November 2002

ATG Interviews Karen Hunter

James Mouw

University of Chicago, mouw@midway.chicago.edu

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

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

Recommended Citation

Mouw, James (2002) "ATG Interviews Karen Hunter," *Against the Grain*: Vol. 14: Iss. 5, Article 12.

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.7771/2380-176X.3761>

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.

ATG Interviews Karen Hunter

Senior Vice President, Elsevier <k.hunter@elsevier.com>

by James Mouw (University of Chicago) <mouw@midway.uchicago.edu>

ATG: What were your first experiences with digital content initiatives? What was your first glimmer?

KH: The very first was back in 1978 in the early years of **Adonis** when we started looking at scanning journals onto optical disks. We thought we could use technology to bring down the cost of document delivery for institutions such as the **British Library**. We hoped — if we could reduce their costs, they could pay some royalties. Unfortunately, at that time, it turned out to be more expensive. A **Phillips** optical workstation cost \$40,000 in the early 1980s, when we were ready to go ahead. Until we got PC's and CD-ROM's, the costs just weren't reasonable.

ATG: What do you see as the actual milestones?

KH: If you talk about straight text services, the things like abstracting and indexing services and legal databases. I mean the real digital content; the milestones to me were things like **Dialog** and **Lexis Nexis**. That got us all realizing what was possible from database searching and what was possible for getting information to a remote user. There were a lot of reasons why it took a long time to move from straight text into more complicated things like journals and **Adonis** was certainly among the earliest. There were a lot of products using CD-ROM and we're all delighted that CD-ROM turned out to be just a step on the way. What we really needed were the local area networks on campuses; that's where we stepped up, for example, with the **TULIP**

experiment and getting information via **LAN** to the desktop. We started getting really more powerful desktop PCs that could handle more complicated graphics. Then came the Internet and the World Wide Web. But what really in my mind made the difference was **Mosaic**.

ATG: Yes, the first browser.

KH: The first browser is just what really blew things away.

ATG: Then the pieces fell into place, we have the Internet, we had the Web browsers, and the users were ready — I guess. What would you actually see as the first successful, beyond a pilot, the putting of all the pieces together to give the information directly to the users?

KH: **ScienceDirect** was early. It was early because when we were coming out of **TULIP**, we decided that we'd go ahead with an on-site solution that we called **Elsevier Electronic Subscriptions**.

That was a commercialization of all of our journals of what we had done with **TULIP** for a limited number. That was early 1996. And **Academic's Ideal** system was really an early pioneer. They had articles up as PDFs or scanned.

ATG: The other milestone that comes to mind is when publishers realized there was also value in back files.

KH: Yes. That brings me to a milestone that you might not have had in mind: **JSTOR**. **JSTOR** opened that up real wide and said, "Wow, if somebody can go back and do this,

these will be used." The other thing is **CrossRef**. Once we put a publisher cooperative linking mechanism into place, there was a way to generate hits on back files.

ATG: You link from the reference that was the quoting article that was 20 years old.

KH: Exactly. So suddenly there was a reason to do that because somebody might actually want it in a much more organized and reliable way. **JSTOR** and **CrossRef** opened a lot up.

ATG: What are your concerns?

KH: I'm not particularly concerned about some kind of wild pirating or unlimited copying or that kind of thing. We're concerned about costs and revenues; it comes down to money most of the time.

ATG: You want to keep that paycheck coming, right?

KH: Absolutely. It's very easy to say, "Well, gee, electronic publishing must be cheaper," but it just isn't the case. If you look at a very narrow view of exactly the same thing and just not printing it, distributing it on the Web instead, that one change is cheaper. But the whole ball of wax certainly is not. We worry about expenses all the time.

ATG: Ten years from now, when print is gone, is electronic going to be cheaper, ever?

KH: Potentially. The question is: Do we stand still? It's not going to be the same set of services. There is no question we are driving costs out of parts of the service. But because

continued on page 62

IMHBCO from page 60

matic to outweigh its benefits relative to a print version of the same product.

Now for the second, and more challenging step, in which we decide to accept this new reality. For most librarians, it is an article of faith that students use the Internet primarily because of laziness. And despite the fact that laziness is often simply efficiency characterized uncharitably, let's grant, for the sake of argument, that the popularity of the Internet as a primary source is *prima facie* evidence of character weakness in our patrons. That still does not mean there is anything morally superior about the print format. The simple and really indisputable fact is that a world in which multiple library patrons can access needed information from their homes or offices 24 hours a day rather than having to schlep across town or campus at inconvenient hours in the (often frustrated) hope that the book or journal they need will be in its design-

ated spot is a better world for researchers, not a worse one. Online formats may not be as character-building as print formats, but maybe we should worry less about that. I'm confident that most of our patrons will have plenty of other character-building experiences in the course of their college or professional careers.

