-exclusively in all other markets worldwide. Bell & Howell will also distribute this content through other parties, such as its K-12-focused affiliate bigchalk.com. As part of the agreement, Bell & Howell has made an investment in Cold North Wind. Most content will be delivered via Bell & Howell’s ProQuest online information system. For more information visit http://www.bellhowell.info/learning.com.

The joint ARL/ACRL/SPARC Website—Create Change <http://www.createchange.org>—has been chosen as a selection for the Scout Report for Social Sciences (8/8/2000), <http://scout.cs.wisc.edu/report/soscsci/20000807.html>, a weekly publication offering a selection of new and newly discovered Internet resources of interest to researchers and educators. The Scout Report for Social Sciences is a publication of the Internet Scout Project based at the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

See The Wall Street Journal for August 18, 2000. The article is entitled “Film Industry Wins a Victory In Battle Against DVD Copying” by Lee Gomes, U.S. District Judge Lewis A. Kaplan said a DVD movie-copying program known as DeCSS violated the Digital Millennium Copyright Act of 1998. He ordered Eric Corley, who operates a popular Website known as 2600.com, to remove the software, along with links to other sites containing the code.

Well, the Second Fiesole Collection Development Retreat was held in Oxford, England, and went smashing well. If you want to see some of the papers presented there, visit <http://www.digital.casalini.it>.

And speaking of smashing, that describes the First Southern African Acquisitions Conference held in Johannesburg, South Africa August 13-14. Many of the papers from that conference are loaded at http://www.tsa.ac.za/corp/events/library/papertitles.htm and we will hopefully have a report in a future issue of ATG.

Here’s a vision of the future which is quickly becoming the present. See the New York Times, May 2, 2000, “Bar Codes Allow Readers to Link to Web From Newspaper,” by the Associated Press. This caught my eye because it originated in Charleston, SC. You’ve heard of that place, right? Anyway, the Post & Courier, our daily newspaper, has begun selectively printing dime-sized bar codes that can be read with a hand-held scanner which is linked to a computer and, voila, the related Website pops up! You can read the continued on page 22
enter the resource and canceled the other parts of the database for lack of use. When I finally figured out the problem, the funds had been shifted to another database and it was too late to do anything about it at that time. This is only one example of a problem that use statistics can produce if they are not calculated correctly.

Answer from Susan L. Fales:

“Librarians need to understand what our customers are using. I think the JSTOR model is an excellent statistical capture tool because it breaks out all of the search and capture possibilities from browsing to viewing to printing. And then it further breaks out the aggregate title-by-title. When consortia licenses are negotiated, an important issue is how the publisher provides statistics. Most publishers provide consortia level usage, but many do not allow the library to capture their own institution’s usage. In order to make sound selection decisions we must have this information. Librarians need to be able to rely on a standard way of accessing and looking at statistics publisher-to-publisher so that apples and oranges can truly be compared.”

“A hit is a hit is a hit, I guess you could say. Once we gather this information librarians must use it. Libraries are using internally devised studies to show cost/use in print journals, and they are taking circulation statistics and coupling these with automated inventories of monograph titles in order to adjust monograph purchases. Until we actually use the information for our electronic collections, publishers have every right to question their need to supply libraries with this information. Libraries are just beginning to build into our cultures the notion of assessment and review. Usage must be an essential part of the decision making process as electronic products need to be sold through an annual review cycle, in the same manner print periodicals and their cost/use is reviewed, and to be approved programs are continually adjusted to provide appropriate coverage within budgetary constraints.”

Answer from Cindy Hepfer:

“Some institutions are able to fund their libraries at the levels necessary to provide faculty, staff, students, researchers, and others with most of the information and resources that they need. But such institutions are few and far between. The SUNY system, where I work, has been steadily losing ground for many years. Increases in library funding have never kept up—or generally even come close—to the rate of inflation of library materials. Since 85 percent of the HSLS budget is spent on journals, the staff in my library has developed a system to track the number of times a journal issue/volume is reshelved. This provides a reasonable, though certainly imperfect, measure of use. We rely heavily, but not exclusively, on this data when journal cancellations time rolls around each summer/fall.”

