

September 2000

## International Dateline-South Africa, et. al.

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### Recommended Citation

White, Martin (2000) "International Dateline-South Africa, et. al.," *Against the Grain*: Vol. 12: Iss. 5, Article 31.

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.7771/2380-176X.3586>

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## International Dateline from page 86

The China Society of Library Science attaches great importance to preparing its members for the Digital Age and network environment. Among the nationwide workshops it sponsored in the last year were "Training and Panels for Library Directors on Library Reform and Initiatives" in October 1999 and "Digital Library Technology Training and Panel" in April 2000 in Beijing.

Other activities CSLS sponsored prior to its second annual conference included the "CSLS Science Popularization Day" on May 28, 2000, which was participated in by special libraries all over China.

After the conference, CSLS organized a package tour from July 20 through 21. Conference attendees visited libraries and museums in Hailar and went to the city of Manchuria on the border between China and Russia. In the morning of the next day, the librarians found themselves stepping into one of the darkest episodes of the Chinese history, a freeze-frame of a grand Japanese bunker built during Japan's occupation of China in World War II. Its construction took four years and over 100,000 Chinese laborers, many of them perished in the process. However, the librarians' heavy-heartedness evaporated instantly in the afternoon as a 30-bus fleet transported them to the beauty of the Inner Mongolian Prairie. There the tour reached its climax as librarians indulged themselves in horse riding, watch-

ing Mongolian wrestling, singing and dancing, and enjoying bowls of wine and dishes of Mongolian food. A bonfire party with the hospitable Inner Mongolian hosts brought the conference to a joyous and memorable end.

The CSLS is now planning for its next annual conference in July in Chengdu, a city close to the Three Gorges of the Yangtze River. It welcomes librarians all over the world to the conference to promote exchanges. Libraries in China today are at a crossroads of making choices among different library systems and options of digital and virtual libraries. They hope that they will learn from the exchanges. They also promise that the next conference will be an even more fruitful and enriching experience for all participants.

## International Dateline —

### South Africa et.al.

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

To counteract the rather pro-European bias of this column, in the past I thought I would start in South Africa. In early September I took part in the **2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Conference on World Wide Web Applications**, organised by **Profession Pieter van Brakel** of the Department of Information Studies at the **Rand Afrikaans University** in Johannesburg. Around 300 delegates attended the conference to hear some very interesting papers on a wide range of Web applications. One of the reasons for me attending the conference was to run a workshop on electronic journals, which attracted librarians, publishers and authors. The sheer scale of South Africa (close to the size of Europe) means that resources are very dispersed around the country, and there is a keen interest in distance learning. However, Internet access costs are high, but not as high as the price of journals. Coming from the UK I found that my pound had a 300% increase in buying power because of the low value of the Rand, and the economic base of the country. This made purchasing food and gifts very inexpensive, but a visit to a bookshop was a real awakening, as European and US books, and CDs were converted at current exchange rates. The result is that, in US\$ terms a CD would cost perhaps US\$45. Now think of the price that you pay for journals, especially electronic journals, and think of the impact on your budget if they cost at least twice as much. The teaching of information science is strong in South Africa, but the opportunities for career development seem rather limited. For details of the conference see <http://general.rau.ac.za/infosci/conf/default.htm>. **Pieter van Brakel** is also the Editor of the *South African Journal of Information Management*, and there is a good article on Internet access in Southern Africa at <http://general.rau.ac.za/infosci/raujournal/default.htm>.

From South Africa a jump to the Netherlands seems rather appropriate. UKB, the consortium of Dutch university libraries, the **Koninklijke Bibliotheek** (Royal Library) and the library of

the **Koninklijke Nederlandse Academie van Wetenschappen** (Royal Dutch Academy of Sciences), signed a five-year agreement in June with **Elsevier Science**. This agreement provides for electronic access to the full-text of all **Elsevier Science** journals. The nature of the agreement is that the universities will, from 2001, pay annually a slightly increased amount for these services compared with their base year 2000 subscription package. The UKB are hoping to arrange similar deals with other publishers. The contact person for UKB is **N. Verhagen**, chief librarian of the **University of Amsterdam**.

**Dr. Hans Roosendaal**, Director of Scientific Information of the **University of Twente**, one of the main negotiators of the agreement, is a speaker at the **International Coalition of Library Consortia (ICOLC) 2nd European Conference** in Berlin, which takes place from 1-3 December at the Harnack-House in Berlin-Dahlem. The aim of the conference is to discuss progress in, and to share experience of, consortia purchasing of electronic information resources. There are three interesting discussion groups on the final day considering licensing models, cross linking / cross reference, and developments in online information. For more information see <http://www.physik.fu-berlin.de/library/ICOLC-01.html>.

In the UK the **Association of Subscription Agencies** <http://www.subscription-agents.org/> is now the **Association of Subscription Agencies and Intermediaries**. My old friend **Rollo Turner**, Secretary General of the ASA says that as the ASA membership now ranges from the small to the largest traditional subscriptions agents around the world and intermediaries such as **CatchWord** and **ingenta** to traditional companies with extensive electronic services such as **RoweCom**, **EBSCO** and **Swets Blackwell**, the new name would enable the ASA to present a more forward looking image to the world and reflects the changing pattern of membership. (The ASA is not the only group adding to its title. The Di-

rectory Publishers Association is now the **Directory and Database Publishers Association**)

The ASA has recently been highlighting an emerging problem in electronic journal management. Some customers who renewed their subscriptions to a printed journal with an electronic version as part of the subscription found their access rights terminated on December 31<sup>st</sup> - even though they had renewed and paid through their agent in good time. This in spite of the fact that both customer and agent had followed all the publishers' instructions on renewals and provided the necessary information. The paper subscription was unaffected.