Don't get me wrong here: there's nothing wrong with loving books. I love them myself, and I have a big pile of them by my bed at home. At any given moment I'm in the middle of reading at least two or three print books. The thought of a library that is largely stripped of print materials makes me sad. But I can't in good conscience hold my patrons hostage to my personal nostalgia. Here's the bottom line: if you're a librarian because you love books, you're in the wrong profession. If you're going to work in libraries, you need to be prepared to provide information services to your patrons in the way that works best for them, whether or not it is the way that makes you the most comfortable as a librarian or that best conforms to our "professional standards."

When books and print journals were the only way to provide those services, it made sense for us to focus on ways to provide books and print journals. Far better options exist now, and if we are true professionals we will acknowledge the new reality, embrace it, and put it to work for our patrons. Luckily for them, the best of the new reality offers an enormous step forward from the reality to which many of us remain so irrationally attached. Our patrons are not the ones who need convincing on that score. 🐾

Endnotes

1. "AAP Numbers Not Encouraging for University Presses," *LJ Academic News Wire*, September 12, 2002.
2. "June Bring Sales Numbers Back to Earth," press release, Association of American Publishers, August 5, 2002.
3. Personal email communication with Brenna McLaughlin, Communications Manager, Association of American University Presses, September 20, 2002.

it's an innovative and creative world and a competitive world, you explore other things you can do. So, I don't know if we're going to stand still and put all our emphasis on cutting costs. Then, yes, the costs could come down. But the world doesn't seem to work that way, because there are a lot of other ways to build a better mousetrap and that adds the cost of development.

ATG: *But unless the publication process changes radically, the first copy costs are still largely there.*

KH: Oh they're there. All publishers have been able to reduce some of those first copy costs, certainly. We do get more electronic input from authors, which has driven down costs. And networks allow us to outsource to other parts of world where costs are lower. So there are things we have done and can do to advance without driving up costs.

ATG: *Talk just a bit more about the copyright and the privacy concerns. Librarians believe in the paper world we can do anything we want with a publication. What is the difference with electronic media? Is it just the ease of copying? You push the button and it's on your machine.*

KH: Yes, I think so. The question is, "Why do publishers object to electronic interlibrary loan?" The perception is that publishers are afraid a copy of an article will be sent around to other people and it will sort of get "out of control." For many of us, including myself, that isn't an issue. We assume that material is going to be shared. And our material is esoteric; how many copies are going to be needed around the world?

The issue we are all struggling with is how to find reasonable pricing models. Right now, most of us are dealing with site licenses. We'll define a site by who is part of that authorized user community. Who is entitled to remote, regular ready access to this information? We all agree on who is in that community. And those people, as far as I'm concerned, can be located anywhere in the world. Then along comes electronic interlibrary loan to say that, in addition to that defined authorized user community, the library can make the article electronically available to anybody else in the world as well. That's troubling.

ATG: *Even though, technically, the same was possible in the paper world, it's just different in the online world somehow?*

KH: Yes. I don't want to make a big deal of interlibrary loan; I think some of it's going to go away of its own accord, but, potentially, a user could enter an order directly, which would be processed automatically with no human intervention. Like 25 or 30 years ago when we worried about something called the **National Periodicals Center**, one collection serving everybody in the world. If it's hands off, the user fills in the form and the electronic copy gets zipped back to the user with no fees paid because its "interlibrary loan" — that worries me.

ATG: *Although that system you described does not yet exist.*

KH: Right. But I've heard it advocated by some pretty influential people.

ATG: *Some of the building blocks are beginning to be put into place. SFX software tells my users the 15 places we've contracted for access. What it does not yet do is push them automatically through to some other pay-per-view site.*

KH: Right. I wouldn't mind a pay-per-view site.

ATG: *Sure. Well, talk about the benefits. There must be some or you wouldn't be doing this.*

KH: Oh, yes. The benefits are tremendous. Ten years ago, every journal publisher had fewer and fewer subscribers every year. That had a financial effect, but also, from a journal prospective, the authors weren't getting visibility and availability in the research community. Electronics has totally revolutionized the situation. We've gone from having 400, 500, 700, 800 copies of an issue around the world to literally 10 to 15 million people having access at the desktop to an issue. The difference is just incomparable. That's really exciting. On top of that, we can release individual articles as soon as they are available and will have the ability to create much more sophisticated services over time.

ATG: *That must have been a difficult change for many of the people within the publishing houses who were simply used to putting ink on paper.*

KH: It was; some of them couldn't make it. And I'll be honest; I think in the book side of life, there are still people who have to make that change. And for some types of books, they may never have to. But we really have to liberate information bound between the covers of big reference books and we're working hard to do that. I know other publishers are as well.

