June 2000

International Dateline-Some News from the UK

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Recommended Citation

White, Martin (2000) "International Dateline-Some News from the UK," *Against the Grain*: Vol. 12: Iss. 3, Article 39.

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.7771/2380-176X.3394>

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International Dateline — Some News from the UK

by **Martin White** (Managing Director, Intranet Focus Ltd.) <Martin.white@intranetfocus.com>

NB: Please note that British spelling has been retained.—KS

First my apologies to the Editor and to my readers for not providing a contribution to the last issue. I was participating in the **Intranets 2000** conference in San Jose at the end of February and just ran out of time to write the column. Quite a range of news and views this issue as I catch up on things. The **UK Serials Group** has said farewell to **Jill Tolson**, who has been a superb administrator for the Group over the last few years. Jill is staying in the serials business as the business manager for the **Cranfield University Press**, under Librarian **Hazel Woodward**. For your files, the new administrator is **Alison Whitehorn**, UKSG Administrator, Hilltop, Heath End, Newbury RG20 0AP, UK tel: +44 1635 254292; fax: +44 1635 253826. The email address is unchanged at <"mailto:uksg.admin@dial.pipex.com" uksg.admin@dial.pipex.com">. UKSG is planning a substantial revision to the Website at www.uksg.org, but this will not be in operation for some months yet.

Two more important appointments. The new **Chief Executive of the British Library** in succession to **Brian Lang** is to be **Lynne Brindley**, who takes over on 1 July this year. This is the first time in its history that the **BL** has had a professional librarian as its Chief Executive. Lynne is highly regarded in the UK, and beyond. She worked at the **BL** from 1979 to 1985 in both the Bibliographic Services division, and in the office of the Chief Executive, and most recently has been the Librarian at **Leeds University** following senior positions at the **London School of Economics** and **Aston University**. Lynne has also played a prominent role in the **Joint Information Services Committee** as Chair of the **Committee on Electronic Information**.

Things are certainly happening at the **British Library**. Currently the **BL** is the subject of a performance review by the **Department of Culture, Media and Sport**, and there has been a determined effort by the Department to gain the views of users of the **BL**. Then in early April the **BL**, along with **Columbia University**, the **London School of Economics**, **Cambridge University Press**, the **Smithsonian's National Museum of Natural History**, and the **New York Public Library** announced plans to create a global public library on the Web offering access to material ranging from the **Magna Carta**, archive interviews with **Frank Lloyd Wright**, and an interactive tour of **Amiens Cathedral**. The project is called **fathom.com** and will involve an initial investment over the next year of around \$80m. The project Website is already up at <http://www.fathom.com>. I was rather concerned however to find that there was no mention of the project on the **BL** site, and that searching for the term "fathom" produced no hits.

The **European Bureau of Library, Information and Documentation Associations** has a new Director. **Teresa Hackett** joined **EBLIDA** on 21 February having been on the **Libraries Support Team of the European Commission's Libraries Programme**.

Teresa has had a varied career in the information business, including working at the **British Standards Institution** and the **British Council** office in Munich. The **EBLIDA Website**. <http://www.eblida.org> is just about the best way to keep in touch with European developments in copyright, freedom of information

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and pretty much anything else that affects libraries. Whilst on the subject of copyright, on 16 March 2000, the **Internal Market Council** took note of the state of work on the proposed directive, which is now moving from working party level to the **Permanent Representatives Committee**. The Council confirmed its intention of making all possible efforts to find a common position on 25 May, in Brussels.

Quite the most interesting and illuminating conference I have taken part in this year has been one entitled **Joined-Up Publishing: the significance of linking**. This was organised by **Helen Henderson** and **Sally Morris** for the **Association of Learned and Professional Society Publishers**, of which Sally is the Executive Secretary. **APLSP** always hold a one-day conference on the Friday preceding the **UK Serials Group Annual Conference**, and this year over 140 delegates were attracted by the subject. As far as I am aware, this is the first conference to tackle the subject from largely a publisher perspective, and was an outstanding success. Among the speakers from the USA were **Clifford Lynch** (CNI), **Helen Atkins** (ISI), **Kent Smith** (NLM) and **Christine Borgman** (UCLA), complemented by presentations from **IoPP** on their **Hypercite** and **STACKS** technology, **Academic Press** on **IDEAL**, **Norman Paskin** on **DOI** developments, and myself looking at copyright and commercial issues. I think the overall conclusion was that linking between journal articles was certainly in demand by readers, but that there were some important standards issues (concerning bibliographic citations, etc.) and commercial issues to be addressed. The slides of the presentations will be available on the **ALPSP** site at <http://www.alpssp.org.uk>. I see that the topic is also being discussed at the **Society for Scholarly Publishing** in Baltimore at the end of May, and I have the feeling that it is going to be one of the hot topics for the next year or so.

Learned Information, the **VNU** subsidiary which publishes *Information World Review* and organises the **Online Information** event each year has been cleaning out the stables. Their two library titles, *Online Information Review* and *The Electronic Library*

have been sold to **MCB University Press**. The Editor of *The Electronic Library* is **David Raitt** at <draitt@estec.esa.nl>. **Learned Information** also published *Knowledge Management* magazine and sponsored a **Knowledge Management** exhibition in London, and these have been sold to **Clive Snell**, who was the MD of **Learned Information**, but has now set up his own company, **Bizmedia Ltd**.

