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Adventures in Librarianship: Can This Marriage Be Saved?

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Desperately Seeking Website

Column Editor: **Amber Williams** (American Society for Bone and Mineral Research; Phone: 919-620-0681) <amber@jbmr.org> www.jbmr-online.org/

I had the pleasure of talking with Dr. Morna Conway, President of The Conway Group, about the impact of the online environment on publishers and librarians alike. I've asked her permission to share the details with you as well. As always, your comments are welcome on this and any other issue you'd like to see discussed in this column. —AW

Amber: How do you think the communication has changed between librarians and publishers?

Morna: I started The Conway Group 26 years ago and my client base has consisted of non-profit association publishers since that time. However, I think any and all publishers realize now that they need to communicate with librarians much more than was necessary at one time. After WWII, many STM journals were started. As significantly more money became available to fund research, publishers thrived and libraries built up their journal collections. In the early 1970s, you started an STM journal and libraries would usually take it. The proliferation of journals continued, and library budgets grew along with them for several years.

Beginning with the Reagan era, university budgets, including library budgets, came under the gun. Large publishers increased subscription rates far above inflation and libraries had no choice but to cancel subscriptions. As a result, publishers increased subscription prices even more, feeding a cycle of inflationary price increases and stepped up cancellations. In the last several years, publishers have realized that librarians have sufficient clout to cancel subscriptions if price increases and usage do not warrant continuing a title. Since 1995, with the advent of the Web, publishers have turned their attention to the dissemination of electronic journals, with print as the archival form. Communication with librarians has improved, driven by the need to talk about Web-based journals, library budgets, etc. This need for dialog has resulted in such forums as the Charleston Conference and the publishers' use of library advisory groups like the National Academy of Sciences' Librarian Advisory Group, which I have run for the last six years.

Amber: With the consortia effort in full swing, how should this affect the manner in which publishers relate to the institutional customer?

Morna: Consortia have arisen to negotiate better pricing for individual library members. One online subscription can technically

serve an entire group of libraries, and that translates into fewer subscriptions for publishers. However, it is still in the best interest of a publisher to lower prices for consortia. By providing service to consortia, journal content is distributed more widely than would otherwise be the case, resulting in more access, more citation, and more exposure for the science published in that journal. It is tougher for smaller and single-title publishers to develop consortia relationships, because there is less price flexibility. However, association publishers really have to look at providing expanded access for online journals. Technology has also created a need for different positions, requiring publishing staff who are able to engage in direct communication with librarians, aggregators, and subscription agents to untangle service and licensing requirements.

Amber: Where do you see common pitfalls that encumber both librarians and publishers?

Morna: Subscription pricing and site license models. There is a desire on the part of some publishers to retain the traditional economic base of print journals, while global access to Web-based journals makes this harder to do. Associations have the added concern of losing membership in the face of remote access that is available to scientists through their institutions. The association publisher's concern becomes, "by making site licenses flexible, will we lose membership?"

Market forces that we cannot predict will be at work; however, the wrong thing to do would be to tighten up the customer's ability to access online journals. This would only lead to resistance from libraries. Over-inflating prices for online access is another common mistake publishers make.

Amber: What is your perspective on the effort to store all information on one site (such

as PubMed) for the purpose of free access?

Morna: Firstly, we need to establish two separate issues: archiving and free distribution are not one and the same. Librarians believe publishers should be responsible for archiving back issues. They are interested in access guaranteed in perpetuity. Archiving of print means having multiple copies around the world rather than a depository of journals buried in some unreachable place. In order to maintain an accessible archive, a system of redundancy rather than burial will work better.

Free distribution begs the question of what it takes to produce a journal. Someone has to pay to take an issue through the process of peer-review, copyediting, formatting for legibility, structure and so on. The model of an end user paying for this process is the prevalent model in our society. The model that involves government participation in provision of such information is a more socialist model and not the standard in a society such as ours. Where there is an end product, it is customary that the end user pays for it. There is no such thing as a free lunch.

Publishers have set up a system of disseminating information and we've entrusted the library community, as brokers of information, to pay for what is valuable. These filters ensure that what is maintained as an archive is quality scientific information.

We have to take a good look at a proposal to make something free that is not free to produce. We have to look at the permanency of government funding before depending on such a proposition. If you look at the filters currently in place, then there is a strong argument to maintain libraries as gateways.

Adventures in Librarianship: Can this Marriage be Saved?

by **Ned Kraft** (Serials Librarian, Ralph J. Bunche Library, U.S. Department of State) <kraftno@state.gov>

Has the sparkle faded from your marriage to Accounts Payable? At breakfast, do you find Accounts Payable holding its newspaper high, hoping that you won't notice it, won't try to start a conversation? We here at ATG understand. We sympathize. And we've come up with a test to help you gauge your relationship and put it in context. Just answer the following questions honestly, as

painful as they may be, and add up your score.