ATG: *There's been some feeling that one of the causes of industry consolidation was that many of the smaller to mid-sized publishers weren't equipped or were unwilling to make the changes necessary to compete in the electronic world. Is that a factor?*

KH: Oh I think so, absolutely. It goes back to cost. You can be small and outsource, and you can be big and do it yourself or work with others on a bigger scale. It's hard to be in the middle. Some publishing owners and stockholders have decided that they would rather take their money now than invest in what is clearly difficult in a competitive environment.

ATG: *What technologies will potentially boost e-content delivery and how?*

KH: Two things I find really exciting right now are hand-held devices and wireless access. Anything we can do to bring access to information to the point and time of need and make it easier for people to use intrigues me. Medical students are increasingly using hand-helds and, in some cases, are required to have them. I was at a meeting in early June where engineering librarians were asked about hand-

helds and I got resounding, "Yes. We want data now and here and accessible." That's exciting to me. I'm a little envious to see **Wiley** come out with what looked to be a very good product, at least by title. I haven't looked at the products themselves but the titles look good. We are doing some very interesting things in medicine for point-of-care use.

ATG: *But, does the content need to be packaged differently? I can't imagine reading a journal article on my **Palm Pilot**.*

KH: I can't either. It's going to be all kinds of data and tabular material and other information for engineers, researchers and medical professionals. I don't see users accessing journal articles that way, at least not right now. We have to be more aggressive in looking for other uses. The other thing that intrigues me is that I think we are approaching tremendous breakthroughs in search technology. A lot of this has been tested out but it just hasn't been implemented much on the academic side. For example, more sophisticated filtering will improve access significantly. **CrossRef** right now is looking at cross fulltext searching, raising the question whether this will be helpful to users or just increase the noise level.

ATG: *Maybe a combination of both? In some cases a broader view or a narrower slice?*

KH: Precisely. To me, it's the next generation. I'm excited about that.

ATG: *As librarians, we worry a lot about what I would call the "Googlization" of information. Do you, as publishers, worry about that, too?*

KH: Sure. We are a big secondary publisher, so I worry about the future for the value-added services that we create now in **Compendix** or **Embase** or our other secondary services. I don't worry about just the secondary services but we have to make the full text more available and searchable so they aren't just searching the publicly available material and missing the rest that's out there.

ATG: *But perhaps some clever technology enabling the user to perform a Google-like purge in a contextual way might be down the road?*

KH: Yes. I think so. That's part of what we've been trying to do with **Scirus**, our science-based search engine. We've still got a ways to go but that searches the Web and any accessible science information, including our own journals and, potentially, other publishers' journals. There's some good technology behind it but there's a lot more development ahead, particularly on specific academic disciplines.

ATG: *From the publisher's perspective, what is the value of digital content to academic librarians?*

KH: Ultimately, the librarian has to answer that. From our perspective, it gives access to a lot more material that is not physically located on campus and provides better search and retrieval of that information at a greatly reduced cost per use. There is no question in my mind that librarians, and therefore

continued on page 63

GRAB A BUNDLE!

GET PRINT AND ONLINE
ACCESS BUNDLED TOGETHER
WITH 2003 SUBSCRIPTIONS TO
ENDOCRINE SOCIETY JOURNALS.

SUBSCRIPTION PRICES FOR THE ENDOCRINE SOCIETY JOURNALS NOW INCLUDE
PRINT AND ONLINE ACCESS. PLUS, ONLINE ACCESS IS NO LONGER LIMITED -
IT'S AVAILABLE FOR AN UNLIMITED NUMBER OF USERS CAMPUS-WIDE. GRAB A
BUNDLE FOR GREATER VALUE AND BETTER SERVICE TO YOUR PATRONS.

For more information,
contact Society Services
888-363-6762,
301-941-0210, or
societyservices@endo-society.org

ACTIVATE YOUR ONLINE SUBSCRIPTION AT

WWW.ENDO-SOCIETY.ORG/JOURNALS/INSTITUTION_INSTRUCTIONS.CFM

Hunter Interview

from page 62

their institutions and their users, are getting a lot more value for their money.

ATG: *It certainly has given us the tools to put right in front of us the value per use in an ongoing way. The paper world did not do this without elaborate studies.*

KH: That's a good point. Indeed, the usage data is clear.

ATG: *I was just doing the Elsevier statistics and my cost per use of articles from the Lancet is 41 cents. I never would have known that in the paper world. The question remains: What is a reasonable cost per use?*

KH: If I had an answer, maybe I could retire.

ATG: *What about fair use? Does it still apply in the digital age?*

KH: I think so. But — I have a bias obviously — I think that fair use as we all know it isn't the same animal in the digital realm. Fair use is a defense and the law gives four factors that can be judged to define why a particular use is fair. With digital content, we start with the fact that you almost can't use it without literally making a copy, and therefore breaking the law. There are some things that everyone agrees are acceptable. Digital content starts with licenses, not because anyone wanted to control things, but because you had to define what was permitted in order to even use the digital content. Otherwise, any use

would fall outside the law from the beginning. A license doesn't mean there is no fair use; it just means that if we can be explicit, and everyone can agree what you can and can't do, then it reduces the ambiguity.