It appears that for a number of publishers there is insufficient time to update the electronic access system before December 31<sup>st</sup> after updating the subscription system once the renewal has been received. This is the case even when the renewals are automated and provided electronically.

This is probably just another teething problem with electronic journals, but the suggestion made by **Rollo Turner** on behalf of the ASA is to "grace" the first few issues of each year to enable customers to receive continuity of service and the publisher to catch up with the large numbers of subscriptions all coming in during the last part of the year or early in the new year. For electronic journals, gracing the first few "issues" is relatively easy and what is more should cost little or nothing (unlike print where the first few issues of the year had greater print runs and resulted in issues being posted to non-renewals). With electronic journals there are no costs of distribution, all it requires is the cut off date being changed from 31 December to 28 February for example. Since the overwhelming majority of subscribers do renew each year, the number receiving content without paying will be small (just as it was for paper).

The **Canadian Association of Research Libraries** <http://www.carl-abrc.ca> is practising international linking in a big way this year, taking their Fall General Meeting to Australia and New Zealand, taking in the **Australian Library Association Conference** in Canberra at the end of October.


The **UK National Electronic Site License Initiative** project has recently been the subject of an interim evaluation and a report of

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## Webworthy from page 92

Surveillance. <http://www.nationalatlas.gov/virusmap.html>

**Zoology** — "Their back were grey, and gross were they, and hideous of head." So goes a line from the poem "The Ballad of the Ice-Worm Cocktail" by **Robert W. Service**, full-text available on the Annelid Resources page, which serves as a guide to scientific information on annelids, and to current worm research and researchers. This 4 year old site offers a discussion group, an annotated bibliography of recent papers on worm phylogeny, and a directory of worm experts. You can also look for worms in literature, search museum collections for Annelida, visit Worm Lab pages, and take Random Field Trips to other worm sites. Particularly fascinating are the recently discovered vent worms, who live in extremely high temperatures, and the leeches who are making a comeback in medicine. **Charles Darwin** spent much time observing earthworms and postulating on their mental abilities, recounted in his 1881 book *The Formation Of Vegetable Mould Through The Action Of Worms With Observations On Their Habits* available through a link to **Project Gutenberg Etexts** (<http://www.promo.net/pg/list.html>). To finish off your visit, download a 5 megabyte Quicktime video clip from the movie **Tremors!** <http://biodiversity.uno.edu/~worms/annelid.html> 

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the findings from an interim evaluation is now available in html at [http://www.jisc.ac.uk/pub00/nesli\\_evaluation\\_report.html](http://www.jisc.ac.uk/pub00/nesli_evaluation_report.html) and in Word at <http://www.jisc.ac.uk/pub/index.html#projects>. The study was commissioned by the **Joint Information Systems Committee (JISC)** and undertaken by staff from the **Human Sciences & Advanced Technology Research Institute of Loughborough University** during March to June 2000.

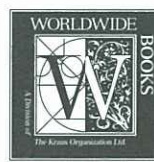
Among the outcomes of the study were that the over-riding view was that **NESLI** has achieved much in a rapidly-changing and complex environment. It was stated repeatedly that the **Managing Agent** has done very well in difficult circumstances. Progress in agreeing to deals, getting them accepted by libraries and achieving end user take up has been slow because of the complexity of the process. Nevertheless there are signs of gathering momentum and support from all the necessary stakeholders. The offers that have been made have been of value to some libraries but the different situations of the libraries means that a single offer cannot meet all needs, and evaluating complex deals in a limited timescale has led to many libraries being unable to take up offers. The recommendations from the evaluation are that the experience of **NESLI** be built on with a view to exploring alternative ways of providing a single negotiating agency and achieving some flexibility for libraries to obtain deals that meet their specific requirements, and to use the services they choose for subscription handling and service delivery. 

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**Step Three.** Add up all of your library's weighted scores and divide by 435 (The total points possible. If you add or subtract activities be sure to adjust this total).

Now that you have your score, what should you do with it? First of all, you can compare it with the following non-scientific arrived at scale and feel good or bad about your library:

- 80 to 100 points means your library is a super digital library
- 60 to 79 points means it is well on its way to becoming a super digital library
- 59 points and below means your library needs a lot more money to

get a higher score (or you can declare it dumb to want more points).

Unfortunately, the thought that the digital future is cheap was a dream.

Second, you could go through the list and line out all the things that don't match your library's needs and/goals and then re-compute how well you are doing. Be sure to adjust the total points possible in step three above. In either case, I have found it useful to think about all the things that could be done and to do a self inventory for my library. 

*I would be happy to hear how well your library did on this digital library measurement scale or what you thought of the scale. Drop me an e-mail: [ferguson@columbia.edu](mailto:ferguson@columbia.edu).*

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