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Bet You Missed It-Killer Diseases and the Smithsonian

Pamela M. Rose

Health Sciences Library, University at Buffalo, pmrose@acsu.buffalo.edu

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The Times They are A-Changin: from page 78

one takes into account the overall population growth of these areas? Perhaps very little. But I, a true lover of books and bookshops, happen to take great heart from these numbers as I have always judged the worth of a city by how many bookshops, used and rare, it has.

Speaking of the worth of a city as judged by the number of bookshops to be found there naturally brings one to the most modern of bookselling phenomenon, the book city or book town. In the U.S. we have **Larry McMurtry's** Archer City, Texas, where in his four "Booked Up" building you can find between 350,000 and 400,000 books. The latest entry into book town status is the village of Wigtown in South-West Scotland. Here you will find that at least 16 bookshops have started up or relocated in this area of great scenic beauty. The first, and still the best known book town is Hay-On-Wye, the Welsh-English border town made famous by its principle bookseller, **Richard Booth**. In his autobiography, *My Kingdom of Books*, (1999, Y Lolfa Publishers), Booth tells the whole story of his founding of his Hay Castle bookshop in the 1970's, and something of the other shops to follow. Now the number is greater than 30, and the town calls itself "Hay-On-Wye, The Town of Books."


So much for looking backwards, and something of the present world of actual and Internet bookselling. What of the future? My guess, and one borne out during my talks with various booksellers on both sides of the Atlantic, is that the Internet will open new markets, bring more people (both buyers and sellers) to the table and continue to have a dual effect on book prices, driving down the prices of common books and increasing the market (and the price) for the truly rare books.

I have said little about dealer catalogues, a subject dear to my heart, for nothing stops all other activity within my own household like the arrival of a truly well produced and interesting catalogue. For a while, some felt the Internet would spell the demise of the catalogues, just as the Internet was the doom of the valued, old search tool, AB Antiquarian Bookman. As one dealer said to me: "Catalogues, and especially best books in catalogues sell very quickly, orders are usually either phoned or e-mailed. Hard copy catalogues are still very important. The Internet is becoming more so, but it will not supercede the catalogues. You can't scan a site, but you can scan a catalogue."

Another dealer told me that just in the past two to three months he has seen a resurgence of interest in hard copy catalogues. His feeling is that a certain amount of trust is automatically given to the entry in a published catalogue. As he put it: "The buyer knows that someone really sat down and handled the book—that

they are sure of the books correctness."

Finally, and as I mentioned in passing before, the Internet and on-line sites like **Alibris**, will allow far greater knowledge of and markets for all books, be they rare, out-of-print or just hard to find. My colleague at Alibris, **Steve Sutton**, brought to my attention an article in the October, 2000 issue of "*Against the Grain*" in which the staff of YBP listed the 50 bestselling books in Environmental Technology for the years 1999-2000. Steve ran these fifty titles against our database and found 28% of the books available. So, while it is true that more books are "hard to find" in the ensuing 30 years as publishers shorten print runs and decide not to bring titles back into print, it is also true that because of sites like our own, books which are reported as OP, OS and OSI are now far easier to buy than they would have been 30 years ago.

This fact, indeed, has not been lost on either acquisitions librarians or new book vendors, many of whom now regularly use our site to help fill the orders which just a few years ago would have been left unfilled. As **Richard Weatherford**, Alibris founder has said, ours "is an entirely new way to find what you need—online, easy, reliable service through the best single source in the world today." 

Endnotes

1. Basil Blackwell. *The World of Books*, (London: J.M. Dent and Sons, Ltd., 1932), pp. 8-10.
2. Michael Sadleir, "Bookshop and Auctions Room," *Book Collecting: Four Broadcast Talks*, ed. John Carter (Cambridge, Bowes and Bowes, 1950) pp. 39-40.
3. Ainslie Thin, "Second-Hand Bookselling," *The Book World: A New Survey*, ed. John Hampden. (London, Thomas Nelson & Sons, Ltd., 1935), pp. 152-53.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 157.
5. John Hampden, ed. *The Book World Today - A New Survey of the Making and Distribution of Books in Britain*. (London, George Allen & Unwin, Ltd. 1957), p. 162.
6. Robert F. Metzdorf, Comp., *The Tinker Library: A Bibliographical Catalogue of the Books and Manuscripts Collected by Chauncey Brewster Tinker*, (New Haven, Conn., The Yale University Library, 1959), p. vii.
7. Joel Silver, "The High-Tech Bibliophile: On-Line Options for Book Buyers," *The Fellowship of American Bibliophilic Societies*, IV, no.2, (Fall 2000), p. 11.
8. Robin H. Smiley, "The Internet Follies Hit the Road," *Firsts*, 9, no. 10, (October 1999), p. 34.