“If libraries are to invest limited resources wisely, we also need a solid measure of the use of all of our online resources. Number of times a title is accessed, like number of times an item is re-shelved, is a very imperfect measure of use—but at this point, I would happily take it. The number of times particular articles, chapters, images, etc. are printed or downloaded would be more helpful, but even then we don’t know whether what has been printed or downloaded has actually been read. Moreover, I’m not sure how we would cope with enormous amounts of detailed information. Perhaps some bright librarian/programmer will develop software to help the rest of us analyze article/chapter/image level use data!”

Answer from Martha Tarlton:

“Our LAN/PC Management maintains usage statistics on our electronic resources. These statistics are particularly helpful to evaluate whether to retain a particular subscription or whether to increase the number of simultaneous users. In addition to knowing the number of searches in a database, it is important to know the number of times users have not been able to access the database.”

THE PUBLISHERS:

Answer from Susan Spikla:

“As part of our online journal publishing activity, we have been designing user statistics that meet the needs of our customers.

These include number of user sessions and accesses of abstracts and full text. We expect to provide the same types of user statistics for our reference materials.”

Answer from Kathryn Suarez:

“We’re still developing usage statistics. Customers and other publishers have underscored the importance of capturing meaningful usage statistics rather than standard hit rates that may be misleading. Is, for example, a high access rate assumed to indicate great satisfaction in the source, or simple accessibility? Rather than hit rates and usage time, perhaps librarians and publishers should devise meaningful ways to capture end-user feedback on what information was accessed plus what information actually addressed the user’s question or research agenda.”

Answer from Scott A. Wich:

“As technology improves, so too will the usage information that we will be able to provide to librarians. So far, we are not hearing much from librarians about statistics.”

Answer from Euzetta Williams:

“For ABC-CLIO books, this is not applicable—yet. In the future, who knows? For our history serial titles, we provide statistics conforming to the ICOLC standards; the e-mail reports are mailed to Web subscribers automatically each month. The electronic products from the schools division will provide our customers with the necessary usage reports.”

The Book Industry Study Group (BISG) has announced the availability of an international standard for the exchange of bibliographic data by publishers, distributors, and booksellers. The standard, known as ONIX (Online Information Exchange) International, was immediately endorsed by Amazon.com, Barnes & Noble.com, and other major U.S. e-tailers, retailers, wholesalers and bibliographic suppliers. The standard and its User Guide provide a scheme of XML tags for identifying all of the information about a book, from title, author, publisher, cover graphics, author biography, reviews, down to details such as dimensions and weight. A preliminary version of ONIX, developed by a working group of the Association of American Publishers (AAP), was released last January. The new version represents a major advance in that it incorporates XML tagging and many refinements hammered out over the intervening months. The complete documentation is available free of charge for download from www.editeur.org/ONIX.html. "We have already received test data in ONIX International from several publishers and can’t wait until EVERYONE sends us data using these tags," said Cindy Cunningham, Manager of the US Catalog Team at Amazon.com. "In the future, we hope to be able to get all data—

continued on page 26
The case is aptly seen in other online products known more for their historic value, not their current additions. Oxford recently began marketing the American National Biography, an impressive scholarly set if ever there was one. If you have already purchased the print edition, why would you need to duplicate it? Is information about deceased Americans growing at an accelerating rate? Oxford’s Karen Casey points out that DNA testing brought out new information on Thomas Jefferson’s offspring after the print edition appeared. This will be reflected in the electronic copy of the ANB. But realistically, most dead people have stopped adding to their resumes. (Poor Zachary Taylor: despite the indignity of being exhumed, the forensic evidence failed to elevate his place in the American presidency or suggest a conspiracy to poison him.)

