September 2001

You Gotta Go to School for That?-The XY Files

Jared Alexander Seay
College of Charleston, seayj@cofc.edu

Follow this and additional works at: <https://docs.lib.purdue.edu/atg>

Part of the [Library and Information Science Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Seay, Jared Alexander (2001) "You Gotta Go to School for That?-The XY Files," *Against the Grain*: Vol. 13: Iss. 4, Article 41.
DOI: <https://doi.org/10.7771/2380-176X.3631>

This document has been made available through Purdue e-Pubs, a service of the Purdue University Libraries. Please contact epubs@purdue.edu for additional information.

Casalini libri

*General Italian book
dealers serving libraries
worldwide*

Via Benedetto da Maiano, 3
50014 Fiesole (FI) - Italy

Tel. +39-055.5018.1
Fax +39-055.5018.201

<http://www.casalini.it>
gen@casalini.it

Our services include:

- Highly selective approval plans to meet every library's special requirements
- Standing orders for series and multi-volume monographs
- Subscriptions to periodicals with direct centralized mailing, subscriptions to on-line periodicals and TOC services
- Physical processing (library binding, bar coding)
- Management reports and statistics
- Bibliographic information for new publications:
 - in printed form (and via e-mail)*
bibliographic cards (free of charge) sent weekly or monthly; catalogues produced at regular intervals in different subject areas
 - in electronic format*
USMARC and UNIMARC records via MIME, FTP, on floppy disk, or on machine readable tape
- Specialized bibliographies compiled on specific subjects
- Web site offering full details of our services, access to our database for monographs and periodicals (180,000 entries, updated each week) as well as direct ordering for volumes and MARC records
- EDI services (offers, orders, reports, claims, invoices, etc.)

Op Ed

from page 46

ning of a new trend. Venders will undoubtedly release other key reference sources from the past in similar electronic formats. If these are going to be successful for both the vendor and the librarian, the products will need to take into account the historic investment that libraries have already made in those resources. So how about it, **Bell and Howell**? My library – and thousands of others – have already made an investment of over 1/3 million dollars in the *New York Times*. You have the opportunity to set an example for the industry. What kind of deal are you willing to make us?

Endnotes

1. For a complete product description, see <http://proquest.com:8090/promo/histNews/>.
 2. For a discussion of problems with various pricing models, see: "The Oxford English Dictionary on the Web. *Against the Grain*, v. 12 no. 4, September 2000, pp. 38-42.
 3. All prices are taken from the Bell and Howell "Newspapers in Microfilm" Web page at <http://www.wlib.umi.com/nim/entry>.
 4. See the Lexis/Nexis "Source List" for a full description of their coverage of the *New York Times*.
- Prices come from the HarpWeek Web page at <http://www.harpweek.com/4AboutHarpWeek/HowToPurchase/HowToPurchase.htm>.

You Gotta Go to School for That — The XY Files

As written by **Jared Alexander Seay**, The Librarian formerly known as "Jerry"

Column Editor: **Jared Alexander Seay** (Reference Librarian/Assistant Professor, College of Charleston Library, College of Charleston, Charleston, SC 29424; Phone: 843-953-1428; Fax: 843-953-8019) seayj@cofc.edu www.cofc.edu/~seay

Having now had the opportunity to experience the joy of raising a human male child for the last 20 months, I feel I can truly appreciate the "war stories" and anecdotal evidences that until now I have passed off as basically "yea, right." Specifically, I refer, of course, to the vast gulf of difference that lies between those born with a full compliment of two X chromosomes – and thus blessed to be female – and those born male and thus saddled with the burden of going through life with only one X chromosome (sigh). Oh, the injustice of it all.

For starters, though I had heard of the great behavior differences in little girls and little boys, the fact that I had neither in my life gave me little reason to consider such trivial matters. Golly, what a difference a birth can make!

Now I am completely immersed, informed, and amazed. Take your standard playing with toys session. Little girls will carefully pull dolls, stuffed animals, and assorted plastic things from the toy box and precisely line them up on the table or the floor. I have seen this in action. They are just so neat and meticulous.

When confronted with the same opportunity, my little **Tristan** is keenly aware that he has the ability to grab handfuls of assorted stuffed animals, cars, and plastic stuff and launch them individually and in groups into the air in rapid fire succession. Toy boxes to him are places from which to obtain flingable items – ammunition boxes if you will.

The little boy trend toward "action" is in
continued on page 50

ATG Interviews Daryl Rayner

Director of Marketing, xrefer

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

self and your experience in the publishing/information world.

DR: My entire working life has been spent working for or alongside publishers. My first job was at **Macmillan Publishers** where I worked in the advertising department of *Nature*, the international journal of science. After that I went to work as the marketing manager at the **Current Science Group**. I worked for **Vitek Tracz** who is a serial entrepreneur. In 1995 we launched **BioMedNet** and later **ChemWeb**. It was the start of my addiction to the digital world! **BioMedNet** and **ChemWeb** were acquired by **Elsevier Science** in 1997. In 1998 I went back to work at **Macmillan Publishers**, this time as an associate director of **Electronic Publishing** and with **Richard Charkin** at the helm. I arrived just as the full text of *Nature* was being put online. In the summer of 1999 I met **Adam Hodgkin** who outlined his vision for **xrefer**, the central premise being that collections of reference works were more useful when put online and infinitely more powerful if linked in an intelligent yet automated way. I immediately wanted to be part of it.