ATG: *Sure. From my perspective, the perceived failures of copyright fair use to address all the issues led to the use of contract law to erect a boundary against many unknowns. Is that a fair characterization?*

KH: Yes, that's my feeling. Very much so.

ATG: *Let's talk about the DOI. What are the benefits of DOI, and, by extension, CrossRef, for librarians, researchers and publishers?*

KH: Well, first an upfront disclosure. Elsevier is the biggest user of DOIs. We've got a lot invested in this.

ATG: *And I'm on the CrossRef advisory board.*

KH: The DOI is an unambiguous way of identifying and locating content. It is permanent and persistent, assuming that the DOI owners do their jobs. Obviously, if we slack off and don't change the URL on the registry, it is no better than anything else. But it is one single place to change it. We just acquired the Harcourt companies and had to change resolution and the URLs of Academic Press for all the Ideal materials we moved to ScienceDirect. It was much easier to do with DOIs than it would have been with anything else. I've been on the board of the International DOI Foundation since its beginning

and what I see is that people are beginning to "get it." CrossRef has been the premier application, but DOIs are really beginning to take off in other areas. In another two or three years, we'll see applications that nobody had thought about, similar to bar codes, whose use is far more widespread now than anyone would have imagined in the beginning. The same thing is going to happen with DOIs. They are easy, they are cheap, they are neutral and they have a number of really useful applications.

ATG: *From my perspective, one of the real benefits is that the publishers are talking to each other.*

KH: I completely agree. We are talking together to make something happen. And we are doing it in the context of a not-for-profit organization. CrossRef has over 150 publisher members. And that's in only a couple of years. That's exciting. And you're absolutely right because that platform is one that we can use. We always have our lawyer there (at the meetings) to make sure we don't talk about anything we can't talk about. But the things we can talk about are exciting, such as fulltext searching on a cooperative basis. These discussions wouldn't have happened otherwise. I don't see a downside because we can use DOIs in things like SFX and Endeavor to do local resolution.

ATG: *What role do aggregators play in supplying academic content, academic sites or any content?*

continued on page 64

KH: Well I have to say this as an outsider because we do not use aggregators. But aggregators have been very important for publishers who needed help due to insufficient investment funds, electronic conversion problems or lack of a sales and marketing distribution system. Aggregators can be helpful to large publishers as well as small ones.

ATG: *Would you distinguish between the Ingenta-like products and the ProQuest extra host-like products? They aren't quite the same as an aggregator.*

KH: There is a difference. I would include HighWire as well. I think that they are more likely to be viable over the long term because publishers can evaluate the value of their services and make a pretty straightforward business decision. Some other services are pulling out. This is totally external speculation, but when we were approached by various aggregators — and this is early on — the general notion was electronic income was just going to be incremental, so we'll pay you only a small royalty. Fortunately, we'd had enough experience with A and I services to know that wasn't the case and that we didn't do it for marginal royalties. I do know that deals were made where the publisher got a pretty trivial amount of money.

ATG: *Well, we know we are speaking cents on the dollar.*

KH: Yes, and you can't go on that way. You've got to look at it and say, "Wait a minute! Where's my business going?" For example, an aggregator offered us \$6 per subscription for **Brain Research**, which we were selling for \$6,000. It just didn't make sense. I laughed him out of my office.

ATG: *Aggregators say their product is an add-on, a convenient way to get to a lot of content, but not a substitution. But you're saying a lot of libraries don't necessarily view it that way.*

KH: My understanding is that is not the case. I mean, how many times do you want to buy something if you can get it more cheaply from the aggregator?

ATG: *How does Elsevier spin off a future role of e-content in things like e-reserves? What about classroom technology and Blackboard.*

KH: To me, it is integral. We've got a generation of students who have had access to computers their whole lives and now we're getting a group that probably has had access to the Web for almost all their educational life. I believe e-reserves are an automatic part of any license because we authorize anyone among the students and faculty to use the material; e-reserves are just part of using the material. **Blackboard** and courseware are exciting; we're moving in that area, particularly in health sciences and we've had some good success with our early offerings. The challenge is how much publishers are willing

to expand the e-reserve notion of dis-aggregating their content, creating "learning objects" and allowing people to select individual components and pay for the package.

ATG: *Once we've licensed access to the contents of Brain Research, as long as we identify this as an Elsevier science publication and you hold the copyright, do you have any interest in how we deliver that information? By the article, by the chunk, by the...*

KH: The easy answer would be no, but I know that some of our authors have concerns about having their materials taken out of context and some of them will occasionally get very irate. If you want to deliver up chunks, I guess I'd have to know the context.