The ANB decided to demarcate the cut-off point for new entries (new dead, if you will), and chose 1996. Now, 1996 is a good year. It’s not round like 2000, but it is quite late in the century and most people will be able to rely on it for information from the 16th century through almost all of the 20th. It might inconvenience print users to learn that Fred Astaire (d. 1987) is there, but Gene Kelly (d. 1998) is not, but does this require us to leave what we already own? Isn’t one format enough? To be fair it should be pointed out that the ANB is adding about 125 entries each quarter. But aren’t there other retrospective analyses of Gene Kelly we can rely on? Will the ANB be the only acceptable source? Does anyone doubt that Oxford will bring out supplementary volumes? Different libraries will have different takes on this question and the argument could be illuminating to all of us. What is troubling is the fact that the debate does not occur at all.

This seems to be an enormous blind spot for many in collection development. The cultural assumption is that print is old and fixed; digital is current and transforming. Print is static; digital is sexy. Print requires us to look things up; digital is interactive and evokes the “aha!” response when we find something.

I admit to feeling all these emotions. I spend a significant amount of time evaluating new databases and promising Web sites of potential use to my institution’s clientele. And my natural instinct would lead me to spend more time trying out the OED online than I would ever spend browsing the pages of its 20 hefty volumes. But browsing is not research. Enjoying the interactive nature of the product is not the same as extracting scholarly content. The undeniable fact is that when we duplicate what we have already purchased, we may have made a choice not to buy something we don’t already own. Our collections become shallower, less diverse, less well-rounded.

Thanks to E-mo, we have fallen into the trap of believing that if one copy of a major reference work is good, two copies are better. If the second copy is electronic, it seems there is almost no justification required, no review necessary. If you object, you might be looked on as a technophobe. Even the reviews rarely ask “do you really need this?” They are rife with descriptions of drop down menus, frames, links, exportable formats, and boolean operators, but they almost never ask “why was this product rolled out?” Reviewers rarely consider themselves with questions external to the product immediately in front of them, but it is these reviews that directly influence buying decisions. It appears to be a given that publishers act in the better interests of librarians; that librarians spend collection development dollars in ways that benefit all their users; and that the question of “need” is relative.

While I have used two recent products from Oxford’s distinguished line, there are other reference publishers such as Gale, Grove and ISI which are releasing far more expensive reference works in business, the humanities and the sciences. Libraries made very large allocations to lease ISI’s Web of Science, despite having previously purchased print indexes, multi-year cumulations, and CD-ROMs. Now ISI has an arrangement that allows libraries to “license” the data, not just “lease” it, for an additional 20%. Licensing is a practice which allows libraries to keep the file and the search software if they should ever decide to cancel the subscription. There is also a one-time fee to repurchase old files of ISI’s databases. Anecdotal evidence has placed this cost in the six-figure range. All of the above publishers would claim some enhancement in their online products, but it’s hard not to argue that they’re also rejuvenating the revenue stream of an existing title.

In fact, publishers have various product lines that they want to sell and resell, much like a movie which has a theatrical release, a video release, and a television premiere. In the case of the OED, librarians are entreated to buy the 20-volume print edition, the 2-volume New Shorter Oxford English Dictionary, the CD-ROM edition, and the OED Online. When sales slacked for one format, newer, “irresistable” versions are rolled out. This is the nature of the reference product cycle. But that does not necessarily mean it corresponds to the enduring needs of scholars, researchers, and other information consumers.

Let’s return to that quote from Hamlet. The full passage runs like this:

The undiscover’d country from whose bourn
No traveller returns, puzzles the will
And makes us rather bear those ills we have
Than fly to others that we know not of?
Thus conscience does make cowards of us all;
...And enterprises of great pith and moment
With this regard their currents turn away

The “bourn” is a boundary or perimeter, according to the OED, and a unique Shakespearean construction. The traveller could well be a library user in search of undiscovered learning. For librarians the “bourn” could represent the limits of our judgment which lead us to buy those names we already know (“bear those ills we have”) rather than seek out “the undiscover’d country of new, significant, and timely sources a good collection really needs. Let’s acknowledge the unique value electronic reference products offer. But let’s also find the courage to resist the Electronic Momentum which puzzles the will and turns away smart decisions.