ATG: Tell us a little about your-

ATG: What exactly is xrefer? How long have you been in operation? How big is your staff?

DR: Let me think a minute. Right now we have 13 permanent employees and we began operation about a year and a half ago, in January of 2000. As a company, **xrefer** is involved with supplying reference content to other sites, services and institutions. At the heart of everything we do is our xreferencing technology. This adds value to reference works by creating links across publications. **xrefer.com** is our destination site; here you can search across an extensive database of titles from publishers such as **Bloomsbury, Oxford, Macmillan, Penguin** and **Houghton Mifflin**. You can also see our xreferencing technology in action in that **xrefer** has been actively syndicating reference content to other sites and platforms.

ATG: What do you mean other sites and platforms?

DR: By other sites and platforms I mean other Websites, and platforms such as digital TV and mobile.

ATG: That sounds exciting. We also understand that you will be introducing a new product.

DR: Yes, this autumn we are launching **xreferplus** which is a subscription product for libraries. It will consist of eighty titles from existing and new publishing partners. At least half of **xreferplus** will consist of new titles and most of these will have never appeared online before. It will also support an advanced search function, thematic search and browse. We are currently inviting librarians to sign up for trials.

ATG: If a librarian is interested in a trial how do they sign up?

DR: By the time your readers see this interview they should be able to sign up directly from www.xrefer.com. Right now, librarians have to sign up for a trial as part of a librarian questionnaire. So you can see we are trying to make it easier. The actual trials will start in late August or early September. But as you know, anyone can search **xrefer.com** now, and that is also a good way to get a feel for our technology and content. Of course, **xreferplus** will have new content, new functionality and a different look.

ATG: The current free database is useful for finding definitions, quotations, etc. In the subscription product will you expand

continued on page 52

You Gotta Go to School for That from page 47

no way impeded by the type of toy either. My little nephews were each issued a **McDonald's** happy meal complete with accompanying plastic toy. To my horror I realized that the **Disney** character toy they received was – gasp – a molded plastic version of a – gasp “girl.” I cringed and waited for them to begin a plastic-induced hysteria and scream for something more appropriate like a molded version of a multi-wheeled all terrain vehicle.

To my amazement they accepted the toy girl readily. Then they immediately begin bashing each other's toy in a simulated fight, all the while yelling, “my gurl can beat up your gurl! Nu uh, MY gurl can beat up YOUR gurl!”

The differences do not stop there. The X chromosome dearth also apparently affects early communication skills. My little niece babbles on constantly about all manner of things all the time. Although she can hardly be understood, she is determined to “tell” you about it. My wee lad – as do all little boys – cares not much for simple communication. What he does care about is recreating the sounds created by combustion

engines – trucks, cars, airplanes, and heavy equipment. He does this very well, thank you very much. Just don't get too close or he will spray you.

But, for the male, the differences get worse from here. The differences manifested by these obvious behavioral X's are X's at the genetic level. Males are shortchanged. It's that darn X chromosome, I tell you.

According to **Dr. Kenneth R. Miller**, a biologist at **Brown University**, “it's the X, not the Y, that is loaded with important genes.” In fact the X is where all THE important genetic stuff is. And the fact that males have only one X chromosome makes them susceptible to all manner of maladies including color-blindness, hemophilia, muscular dystrophy, and a host of other genetic disorders in much greater numbers than females suffer.¹ Even at birth, males have a much greater incidence of malfunction than do females. As a pediatrician recently told me, “compared to female babies, male babies are just biological wimps.” Females have more stamina, less health problems, and live longer. “Imagine me – a bio wimp. Gee, what a cross to bear.

So, not only has fatherhood made me keenly aware of the male/female differences, but now I have to deal with the fact that my

child has inherited his father's inferior biology. Golly, what am I to do? How do I break the news to him? Will he blame me? Will he need therapy?

He's out there now pushing his plastic versions of heavy construction equipment and spitting out enslobbered engine sounds completely oblivious to his plight – having absolutely no idea that his babbling female baby colleagues are...well...better X endowed. How shall he manage?

Hopefully, he will follow in the wise footsteps of his father. I managed to compensate for my own inherent biological inferiority by becoming a librarian. It was only among the acronyms of **LC, OCLC** and **BI** did I find inner peace for my X shortcomings. We can only hope that my son will be able to overcome his own X chromosome deficit in a similar way.

Of course, he could just rely on the whole patriarchal, male-dominated society thing.

Nah. That would be too easy.

Endnotes

1. You can read **Miller's** article as it appeared in *Discover Magazine* at (<http://biomed.brown.edu/Faculty/M/Miller/Discover/Y.html>)