ATG: *Sure, but we used to see licenses that prevented anyone from accessing information except the publisher's own front-end. Those kinds of restrictions just don't seem to pertain anymore.*

KH: No. We're lucky because we started with a local system with **Elsevier Electronic Subscriptions** (now **ScienceDirect On Site**). We've always been pretty open to alternatives; if you can find a way that integrates this information into your system, you don't have to use ours.

ATG: *How will usage data affect licensing in the future?*

KH: I think we're all looking for new pricing models. There is ambivalence. Most of us want to get away from a strict title by title set of entitlements and into something that gives better access to a whole database of information. Some librarians don't want to give up making specific decisions about specific titles that they think are relevant to their campuses. But I believe we can never know well enough what each individual could use; therefore, wider access to a wider group of material is better. So if we are looking for a new pricing model, usage is certainly going to become a component. The difficulty is that you don't want to do anything that is going to discourage use and that's what concerns me if you make it too linear.

ATG: *You need to put into place little areas that will restrict the usage. When Elsevier initially went to the click-through screen, we objected because we thought the users wouldn't click on it.*

KH: I agree. Any barrier is going to discourage use. Some librarians won't let us offer pay-per-view because of concerns about running up some uncontrolled bill. We've never gone to a concurrent user model, although some librarians have asked about it. Usage data will ultimately help us as a community develop new pricing models. I'm going to either change what I'm subscribing to because I can see the use or I can convert it into something that gives me access to a wider amount of information because we all know about how much I will use it.

ATG: *We are beginning to look at online usage data as an indicator of which print versions should be cancelled, limiting publica-*

tions with low usage to online access. Does that make sense as a model?

KH: I think that makes a lot of sense. One of the things we've done is offer an **E-Choice** license as part of the merger of **Ideal into ScienceDirect**. Essentially, this puts the value on the electronic with a very marginal add-on for print, essentially flipping the model. It's too early to know how successful this will be.

ATG: *We also have content from three or four publishers where they've turned to us their entire list. The result is a significant and continued use of unsubscribed content — not at the level of the subscribed, but still significant.*

KH: Yes, we've seen that in **OhioLink** and other consortia where there has been a cross access with a whole list. We ran an experiment with the **University of Michigan** called **PEAK** and after it ended we gave participating universities and corporations unlimited access to all of **ScienceDirect** if they signed a three year contract. We weren't sure how to make a transition — we didn't want to cut people off. Many had been getting access to everything in **PEAK**. So we said, "Let's just do it." Now, of course, we are at the end of those three years and trying to figure out how we take the next step. It wasn't a bait and switch thing; it was a proposal to continue the access initiated as part of the experiment. There was a lot of use of unsubscribed titles, but not enough to warrant additional individual subscriptions.

ATG: *Actually we're discovering that there are three or four unsubscribed titles that account for a large percentage of the unsubscribed usage and we probably need to subscribe to them.*

KH: Yes. In our specific case under our current model you could probably swap those.

ATG: *What about the model where the user, the library, actually pays as they go? To me, this is the old Dialog model, which no one liked and we got away from it. Is it coming back?*

KH: Right now we offer pay-per-view in two ways. We offer it as access to non-subscribed titles if you are a **ScienceDirect** licensee and we offer it to individuals who are coming in on their own. **CrossRef** has been part of the reason because we want to make it easier for people following a link to be able to access non-subscribed material. Also, **Academic** was doing it and we didn't want to cut back on the services that it offered when it became part of **Elsevier**. If you go the next route and say everything is pay-per-view without a site license, you will discourage use. If we can find a model where people pay a flat and predictable fee, it will be a lot more productive for everyone.

ATG: *Well, the sort of systems that we are only now beginning to put into place, like CrossRef, are making it so much easier for users to navigate. If we start to put barriers on, one concern is that we begin to lose the benefits.*

continued on page 65

This scientific mind is full of futuristic technology

Fortunately, your experience with Majors
EDI technology will be painless.

www.majors.com

800-633-1851

Hunter Interview *from page 64*

KH: I would agree. Initially, Elsevier only allowed non-subscribers hyperlink access to citations from ScienceDirect but we were soon convinced by some internal and external pressure to put up the abstracts. I think we are doing more collectively as an industry about saying, "Let's make it as easy for the users as possible." This is a guiding principle that is pretty strongly expressed.

ATG: *Tell me about the agreement you reached with the Dutch National Library.*

KH: The National Library of the Netherlands. We will deposit with them one copy of every Elsevier Science journal on ScienceDirect. I think we will go to books later but the initial agreement is for the journals. The National Library, then, will take responsibility for their permanent preservation, which doesn't mean that we are giving up our own internal responsibility to do that as well. They are not going to duplicate ScienceDirect; they are going to preserve the content and make sure it is accessible because we think having it totally dark is dangerous. But they can't provide remote access to it.

