

November 2002

## Adventures in Librarianship -- First Draft

Ned Kraft

*U.S. Department of State*, [kraftno@state.gov](mailto:kraftno@state.gov)

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



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

---

### Recommended Citation

Kraft, Ned (2002) "Adventures in Librarianship -- First Draft," *Against the Grain*: Vol. 14: Iss. 5, Article 31.

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.7771/2380-176X.3780>

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

ing information about works, rights, etc.). Together these guarantee a unique assignment to a piece of content. Naming authority prefixes are assigned by **DOI Registration Agencies** — the **STM** community's **CrossRef** initiative is one such — each of which is free to offer its own business model to its relevant community. (**CrossRef**, for example, operates on the basis of a fee structure detailed on its Website, [www.crossref.org](http://www.crossref.org).)

So what's the big deal about **DOIs** anyway? Why should librarians and publishers care about them? First of all, **DOIs** have the ability to link to large quantities of metadata about a digital object; for example, bibliographic data required to cite the article in another journal, or information needed by librarians or retailers. That metadata can be dynamically updated by the assigner, yet becomes instantly available to users. It may include not just basic data such as the ISBN number but much more information, such as an author biography, for example.

Secondly, a **DOI** is tremendously powerful because of its multiple resolution or routing capabilities. Unlike a URL hyperlink that connects only one site to another, a **DOI** can call up a menu of hyperlink options simultaneously. A **DOI** could, for example, include hyperlinks to multiple servers where the same object is stored, or display a range of user options, such as reading an abstract, viewing an article or purchasing it in part or in its entirety.

Ultimately, **DOIs** could be used just like a bar code to track digital content through an entire digital distribution chain from the earliest stages of creation and production through distribution and final delivery to end user.

The technology backbone of the **DOI** network is the **Handle System**.<sup>®</sup> Created by Internet co-founder **Robert Kahn**, the **Handle** resolution process transports **DOI** requests to the **DOI** directories where the **DOI** identifiers are stored and resolved to appropriate data such as URLs. The **DOI Foundation** has now added to this another technical component, the structured metadata approach pioneered by the **indecs** (interoperability of data in e-commerce systems) initiatives and which now forms the basis for developing an international standards effort for rights management. Currently, the **Handle** system processes **DOIs** from five registration agencies: **CrossRef** (U.S.), **Content Directions Inc.** (U.S.), **Enpia Systems** (Korea), **CAL** (Australia) and **Learning Objects Network** (U.S.).

The impetus for the **DOI** began back in 1994. It was sparked by the **Association of American Publishers (AAP)**, which was attempting to address the issue of online copyright management and protection, especially


in anticipation of eBooks and future e-commerce opportunities. An **AAP** committee subsequently created the **DOI** as a numbering system to identify copyrighted content on the Internet; however, **DOIs** remained pretty much a theoretical concept until 1998 when an international collaborative venture set up the **International DOI Foundation** ([www.DOI.org](http://www.DOI.org)). **CrossRef** became the first registration agency at the end of 1999.

The **DOI** numbering system can become an even more powerful control tool for researchers and budget-conscious librarians alike who use library automation systems such as **ExLibris's SFX** context-sensitive reference linking. For example, **SFX** enables librarians to create customized links to appropriate content within the library's e-collections regardless of where the information is hosted. In this way a library-specific local resolution tool complements the **DOI** global resolution tool.

Because **SFX** links can identify content that is already included in an electronic license, it provides full access to researchers who might otherwise be charged for an individual article, unaware of the library's periodical subscription. This is a major boost for

librarians because it helps them restore control over their budget. The ability to avoid double payment is particularly welcome with the escalating cost of electronic subscriptions, which are consuming an ever-larger share of library budgets.

In conclusion, the establishment of a unique numbering system for identifying creative content fulfills the promise of digital rights management that encryption firms pledged when they adopted the name but fell short of delivering. Digital rights management is too complex to be solved by just a locking mechanism. Encryption itself can't begin to address such questions as: Who owns what rights? How much should different uses cost? How many uses should be licensed? And other thorny issues.

But encryption and a digital numbering system can, together, truly open up broad access to information while ensuring that creators are paid for their work — a fundamental concept upon which the continued progress of the world depends. That's why I predict that **DOIs** are here to stay — and sure to spread. 



---

## Adventures in Librarianship — First Draft

---

by **Ned Kraft** (Ralph J. Bunche Library, U.S. Department of State)  
<[kraftno@state.gov](mailto:kraftno@state.gov)>

---

### DRAFT RESPONSE - PLEASE EDIT BEFORE SENDING TO THE DEAN!

To: Dean Horkner, Darkmound University  
From: Dr. Samuel Prudent, Fraught Memorial Library  
Subject: Space Planning

The Library's Space Planning Committee met on 1 January to review the University's proposed ~~demolition?~~ renovation of the library.

The proposed new office configuration for the technical services division, described by the architects as a "flexible and innovative approach to right-sizing the work flow," ~~Anyone want to guess what that means?~~ is certainly eye catching if you are ~~colorblind and easily bewildered~~. However, we believe it may violate several municipal codes. Four-by-four might be too small for a cubicle, no matter how rich the wood grain.

Though we appreciate your suggestion that the library include a sports bar televising the University's basketball triumphs ~~by last count, those triumphs numbered two~~, we suspect that the rare book room is not the appropriate place to offer such a service. We wonder, in fact, whether that service might duplicate the sports bar already established in the student union building.

