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Letters to the Editor

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From Your Guest Editor

by **Tom Gilson** (Head, Reference Services, College of Charleston) <gilson@cofc.edu>

This year's version of the reference publishing issue of *Against the Grain* has changed emphasis a bit. Taking our cue from **Fran Wilkinson's** and **Linda Lewis's** lead article, we have shifted the focus to include patron responses. In their group interview "To E- or not to E-: Print vs. Electronic Ready Reference Tools" **Fran** and **Linda** explore the "attitudes of both librarians and end-users toward electronic ready reference tools, specifically, electronic dictionaries and encyclopedias." Four librarians, from three different institutions, including the entirely virtual **Western Governors University**, offer their impressions of print vs. electronic ready reference tools. But perhaps even more interestingly, these same librarians poll a group of their patrons with similar questions and then respond to what they discover. It all makes for fascinating and surprising reading.

Never one to shy away from taking a stand,

Dave Tyckoson looks long and hard at the issue of duplication. How long can librarians afford to purchase the same information over and over, just in different formats? **Dave** has some answers and possible solutions.

In an interesting juxtaposition, we have a review of the electronic version of the *Encyclopedia of Astronomy and Astrophysics* by Physics professor **Robert Dukes**, followed by a review of the same database by one of his students, **Kwayera Davis**.

Of course, we are still interested in what publishers and database providers have to say, especially about new and innovative products. Check out our interview with **Daryl Rayner**, Director of Marketing for **xrefer**, a company that broke on the scene offering free access

to a number of reference titles searchable with a single interface. They are launching a new subscription product, **xreferplus** that will consist of "eighty titles from existing and new publishing partners" a number of which "have never appeared online before."

Kay Ann Cassell, Associate Director for Programs and Services of the Branch Libraries of the **New York Public Library**, shares her insights in another thought-provoking *ATG* interview. **Kay** is responsible for collection development for the 85 branches of the **NYPL** and is the author of *Developing Reference Collections and Services in an Electronic Age: A How-to-do-it Manual for Librarians*, as well as the editor of the quarterly journal *Collection Building*. She has a lot to say, and it's well worth reading.

And, of course, I've thrown in my usual "two cents" about recently published reference titles.

Your Guest Editor 



Letters to the Editor

Send letters to <strauchk@earthlink.net>, phone or fax 843-723-3536, or snail mail: *Against the Grain*, MSC 98, The Citadel, Charleston, SC 29409. You can also send a letter to the editor from the *ATG* Homepage at <<http://www.against-the-grain.com>>.

Dear Editor:

The June issue of *Against the Grain* is getting me revved up for the **Charleston Conference**. I was certainly happy to see that one of the pre-conferences is **eBooks for Librar-**

ies. It was done at Cornell in late April but I had a conflict and was unable to attend.

Sincerely, **Phil Dankert**
<prd2@cornell.edu>



*Editor's note: The registrations for the **CC** are coming in. Have you sent yours in yet? **Yr. Ed.***

From your empty-nest Editor:

Well, my daughter **Ileana** went off to college on August 18. This means that the phone isn't ringing off the hook, teenagers aren't walking in the back door unannounced, there's food in the refrigerator, and my car is now available for me to drive to work. Still, it's a sad time for mother.

I have drowned my sorrows by working on the September Reference Publishing issue of *ATG*. This issue is guest edited by the energetic and fabulous **Tom Gilson** and is full of all sorts of things for you to know about. We have some end-user reviews (by a Physics professor and his student) of the *Encyclopedia of Astronomy and Astrophysics*, some great interviews with **Kay Ann Cassell** and **Daryl Rayner**, a conversation with **Peter McCracken**, and a bam-zowie lead article by **Fran Wilkinson** and **Linda Lewis** which explores attitudes of both librarians and end-users toward electronic ready reference tools, specifically, electronic dictionaries and encyclopedias. And, as usual, that's just the tip of the iceberg.

Meanwhile, I have to go and call my daughter. Mom wants to know what **Ileana's** up to. The nest may be empty, but the phone lines are full!

Yr. Ed. 

AGAINST THE GRAIN DEADLINES

VOLUME 13 — 2001/2002

Event	Issue	Ad Reservation	Camera-Ready
Charleston Conference	Nov. 2001	08/15/01	08/29/01
ALA Midwinter	Dec. 01/Jan. 02	10/24/01	11/14/01

VOLUME 14 — 2002/2003

Event	Issue	Ad Reservation	Camera-Ready
Annual Report, ACRL, ARLIS	Feb. 2002	12/12/01	01/09/02
SLA, MLA	April 2002	02/06/02	02/27/02
ALA Annual, AALL	June 2002	03/27/02	04/17/02
Reference Publishing	Sept. 2002	07/10/02	07/31/02
Charleston Conference	Nov. 2002	08/21/02	09/11/02
ALA Midwinter	Dec. 02/Jan. 03	11/13/02	12/04/02