ATG: *You have copies.*

KH: We have copies; maybe a dozen libraries around the world have copies of everything.

In a catastrophe, they basically could make the information available for free, to anyone, anywhere. So anybody who needs it and wants it could have access.

ATG: *Now do you see this as the solution or...*

KH: I see it as part of the solution.

ATG: *If a group of libraries in the States came together and said we want to do this, too, would you work in multiple locations?*

KH: Absolutely. I've had extensive discussions with four or five groups in the U.S. over the last couple of years and we were close on a couple occasions but, in the end, nothing was finalized. For example, we worked with Yale on the Mellon digital archiving project and I was hoping for a similar archive arrangement but Mellon is now going another route. Other collaborative opportunities are still possible there. We've talked with the Library of Congress, the OCLC, and some other people. We would definitely like to do something in the U.S. We just have to find right partner.

ATG: *About risks and challenges. One of the challenges simply has to be the management of the information.*

KH: Yes, I think the challenge is on the repository side. It's expensive, or at least people think it is going to be expensive. The Netherlands has been investing for years; they have been the leaders. I think some of that is clonable, and I think they are quite willing to share informa-

tion, so it's not like everybody has to go back and do it all over again. They have been working with the Library of Congress and the British Library. So I think there will be some sharing at the national library level that will make it better for everybody. But it is expensive for an individual university library to decide to become an archive at our volume. With our program of digitizing all back files, we anticipate a starting archive of seven terabytes.

ATG: *But it sounds like you recognize that a capital A Archive is different than having 12 copies around world.*

KH: Yes, absolutely. We look at four levels of archives. There's the one we keep ourselves. There's the one that I call sort of de facto archives — those are those 12 copies that happen to be around the world because they are customers who wanted to receive things locally and are getting everything. But they've never made any agreement to be an archive. The third level is what I call self-designating archives where a number of countries have felt the need for local copies in a case of war or other disaster. None of those have come to a final conclusion. In most cases, I think they are trying to figure out what is it that they really want to do. The fourth level is the official archive, of which the National Library of the Netherlands is the first.

ATG: *Regarding the archive in Asia, we know there are massive problems in parts of the*
continued on page 66

world with piracy of information. Have you actually had experiences with piracy?

KH: We do from the book side. Piracy on books, textbooks, medical text books — things of that sort are a major problem and we work through our trade associations to try and combat it and we've had some success. On the journal side, we have some experience — we've had some things like fraud but not necessarily piracy. For example, there was an agency in California that would order an individual rate and resell it to an institution for whatever price they thought they could get abroad. That's been shut down. As far as individual journals, I'm sure there is piracy we don't know about. We've had an occasional electronic case and we've shut down a couple of things. Usually it's individual graduate students who want to make sure that all their friends and colleagues back home get access to something. And I don't know whether they know they're doing something wrong. It's usually fixable. On an organized scale we have had some problems in the past with journal piracy but it hasn't been a big issue. It's much more of a book problem.

ATG: What digital library initiatives do you keep track of and which do you think are important and of interest in the long term?

KH: There are a number of them. Obviously, I watch what my traditional competitors are doing. We've got a competitive intelligence unit that works hard at watching and tracking. We follow closely what **HighWire** is doing, no question about it, and less closely, but with admiration, what **BioOne** is doing. I think both services have provided really necessary services. They've seen a need and they've filled it in a responsible way. We looked at standards development. So, in addition to **DOI**, we follow things like **OAI** and **Open URL** and **OAIS** and we are using them as part of our digital archiving. We go back and forth with **Open URL**.

And we use **OAI** in some things. Also we monitor things like **SPARC**, **PubMed Central** and the **Public Library of Science**. I personally don't think any of those at this point are successful. **SPARC** has had one success.

ATG: How will the virtual library influence content distribution and usage? Also, virtual patrons?

KH: It puts a responsibility on publishers and librarians, as brokers for our respective audiences (authors and readers) to make as much information available to as many people as possible wherever it happens to be located.

ATG: You want to be paid for those efforts obviously.

KH: At the end of the day, we want to be paid. The wonderful thing is I've got a tremendous CEO. I really, really admire my CEO, **Derk Haank**. He is an economist by training and he said, "Look, I want to survive. I want my customers to survive. I don't need

to extract the last dime." So the main thing to me is that a virtual library just increases the need for us collectively to think "out of the box" on how we move through this.

ATG: What can music and video providers learn from text providers?

KH: I think our businesses are so different I'm not sure there's a lot that transfers. Particularly on the consumer side vs. academic. Some society publishers for whom their journals are their only asset want to continue to make sure that they can make money from everything because they rely upon that for a great part of their society income. They are very adamant. If you ask them when you might consider making a journal article available for free, they'll say never.