1. How long does it take Accounts Payable to return your desperate phone calls?

- a) One day
- b) One week, with a bad attitude
- c) Only after veiled threats
- d) Returning phone calls is against policy

continued on page 93

2. Does Accounts Payable acknowledge your pleading memoranda?

- a) Sometimes
- b) Yes, by making librarian jokes
- c) Only through legal counsel
- d) That would be against policy

3. In meetings, does Accounts Payable...

- a) Refuse to look at or speak directly to you
- b) Leave the meeting almost immediately for "more pressing engagements"
- c) Whisper disparaging comments to others
- d) Give you what in some cultures would be called "the evil eye"

4. When you give invoices to Accounts Payable for payment, do they say...

- a) Clarissa will do these... as soon as she gets back from maternity leave

- b) Who are you again?
- c) What are these?
- d) Nothing; responding in any way would be against policy

5. When you and Accounts Payable are unexpectedly alone together, do you...

- a) Smile and try to pretend that all is well
- b) Silently sweat
- c) Release a blizzard of distracting, incoherent chatter
- d) Feel a deep sense of impending doom

6. In social situations, does Accounts Payable...

- a) Tell your most embarrassing stories
- b) Flirt like a teenager with the other departments
- c) Drink too much and start sobbing in the corner
- d) Claim to not know who you are

Scoring

If you scored between 6 and 10 points count yourself lucky. We recommend that you stop your crying and get on with your job. As sobering as it may be, your relationship with Accounts Payable is no worse than most.

If you scored from 11 to 18, therapy may help. We recommend a qualified counselor, possibly with some religious training, and a strict schedule of joint and individual sessions.

If you scored 19 or above, you probably already know that it's hopeless. Cut your losses. Get a credit card. And never voucher another invoice again.

1. a) 1	b) 2	c) 3	d) 4
2. a) 1	b) 2	c) 3	d) 4
3. a) 1	b) 2	c) 3	d) 4
4. a) 1	b) 2	c) 3	d) 4
5. a) 1	b) 2	c) 3	d) 4
6. a) 1	b) 2	c) 3	d) 4

Chaos — An Update on ONIX International

by **Sandra K. Paul** (President, SKP Associates) <Sandy@SKPAssociates.com>

We described **ONIX International** in *Against The Grain*, vol.12#4, Sept. 2000 p.84, and at the **20th Annual Charleston Conference**. This is an update on the **ONIX (ONLINE Information eXchange)** metadata standard since last fall.

In November 2000 **ONIX International Release 1.2** appeared on the **EDItEUR Website** www.EDItEUR.org. That version expanded some of the fields and corrected errors in the prior release. A minor set of additions and corrections appeared in **Release 1.2.1** in April 2001. (It should be noted that each release of ONIX indicates the changes from the prior release in its frontmatter. All of the versions of the standard and its DTD are available FREE OF CHARGE at the **EDItEUR** site.)

A set of Frequently Asked Questions has been developed and is available on the site. A mapping has been done between **ONIX** and both **MARC 21** and **UNIMARC**; the links to both of those appears on the site. AND, a list of all of the implementers who have advised us of their status now appears on the **Book Industry Study Group Website** - www.bisg.org. Efforts are underway to further publicize the standard for printed books within the U.S. and abroad.

Library community interest in **ONIX** has resulted in the addition of two librarians — **Sally McCallum** of the **Library of Congress** and **Karen Coyle** from the **University of California Digital Library** and Chair of the **American Library Association Task Group on E-Books** - to the **U.S. ONIX International Policy Committee**. Although it is acknowledged that the existing **ONIX** standard was developed to meet the needs of the retail and e-tail community, there is sufficient overlap with the traditional library bibliographic standards, and sufficient interest by librarians in having the data

contained in the **ONIX**-tagged records in their **OPACs**, to pursue this avenue further for commonalities. Specifically, we will be seeking input from the library community on tags and values in **ONIX** that overlap with those in library standards, so that they can be standardized.

ONIX International was originally adopted in the United States and the United Kingdom. At a meeting of the **ONIX International Steering Committee** in March during the **London Book Fair**, it was announced that implementations are now underway in Germany, France, Argentina, and Bel-

gium. In addition, a test file has been received from the **Russian Book Chamber**, indicating their potential adoption in the near future.

At the current time, however, future releases of the standard to cover e-publications and other media and applications are on hold. The implementers are awaiting a paper from the consultants to **ONIX International** (**David Martin** and **Francis Cave**) on the approach to be taken with other media. Just as the **MARC** standard had various versions for different media, the **Association of American Publishers**

continued on page 94

ADVERTISERS' INDEX

63	ABC CLIO	87	BRILL	95	KLUWER ACADEMIC
31	ACADEMIC PRESS	47	CASALINI LIBRI	67	MAJORS
23	ACM	79	THE CHARLESTON ADVISOR	61	McFARLAND
48, 49	ACS	10	THE CHARLESTON REPORT	96	MIDWEST LIBRARY SERVICE
2	ALFRED JAEGER	69	CHOICE	77	MARTINUS NIJHOFF INTL.
39	AM. INSTITUTE OF PHYSICS	33	EASTERN BOOK COMPANY	11	PROQUEST
15	AM. PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSOC.	75	EBSCO INFORMATION SERV.	41	RITTENHOUSE
13	AM. SOCIETY OF CIVIL ENGINEERS	21	ELSEVIER SCIENCE	12	SCHOENHOF'S FOREIGN BOOKS
37	AM. SOCIETY OF PLANT BIOLOGISTS	43	EMERY PRATT	19	M.E. SHARPE
59	ASME INTERNATIONAL	83	ERASMUS	65	SIENA LIBRARY COMPANY
5	ATG	17	FAXON, ROWECOM	57	SIAM
20	AUX AMATEURS DE LIVRES	51	GROVE'S DICTIONARIES	73	SPRINGER PUBLISHING
16	BASCH SUBSCRIPTIONS, INC.	27	IEEE	45	SWETS BLACKWELL
3	BLACKWELL'S BOOK SERVICES	35	ILLUMINATING ENGINEERING SOC.	55	H. W. WILSON
25	BOOK HOUSE	7	INGENTA	29	YBP
9	BOWKER	53	INSTITUTE OF PHYSICS		

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