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Here Lies The Book, R.I.P.: The Report of Its Death Has Been Greatly Exaggerated

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lism will finally be a reality. Electronic sources will become ever more visual and attractive; visual features will be animated, and major artists will express their visions aided by the new technology.

Already **Abington Press's** *New Interpreter's Bible* is available on CD-ROM, its entire twelve volumes condensed into a concise package. Two translations of the *Bible*, the NRSV and the NJV, are included in their entirety, along with the critical commentary and additional reflections on faith and life applications by prominent religious leaders. The *Maxima Bible Library* on CD-ROM provides all of twenty-four *Bible* translations, complete with commentaries and dictionaries, as well as links to **Josephus**. As a bonus, it adds a Holy Land Multimedia Tour and a selection of Christian ClipArt. Other sets now sold in stores and catalogs enable interactive comparative readings of **Philo** and **Josephus**, greatly expanding knowledge of the world in which the Christian *Bible* appeared. With programs and eBooks now in existence, it is possible to link the original languages of Scripture to favorite translations and a variety of alternate readings. The voice of a cultivated speaker of each language may be included, as well as that of a favorite actor reading from the authorized or any other English version of the *Bible*.

Luther's entire works may be purchased on CD-ROM for a reasonable price. Church history collections bring **Calvin** face to face with the Greek and Latin fathers of the Church. While Moslem resources of a comparable nature are not yet readily available, at least in the Western world, they will certainly come. Just as the call to prayer is now more frequently heard in the great Islamic cities of the world as a recorded message rather than through the living voice, the Mother of Books will surely make its message known through these super-efficient media.

Even if electronic Scriptures never attain the stature of sacred artifacts, the study of their contents will be greatly facilitated. We are at our best when holy writings engage us actively. The interactive virtual world is perhaps the most immersive medium that has yet been devised. Cyberspace will bring us into contact with *Bible* students, even scholars, from all over the world; our questions may be answered almost instantaneously by reference librarians in Israel or the Vatican. Collaborative *Bible* study through eBooks and the Internet may become the rule. The encyclopedic nature of digital environments will be awesome indeed.

The navigational possibilities provided by future eBooks will be especially suited to the study of a collection of documents as allusive and refractive as the *Holy Bible*, where a passage in *Matthew* may suggest a reading of *Isaiah*. From *Genesis* through *Revelation*, the themes and images of Scripture echo one another. Through hypertexts, passages may be instantly linked. **Janet H. Murray**, who teaches courses in interactive narrative at MIT and who has written prophetically about the nonlinear ad-

vantages of electronic storytelling, has identified the hypertextual, mosaic, and kaleidoscopic features of e-narrative as the likely inspiration of new art forms.¹ These are precisely the features which could make the study of Sacred Scriptures more personally rewarding and informative than it has ever been. Hypertext can provide an instantaneous linking of text, images, charts, tables, video clips, and oral messages. The mosaic nature of the new media makes possible a juxtaposition of many related features, which may then be scrutinized simultaneously, even with visual illustrations. In *Exodus*, **God** tells **Moses**, "I am that I am," while **Jesus** in *Revelation* announces "I am the alpha and the omega, the beginning and the end." With a few clicks, these passages, with relevant commentaries, may be quickly compared. The kaleidoscopic possibilities of the new media further provide new ways of arranging information. With search engines and a multitude of links, rearrangements may be quickly made of study materials, perhaps in ways nobody ever thought of before.

One of the most welcome aids for exploring holy books, at least within the Christian context, is the work of major visual artists. Vivid illustrations have long been allowed for didactic purposes, even by the most austere Calvinists. Now can be added the ability to make virtual visits to great churches, shrines and cathedrals all over the world. A virtual tour of Jerusalem, reconstructed as it would have been in the time of **Christ**, will be more memorable than descriptive chapters in a traditional text. Virtual visits to the Seven Churches of the *Book of Revelation*, along with missionary journeys as companion to St. Paul, may become routine for students in the next few years.

There will always be strict Islamists reminding us that the *Koran* cannot really be translated and that there is a limit to embellishments that may be tolerated. The Christian guardians of Scriptural integrity will also throw upon all innovators the curses of the *Book of Revelation* on those who dare "to add or take away" from the sacred vision. While restraint is appropriate in dealing with Scriptures which have been treasured and conscientiously transmitted

through generations, *Bible* students will not be able to resist the enticements of the new media.

Yet it may be the non-canonical works of earlier religious devotion that can best prepare us for the wonders to come. I dream of making, during my lifetime, a grand virtual tour of **Dante's** *Inferno*, *Purgatorio* and *Paradiso*. This will be the collaborative work of the finest translators, illustrators, animators and game makers, along with myself. I envision a *Divine Comedy* accessible in the late medieval Tuscan tongue, in modern Italian, and in English. Illustrators from **Michelangelo** through **William Blake** to **Leonard Baskin** have been inspired to illustrate **Dante** and in doing so have expended our vision and their own. Skilled contemporary artists will have visualized this netherworld for me (and possibly even the celestial one), and game makers will have animated it. I will travel at my own pace, conversing, as I choose, with the different characters I meet in Hell, Purgatory and Heaven. At any point, I may remember a person I quickly passed over. **Virgil** and I will then quickly backtrack to an earlier circle of the *Inferno*, so I can take another look and have a conversation. Or we may choose to advance to a higher rung of the Purgatorial mount, if I have limited time that particular day. As I move along, I will certainly try to comfort **Paola** and **Francesca**, in the outer reaches of Hell, but I will pause only briefly before **Pope Adrian V**, fearing to distract him from the earnest penance that will eventually win his release from Purgatory. Perhaps I may even reach the celestial city, though recreating it will be a supreme challenge for the artists and game makers; and I, in this fallen state, will feel as uncomfortable in the virtual Paradise as I do in the one on paper, as **Dante** certainly intended. When this Dantesque journey becomes available to me, I will not long lament the disappearance of my Penguin paperback with its awkward end notes and its yellowing pages.