ATG: And we do indeed have some societies who are pricing their electronic content very aggressively.

KH: Yes, so again, I can't even speak for journal publishers. There's no unanimity among them.

ATG: Well you're very different from a New England Journal of Medicine.

KH: Yes and no. The **Lancet** is an **Elsevier** publication and it is very similar to **NEJM**.

ATG: Have recent occurrences in the industry broadly impacted your Web strategies?

KH: I think some of the hype has gone out of things and that is a good thing. It puts us back on a realistic basis that says this is a wonderful way to distribute information but it's got to be on a firm financial foundation or it isn't gonna fly and it isn't going to be there for the long term. So that cold water dose of reality I think is useful. I'm not saying that our particular segment of the industry ever bought into that mindset that much. I think we we're all pretty realistic, both librarians and publishers. But the financial market had such unrealistic expectations of what a publisher was supposed to be doing and it was putting pressure on us. The collapse of the excitement around e-books was interesting to watch.

ATG: And it's still continuing.

KH: It's still continuing. I think there is an important role for electronic distribution of information in books, but I think we have a long way to go yet about figuring out what all that is. We have to reconfigure the whole way we think about book information, how it is tagged and made available. I think we will make some progress through the educational side, the courseware and the major reference works and trying to understand better how they can be used. So we have a long way to go.

ATG: I get really excited when I think about the possibilities of aimlessly linking the reference content in with the journal content but no one seems to be quite there.

KH: It's not yet, but I think we are going to get there. Within **CrossRef** we're certainly talking about adding books.

ATG: Yes that's where the value really becomes apparent.

KH: Yes, I think we'll get there.

ATG: Which I guess very nicely leads us into the traditional interview ending question which is: Polish off your crystal ball. Where do you see electronic publishing and, perhaps a little more broadly, electronic publishing as a component of publishing, going overall in the next three to five years?

KH: I think we've barely scratched the surface. As one of my colleagues said, we've taken the low hanging fruit. There is so much more that can be done. But there is a change for the better from the second half of the 90s when there was so much emphasis on electronic that some publishers forgot their basic business. We've moved past that stage right now. We've got our basic stuff out there, maybe not books, but journals, and we can do a lot to improve it. But we also have to remember to tend to the basic business and make sure the content is top quality and published fast. What excites me is I really think there are tremendous new services that can be developed. I don't know if we are ready yet for a generational change in electronic services. I do think it is evolutionary but I think in five years we are going to see some fantastic products on the market that just aren't there yet. I am looking where we are putting investments today and a lot of it, but not exclusively, is back office in order to keep up with the electronic products. But that's where the investment is going: in support of electronic services.

ATG: When you mentioned picking the low hanging fruit, that's the...

KH: That's the journals.

ATG: That's the easiest fruit to pick but it's also the least expensive fruit to pick. Who's going to pay for this?

KH: It wasn't inexpensive as I said when we started building media neutral databases, instead of dumping our journals into a database. We originally had a five year plan for production retooling; it took us 10 years. It was painful and expensive. But we've also been able to drive costs out at the same time; so it's not just a one-sided thing. We've worked hard to retool the whole production process.

ATG: You had a lot of different publication streams.

KH: That's correct, so we had to get all that rationalized. That was not easy to do but we also took an aggressive approach and said we were going to do it with **SGML** to begin with; we weren't going to do some kind of post-production processing and try to make it work afterward. But there was no question in anyone's mind when we started **ScienceDirect** and when we started **TULIP** five years earlier that we had to get journals delivered to the desktops. So we didn't have to have a business plan in quite the same way that you have to for some things because we said, "What is our alternative? Are we going to sit here and just do this in paper?" I think the next generation is not so obvious and it could cost more.

ATG: Any final thoughts?

continued on page 67

ATG Interviews Jenny Walker and Oren Beit-Arie

Jenny Walker (Director, Sales & Marketing, Information Services Division, Ex Libris)

Oren Beit-Arie (VP, Research & Managing Director, Information Services Division, Ex Libris)

by Rick Lugg (Partner, R2 Consulting, 63 Woodwell's Garrison, Contoocook, NH 03229; Phone: 603-746-5991; Fax: 603-746-6052) <rick@r2consulting.org> www.ebookmap.net

TOPIC: SFX for Selection and Acquisitions

In our series of articles on the Virtual Approval Plan concept, which appeared in the June issue of ATG, we explored tools that might be used to create links from a library selector's integrated library system (ILS) to a range of extended metadata—and to access those links from the technical services modules of the library's ILS.