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Endnotes


17. See HYPERLINK “http://www.galenet.com/servlet/LitRCServlet/about/about=LRCServletDocTitle&af=description”


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To address one of the problems in the area of electronic resources for libraries, the Association of Research Libraries, under the auspices of its New Measures Initiative, has begun a study to determine how to develop statistics and performance measures that address the delivery of networked information resources and services. Charles R. McClure and Wonsik “Jeff” Shim, Information Use Management, and Policy Institute, Florida State University, will direct the e-metrics study, which includes the participation of 23 ARL member libraries. “ARL libraries have become increasingly interested in finding ways to gather consistent and comparable data to evaluate our electronic information services. This project will help administrators make better decisions regarding the purchase and deployment of these new resources that are taking a greater and greater share of our budgets,” said Russ Miller, University Librarian and Director, University Library Systems, University of Pittsburgh. Miller and Sherrie Schmidt, Dean of University Libraries, Arizona State University, serve as co-chairs of the project for ARL. The e-metrics project will be conducted in three phases. Phase one (May-October 2000) will gather data in a systematic way information about current ARL libraries’ best practices in statistics, measures, processes, and activities that pertain to networked resources and services. The resulting inventory and analysis will serve as a basis for the second phase of the project, to be conducted November 2000-June 2001. During that time, a methodology will be developed and tested to assess the degree to which such data collection is possible and that collected data are comparable among member libraries. During the project’s third and final phase (July 2001-December 2001), a set of refined measures will be proposed to ARL, complete with data descriptions, and guidelines for data collection, analysis, and use.
sotto voce — Taking the Step from Speaking Softly to Listening Loudly

by Bob Schatz (everbob@yahoo.com)

After giving it serious thought, I’ve decided to discontinue my contributions to “sotto voce,” at least as a regular column. As I drive around North America visiting libraries, I’ve become aware of how much less I know for certain than when I was younger. I also find my thoughts turning more often to things of a personal nature than to the vagaries of the world of librarianship, publishing, and vending.

A column written for a professional publication should expand readers’ knowledge, or at least reveal otherwise hidden truths. That is difficult to accomplish when the writer has far more questions about his world than answers. I know that somewhere out there is a person who knows what kind of books will exist in the future, who understands how libraries will serve the very different demands of patrons in the coming years, decades, and centuries. This person will be able to reveal what kinds of publishing will remain in the electronic era of the 2000s, and will be able to answer the age-old question, “What will be the new publisher doing buying a systems vendor?” As I ponder these questions myself, I think it is fair to say that the technology of publishing will remain in the electronic era of the 2000s, and will be able to answer the age-old question, “What will be the new publisher doing buying a systems vendor?”

In paring, I’ll share with you the one thing I feel certain about, and it doesn’t take submitting it six times each year to get this message across: It’s about people. It always has been and always will be. The work we all undertake, whether we be vendors, publishers, or librarians, is helping people improve their world and their lives. The way we interact with each other is far more important than the way the computer systems interface. The books, journals, and technologies we deal with are conduits through which information flows. They represent the means, not the ends, of librarianship. Technology exists as a tool to help us help each other. It is supposed to work for us, not the other way around. If we are not careful, though, we’ll find ourselves working for the machine, a process which, I fear, has already begun. In the face of that, it is worthwhile to devote ourselves to whatever it takes to retain our humanity in this age where innovators too often ask “can it be done” rather than “should it be done.”

And with those revelations, I bring this column to a close (or at least a hiatus) for my contributions. Thanks, Katina, for giving me the opportunity to express my thoughts. To those of you who responded to my columns via email, thanks for that too. It was fun getting “fan mail.” If the clouds part on one of my trips and new truths about librarianship and vending are revealed to me, I hope you’ll allow me to share my thoughts with you again on a guest columnist.

I’m beginning to embrace the idea that the truth is not so much in the telling as it is in the living, and I look forward to the time I’ll share with many of you in my continued work with Everett. Through our professional interactions, I hope we’ll be able to expand the human values that still surround this profession. Those actions, not the columns we write, are the real statements we make about what is important to us, even if, in this complex world, they are only heard as a sotto voce.