There are two main library-oriented exhibitions in the UK. In March, there was the **Internet Librarian International** and **Libtech 2000**, with a conference programme devised by **David Raitt** and **Jane Dysart**. A feature of the conference was the number of speakers from the USA, and delegate numbers were well up on 1999 at around 300. Alongside this conference in the Olympia exhibition complex in London was the **London Book Fair**. Although nothing like the scale of the **Frankfurt Book Fair**, it would still take a morning just to browse around the stands. I am always amazed at just how specialised many publishers are, and indeed just how many publishers there are. In an age of electronic access and the imminent arrival of the e-Book it is good to see that book publishing is still surviving. I am sure that there are some figures on it somewhere, but my sense is that smaller publishers have benefited from the arrival of **Amazon** and **Books OnLine**, as even the major London bookshops with in excess of 200,000 books cannot stock everything. To be able to identify and order specialised book titles through the Web-based services is, I feel, an important benefit.

If you are visiting the UK in June then try to include a visit to the **Library and Information Show** at the **National Exhibition Centre** in Birmingham on 6-8 June. This is the most general of the UK events, and attracts academic and public library professionals as well as corporate librarians. More details can be found on <http://www.lishow.co.uk>.

To move briefly on to Canada, the **Canadian Association of Research Libraries** has a new Website design, and is no longer a sub-site of the **University of Ottawa**. The URL is <http://www.carl-abrc.ca/index.htm>.

And finally, a piece of blatant promotion, which I hope the Editor will let through. I too was delighted to see the work of **Gordon Graham** honoured by *The Bookseller* (**ATG**,
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Innovations Affecting Us
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through the switch without being diverted. However, the switch temperature must be 65 degrees Celsius to work properly.

The bubble-jet heaters can set up a switch path in less than 10 milliseconds which is considerably faster than the 50-millisecond limit carriers set on acceptable network failures. Customer applications running across a network will not be able to detect a failure if the network

can be restored within 50 milliseconds; so the switch could be used to route traffic along an alternate path around a broken fiber.

The switch has no moving parts; so it is theoretically less susceptible to failure. However, micromirror optical switching technology is still young; and nobody knows how well it will stand up over the long term. It is also unclear how well the bubble-jet heaters will stand up when used continuously for months or years. This could be the case in certain switch configurations.

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select, acquire, catalog, service, and we have not even figured out how to really store it in the very long run. I have likened it to a secret librarian plot to assure our job security. Paper is/was a breeze by comparison. But am I, are we, deluding ourselves? Are we selecting and cataloging the music to be played while our Rome burns?

Since the "we" of librarianship includes so many thousands of people, the answer has to be at least a partial YES. But it doesn't and won't be true of everyone. I am confident in the midst of competing "online enablers," all of whom will come and eventually go, there will still be a need to understand the needs of the faculty and students who are associated with our institutions, and to decide which enablers should be adopted for which purposes. I am confident that there will continue to be too many enablers and too few dollars with which to purchase their services. Each enabler, moreover, will no doubt provide a menu of choices and librarians, or whatever we are called, have experience choosing from such menus. In the midst of multiple enablers, there will also be a need to organize their offerings into a single non-chaotic portal and then to train students and faculty how to use these important resources. And finally, as part of the academy moves on to work on more immediate problems, other parts will continue to assess and value the cultural works of the past. These works will then need to be stored and preserved.

What, then, is the major challenge facing libraries and their directors in the future? I believe it still is to stay relevant to the changing needs and situations encountered by our institutions, faculty, students, communities, and to the people who work in them—but to put a greater emphasis on the word "changing" because the academy is in the midst of a revolution. 🐼

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February 2000, p.8) I worked with Gordon at **Butterworths** from 1982 as I tried to move **Reed Publishing** into electronic delivery, and I was immensely fortunate to have Gordon as a mentor. Over the next three years, I learned an enormous amount about both the science and art of publishing from Gordon, who always seemed to have the time to take a very ambitious neophyte publisher to one side and suggest how best to refocus his energy. Since his retirement, Gordon has been the editor of *Logos, the Journal of the World Book Community*. Any reader of *ATG* will benefit from the papers that *Logos* publishes, and Gordon's editorials are quite outstanding. The title is published by **Whurr Publishers**, and the ISSN is 0957-9656. Gordon also published a collection of his essays on the international book business in 1994 entitled *As I Was Saying*. Another essential read. 🐼

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Webworthy from page 96

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Part of the "Free Resources" section on the BIOSIS Web pages, the Internet Resource Guide to Zoology contains an incredible wealth of links to Web sources covering everything from Sea Anemones to Zoraptera. Here users can instantly link to many zoos and wildlife parks of the world. Links are arranged alphabetically in each list, and general areas like publications, journals, and entomology are listed along with specific species like Psocoptera (book lice).

<http://www.york.biosis.org/zrdocs/zoolinfo/> 🐼

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sional, and reference area. Contributed databases will prevail and publishers will license data to add the pedagogical tools for use. The author will have more control of the work. Or in the case of the University professor/researcher the University will have the "rights." There will be tremendous mix/match and intellectual property rights will decide the winner. It is already exciting, and we are just at the starting line.

Consumers are not our core market. Librarians and retailers are. If carefully presented to the market, digital content can be a mainstream kind of medium.

I guarantee that there will be some partnerships announced that will be wild and crazy—look at AOL and Time-Warner. 🐼

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