The staff enjoyed meeting Mr. Harrison at the reception. We appreciate his skill in the business world and his willingness to fund the renovation. We hope, however, that you will find some delicate way to decline his offer to microfilm all of our monographs ~~without making the lunacy of the idea too obvious~~. Again, there may be some legal

*continued on page 91*

# Drinking From the Firehose — SPAM SPAM SPAM: and MORE SPAM!!! What are we to do?

by Eleanor I. Cook (Appalachian State University, Boone, NC) <cookei@appstate.edu>

SPAM. We're all dealing with it these days. I've been intending to write a column for *ATG* on this topic for months. Now that I am finally researching the situation, I've found other essays expressing similar thoughts. So at the end of this column I'll cite a few so you can read them too if you care to do so.

Here's something everyone agrees about Spam: We HATE IT and wish it would go away! So, why do these people perpetuate it? We assume there are actual human beings somewhere behind this stuff and I want to know what they are thinking. SURELY they know that 99.9% of us are totally uninterested in whatever it is they are peddling. Some of the messages are unreadable anyway. And some would be totally laughable if they weren't so pathetic or offensive.

Unfortunately, the significantly offensive messages are causing major disturbance, so anti-spam legislation is being introduced by Congress. Several bills are pending. The **Senate's Can Spam Act of 2001** (S.630) has the best chance of being passed, according to some observers. There is also the **Wireless Telephone Spam Protection Act** introduced by the **House** (H.R. 113). While it's true that spam as commercial speech is essentially protected by the First Amendment, consumers also have rights concerning the invasion of their privacy. Unless of course these spammers ARE Terrorists and they're trying to bring down the Internet with this garbage! Well, the al-Qaida couldn't do much worse



to annoy the American public — Spam is wasting so much time that it is becoming a major problem for the working public. There are a number of spam zapper systems available, but I would like to know what is being done to STOP the spam? These people, like stupid cell phone users (especially those talking while driving), need to realize that their actions DO have a real negative consequence and that they need to be held accountable. Spam is making junk mail and telemarketers seem tame.

I have had the same email address for 13 years. Besides that, I have been an e-list editor for about 10 years, which means that my email address is very public. Therefore I am suffering from the wrath of spam. It started slowly and then exploded about six months ago. Our campus email administrator and his colleagues continue to valiantly battle spam the best they can with the resources they have at their disposal. But it's a losing battle. And it's not just me having the problem — anyone who interacts with the Internet marketplace these days has a high probability of having their email address lifted and then distributed to nefarious spammers, no matter what is done to avoid it.

It is only natural at this point to ask — how can we get around this problem? Is there any practical way to avoid it without compromising our civil liberties? Of course, we librarians are quite aware that U.S. citizens' civil liberties are in serious jeop-

ardy in the name of "homeland security," and to add to this problem, we are constantly targeted as "consumers" by marketplace forces we have little control over.

Forget reading the privacy policies companies issue — they can change and they do, often. I pore over my library's database licenses with a fine-toothed comb, but I do not always take the same care when shopping on the Internet. Not because I don't care, but because even if I am diligent, the next time I visit that site, they may have totally redesigned the page and often when they do, a return visitor has to start all over again and reset preferences. Here's the problem in a nutshell: every company out there is convinced that THEY are your universe. Excuse me, but you're NOT. Each family/person/household, whatever you want to call it, has a multitude of services hitting on them at the same time, whether it be through email spam, telemarketers or paper junk mail.

Think about the old days: What if you had to sign a license agreement every time you bought a piece of clothing at a local department store? Or bought toothpaste at the drug store? Or bought green peppers at the grocery store? Any time we buy anything on the Internet, we are entering into a contractual agreement and many of these agreements are underwritten by onerous legal documents in the background. It's true that commercial enterprises have had consumer "contracts" for many years — return and exchange policies, for example. But most of these are navigable by the average consumer. And while I don't mind and might even appreciate getting a flyer in the mail from one of these stores on occasion, if we all received ads every day or every week from these places it would get annoying very quickly.

Not so when dealing with the Internet! Acquisitions and collection development librarians better than anyone, can see where this is going. Remember the stacks of publisher flyers we used to get before email? I don't get as many in paper anymore — but now my email folders are full of crazy messages that have nothing to do with my work!

So, how can you develop a fortress against spam? If your workplace or ISP isn't helping you, it should be. Most are developing or utilizing methods to block unwanted mail.

I cannot possibly describe all the "spaminator" products on the market right now. But I can say, beware of those you get as spam! Allow your ISP (Internet Service Provider) — for personal accounts — or IT (Information Technology) department at your

*continued on page 92*

## Adventures in Librarianship from page 90

issues there, and our patrons might balk at so radical a change.

Equipping our reading room with pull-out bleachers for girls badminton games would be an interesting way to get double duty from our space and increase awareness of the library's resources ~~among web-crazed undergrads who would never otherwise step foot through our doors~~. We were surprised, though, by the suggestion that the library's budget be tied to the fortunes of that team. Perhaps the Budget Director could meet with us again to explain the reasoning.

Our Committee is excited by the architect's proposal for information "kiosks" with directional touch screen "pathfinders."

But if patron questions are to be answered by reference librarians "cleverly hidden" within the kiosks, then we suggest removing the touch screens to free the librarians for face-to-face transactions. We estimate that not installing touch screens could save the University approximately \$10,000. ~~Any volunteers for life in the kiosk?~~

As you said so succinctly in the presentation, it's time for the library to "innovatively re-engineer the information paradigm." *Qu'est-ce-que c'est?* The planned library renovation offers us the perfect opportunity to do just that ~~And to think about early retirement~~. We look forward to working with you and the architectural team toward the completion of this project. ~~Now let's all pray the funding dries up.~~ 