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products from the project—a set of tools, processes, and techniques—will be useful to the library community in general as it looks to provide electronic resources to their communities. A separate task force from within the project will focus on working with vendor-based database products to arrive at agreed-upon data element definitions and terms, specific data that can be collected, and methods for reporting data to libraries. This ARL Task Force on Statistics from Vendor-Based Da-

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tabase Products will also be building on existing work in the field. Participating institutions include University of Alberta, Arizona State University, Auburn University, University of Chicago, University of Connecticut, Cornell University, University of Illinois at Chicago, University of Manitoba, University of Maryland, University of Massachusetts—Amherst, University of Nebraska, New York Public Library, University of Notre Dame, University of Pennsylvania, Pennsylvania State University, University of Pittsburgh, Purdue University, and University of British Columbia. Continued on page 85

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We believe that this restructuring of the current committee and task force structure will immediately save the library substantial time, money, and resources (structurally).

Considering the results of this study, it would be unreasonable to expect the Vice-Director to implement the Task Force recommendations (above). Therefore we suggest that the results be shelved until such time as the lowest geological strata (some respondents used the name “Hades”) accumulates are remarkable abundance of ice crystals.

Webworthy
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A captivating glimpse of astronomers’ visions; the Astronomy Departments list offers instant astronomers a great snapshot of college choices, and Astronomy Pictures will dazzle viewers with some of the best photos of our universe. cdsweb.u-strasbg.fr/astroweb.html

Bioweapons
Would you hire a former bioweapons lab scientist? Just how much Pasteurella tularensis does it take to cause rabbit fever? Check out these two sites to explore the fascinating topic of Bioweapons.

— Offering an in-depth look at the Chemical and Biological Weapons Nonproliferation Project at the Stimson Center in Washington, D.C. www.stimson.org/cew.

— All the Virology on the WWW provides a list of disarmament projects and Department of Defense sites, and the full text of the 1972 Biological Weapons Convention. www.virology.net/garry/awwebw.html

Botany
Botanists and gardeners alike will be delighted to discover The International Plant Names Index (IPNI), a collaboration between The Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, The Harvard University Herbaria, and the Australian National Herbarium. Names and basic bibliographical details of all seed plants were merged from the Index Kewensis (IK), the Gray Card Index (GCI) and the Australian Plant Names Index (APNI) to create the “most comprehensive listing of seed plant names available to date.” With ongoing deduplication, standardization and verification of its currently over 1.3 million species, this will become the botanical names resource of choice. Future plans include setting up additional mirror sites, allowing users to contribute data directly, offering subscriptions, and allowing links to remote databases. Note that finding a plant name listed in IPNI does not mean it is the currently accepted name of an particular taxon. www.ipni.org

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University of Southern California, Texas A&M University, Virginia Tech University, University of Western Ontario, University of Wisconsin-Madison, and Yale University. The institutions are providing both the financial resources for the project as well as staff time for data collection and testing of methodologies. An article about the project appears in the June issue of ARL: A Bimonthly Report on Research Library Issues and Actions from ARL, CNI, and SPARC <http://www.arl.org/newsbr/210/eremetrics.html> and, throughout the project’s three phases, information about the study and its activities will be available through the ARL New Measures Initiative Website at <http://www.arl.org/stats/newmeas/newmeas.html>, which also hosts resources relating to the other ARL new measures projects. For further information, contact Rush Miller, University of Pittsburgh (rmiller@pitt.edu); Sherrie Schmidt, Arizona State University (sherrie.schmidt@asu.edu); or Martha Kyvildiou, ARL Senior Program Office for Statistics and Measurement (martha@arl.org).

Well, y’all, I have a huge Rumors file still not tapped and I’ve run out of room! I told you the summer was unbelievably busy! Stay tuned for November!

Contributors to the Liblicense list on this topic which I read included the following: Ann Okerson, Dana Bostrom, Ethelann Adler, JoAnne Deeken, John Abbott, John Cox, Katherine Klempner, Katherine Porter, Martin Borchert, Michael Spinella, Michele Newberry, Peter Boyce, Richard d’Avigdor, Rick Anderson, Scott Wicks, and Thomas Sanders.

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Web. This way the alumni receive value from their schools but not at the cost of supporting today’s students.

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