Bet You Missed It

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

Column Editor: **Pamela M. Rose** (Web Services and Library Promotion Coordinator, Health Sciences Library, University of Buffalo)
<pmrose@acsu.buffalo.edu> <http://www.acsu.buffalo.edu/~pmrose>

READY REFERENCES

by **Pamela M. Rose** (Univ. at Buffalo, State Univ. of NY)

Reference Manager 9.5 version is a substantial update to the previous version 9, providing the ability to search, import and edit citations from the Web while simultaneously working on a manuscript. It also offers "pay-

per-view" access to **Search ISI**, a spell checker and a customizable dictionary.

See — **Brian R. Shmaefsky**, "Micromanaging References" in *Science*, p. 2097, Dec. 15, 2000.

FRAUGHT WITH FRAUD

by **Pamela M. Rose** (Univ. at Buffalo, State Univ. of NY)

The prevalence of research misconduct is difficult to ascertain, but researcher Charles Turner uncovered a high incidence in his research study on the sexual behavior of 1800 Baltimore residents. A data collection manager's alert uncovered an "epidemic of

falsification" that took months to weed out. Other studies estimate 1 fraud per 100,000 scientists per year. Some institutions are attempting to remedy the problem with special education programs.

See — **Eliot Marshall**, "How Prevalent is Fraud? That's a Million-Dollar Question" in *Science*, p.1662-63, Dec. 1, 2000.



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COVETOUS COMPETITION

by **Pamela M. Rose** (Univ. at Buffalo, State Univ. of NY)

Mysterious motives drove someone to steal nine hard drives containing epidemiological data on the incidence of AIDS, malaria, tuberculosis, and other killer diseases gathered by the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR). The MO points to an inside job, with speculation that "jealous" competitors may be responsible.

See — **Pallava Bagla**, "Disease Data Stolen in Lab Break-In" in *Science*, p.1668-69, Dec. 1, 2000.

PALM OR PC?

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

With sales in the U.S. dropping dramatically in the last quarter of 2000, once again the death of the PC is being predicted. Reasons for the drop include the general slowdown in the economy, market saturation, and the increase in sales of other tech gadgets, especially handheld computers. However, the PC, with its versatility and power, is still the best means of keeping up with innovation on the Internet.

See — "The PC is Dead—Long Live the PC", *The Economist*, December 16, 2000.

DATA DELUGE

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

The most interesting bit of this article is the opening quote, stating "more data will be created in the next three years...than in the whole of human history." Such a prediction heralds the ongoing battle to provide cheap, accurate, quickly retrievable data storage. At the forefront of the struggle are two companies—EMC and Network Appliance (NetApp)—which embrace two opposing technologies: EMC's stand alone units linked by storage-area networks (SANs) and NetApp's employing network-attached storage (NAS). Recently the rivalry heated up when EMC launched its own NAS server, meant to compete directly with NetApp. Meanwhile, Internet companies are demanding more and more storage as their databases grow.

See — "Store Wars", *The Economist*, December 9, 2000, p. 69.

WORKING EXHIBITIONS

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

Museums world-wide are overflowing with objects that never reach the public eye. Storing and maintaining this abundance taxes the resources of many institutions. Both the Smithsonian and Britain's Natural History Museum (NHM) are trying innovative ways to serve the needs of both public display and preservation for research. The Smithsonian is creating a computerized catalog which features digital images of specimens. The NHM is developing a working laboratory which will also be a public exhibit—allowing visitors to observe the work of researchers on the museum's collection.

See — "Behind the Scenes at the Museum," *The Economist*, December 23, 2000.