WebBridge (designed and built by *Innovative Interfaces*) and *SFX* (owned by *Ex Libris*) were cited as two of those tools, and we thought it useful to deepen our understanding of both products. In subsequent issues, we'll look at *Endeavor's LinkFinder Plus* and "resolution" tools offered by other ILS vendors. — RL

ATG: *SFX is sold by Ex Libris, an ILS vendor. Could you describe the relationship, if any, between SFX and ExLibris's other products?*

JW & OB: We initially licensed *SFX* nearly two years ago, in February 2000, from Ghent University. We spent the first year doing beta testing with a number of clients here in the US. We went to market with the product in February 2001.

SFX is an entirely stand-alone component, but it obviously integrates extremely well with *Ex Libris's* other products—We do sell it in conjunction with our *MetaLib* product—every *MetaLib* product that we sell includes a fully functional *SFX* server.

ATG: *Could you elaborate on that scenario a bit? What does the MetaLib component do versus what does the SFX server do?*

JW & OB: The *SFX* component handles the context-sensitive linking between re-

sources. *MetaLib* is a portal and cross-database search tool. They're complementary systems. I often refer to *MetaLib* as the "front door"—whereby a user comes to a particular system, but doesn't know where they need to look for an item, and *MetaLib* will help them find relevant material for a particular subject area. I portray *SFX* as a "back door" approach, where a researcher knows exactly where they want to search: an engineer goes to *INSPEC* or *Web of Knowledge* and wants to start using that native interface. Then, having found an item of interest, they want to be able to link out to it.

ATG: *How many SFX servers have been implemented in libraries to date?*

JW & OB: We have about 200 customers in 19 countries.

ATG: *Many of our readers are familiar with SFX, but for those who aren't, could you briefly describe what problem it's intended to solve?*

JW & OB: The key issue is that it provides consistent and context-sensitive linking across a range of information resources. Most importantly, the linking services that are offered are determined by the library. The librarian can determine what types of links to provide and where those links resolve. Until now, most of the linking had been provided by information providers, so for each of these resources librarians would have to configure what other resources they want to link to. With *SFX*, the librarian can configure the *SFX* server based on the library's subscriptions and services and then all of the information resources use that configuration. So it streamlines [linking] for the librarian, simplifies maintenance, gives them more control, and from a user point of view, provides more consistency—they will see an *SFX* button in all the different resources, and they'll understand

that by clicking on that, they're going to be taken to additional relevant resources, as decided by the librarian.

ATG: *Is it possible to "back out" and return to your starting point, once you've followed an SFX link?*

JW & OB: Yes—you can link via *SFX* from a source to a target, and having explored one target link, you can always back up to the menu and explore another—and you never lose your original starting point. That always remains on your screen, with the *SFX* menu and the target opening in separate windows.

ATG: *SFX is typically described as a "reference-linking" tool, working from information resources on the public access side of the library. In envisioning the Virtual Approval Plan, we're more interested in its possible use as an organizing tool for library selectors. Are there features in SFX that could support (or be adapted to support) new title selection for books?*

JW & OB: The initial focus for our customers has been on providing these services for the end users, but *SFX* is equally applicable for technical services. With *SFX* certain services can be restricted to certain groups only, e.g., staff or specific groups of staff members; the library can define that logic.

ATG: *So it would be possible, for instance, for a library to designate certain sources and targets as "for selectors only", e.g., querying publisher sites for ONIX data? It would be possible to prevent the public from seeing those sources?*

JW & OB: Yes, absolutely—this is what the University of Chicago is doing today.

ATG: *Would this require an additional or separate SFX server?*

JW & OB: Not at all; this can be defined by the logic. The targets are context-sensitive—both as to whom the user is as well as where the link is going. But the library needs to define what are the possible targets services, and then they can restrict certain services to specific groups of people.

ATG: *In the June 2002 issue of ATG (p.26), Ted Fons of Innovative Interfaces argued that the ILS (as opposed to materials vendor systems or OCLC) is the appropriate locus for the virtual approval plan. In fact, linking tools such as WebBridge or SFX would need to be launched from the Approval or Acquisitions module of the ILS, in order to allow convenient creation of purchase orders, de-duplication, checks against holdings, and*

continued on page 68

Hunter Interview from page 66

KH: I do find it's really exciting. We really have progressed into a neat new generation of services. It's been 30 years since I worked for a research library in technical services and journal acquisitions. This is such a different world, with such a different set of things we can offer to users. The irony is that with electronic ordering, I personally buy more books now than I've ever bought.

ATG: *To me, one of the really telling signs was the idea floated by a number of*

libraries to stop checking in their paper journals because no one was using them anyway. Even two years ago, they would have been laughed out of the industry. But it's being taken seriously.

KH: Yes, that's very interesting. Well, I think we've got some exciting times ahead. A couple of years ago, I was saying, "All I want to do is retire." Sort of been there, done that; I'm ready to do some other things. While a part of me still says that, part of me is saying, "Wait a minute; there's so many neat things coming down the road right now. It would be nice to be part of it."