Endnotes

1. Janet H. Murray, *The Future of Narrative in Cyberspace* (New York: The Free Press), 1997.

Here Lies The Book, R.I.P.: The Report of Its Death Has Been Greatly Exaggerated

by **Mark Y. Herring** (Dean of Library Services, Dacus Library, Winthrop University) <herringm@winthrop.edu>

If you've kept up with libraries at all lately, you've doubtless witnessed what might be called the harbinger of the death of the book. Everywhere you turn, libraries are either "deserted," their books "vanishing," or the concept "obsolete." A \$53-million renovation at the **Walter Library, University of Minnesota-Twin Cities** sequestered books to the basement or else-

where. Supercomputers have replaced them. Book sequesterations at prestigious **Duke University** raised eyebrows. In the new **College of Charleston** library books have taken a decided backseat. **Marquette University** began with a traditional library structure but its trustees essentially said, "Nothing doing!" They wanted

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something new.¹ All of this continues to occur in the face of **Cal-Poly's** essentially traditional \$45-million structure that will open soon.² It would seem if the nation's single largest collection of computer-geeks and engineers couldn't come up with a Spielberg-type *Minority Report* futuresque library look, no one else will. At least not yet. What's going on?

Unfortunately, our cyberage may be bringing us the research equivalent of fast food: it doesn't matter whether it's good or healthy, only that it satisfy. And very much like fast-food, we are slowly coming to understand that the "food" of the Internet isn't all that intellectually nutritious. Reliable Web-based information is very expensive, leaving us back where we began, with libraries supplying the bulk of information access but in various formats. Indeed, this is already true with respect to the Internet. Outside the home, libraries supply the greatest percentage of access to the Web for all users. While the Web relies on "free and open access" (read unreviewed and unchecked), libraries are beginning to supply a kind of oversight on the Web.

Yet the fact remains that the numerous protestations of the book's demise are greatly exaggerated, for the Internet is no substitute for a library. This is true for a number of reasons of which space will allow only a few. First, the pool of information is very shallow compared even to a medium-sized library. Although there are over a billion Web pages on the Internet, many supply unreliable, uncorroborated information. Trustworthy Internet information does not come cheap, as we shall see. Furthermore, when you find what you want amid 3 million hits in 1.2 seconds, you print it if it's more than three pages, but more on this later. Finally, libraries have never collected vanity press publications. Remember that the next time someone boasts to you that the Internet has more than a billion pages of "information." The World Wide Web is the triumph of narcissism! Let's look at these in greater detail.

Habent sua fata libelli. Books have their fates, but no one, not even **Gutenberg**, could have predicted this. The Internet pool of information really is shallow. Right in the middle of a boom in book publishing, we have this rush to put books out of business. The simple truth of the matter is this: digital books have a much more uncertain future.³ **Questia Media** began with more than \$100 million in venture capital. In the summer of 2002 **Questia** cut its staff in half. **netLibrary** [sic] began with nearly the same amount of money. In 2001-2002 the company filed for bankruptcy and **OCLC** bought them out. **Xanadu** has since closed its doors while other digital ventures either continue to struggle or are heading for the courts to salvage what they have.⁴ Yet it is print materials that are running for cover! When mystery-guru **Steven King** threw his considerable weight into cyberspace with his 66-page novella, *Riding the Bullet*, e-zine *Salon* and others rushed to declare victory.⁵ There was one fly in the ointment: there wasn't one. **Simon & Schuster** began the demise by shutting off the print func-

tion. When that happened, the half-million who downloaded the book vanished as quickly as point and click. Apparently they were not reading all 66-pages on-screen after all. Moreover, eBook reader surveys not only reveal that eBook readers are frustrated, but that many of them would rather order online ... more *print* books.⁶ All of which is to say that with the mountain of evidence in favor of books, why have they suddenly been put in the dock?

Is the Internet that unreliable? Consider the chagrin of former Kennedy White House official, **Pierre Salinger**, when he charged a few years ago that our own government shot down TWA Flight 800 during a routine missile launching. **Salinger's** two-page document proved identical to a message that had been riding the Web's spookdrift for years.⁷ The message spawned rumors that "friendly fire" was behind the July 17 explosion of the Paris-bound jumbo jet, which killed all 230 people aboard. **Salinger's** mistake resided in the belief that the hundreds of conspiracy-theorists who lurk about the Web, spewing out as many lies as their febrile brains contain, were actually reputable researchers. If the information can convince **Salinger**, a respected political advisor, it can convince any high school or college-age student.

In many ways, the Internet is a vast uncatalogued library. Sure, you will get a couple of million hits (more likely *tens of millions*) but the sad fact of the matter is that any one of them, or none at all, may lead you to what you want. A *Google* search on Saturn is as likely to turn up the planets, as the car, as some scantily clad dancer. You may or may not be able to tell which ones are worth looking at but it's certain that viewing the first twenty or fifty or one hundred may not be enough. If you're savvy enough you may be able to target your search better, but how many users know how to do that? Finally, imagine walking into a library and going to the history section only to find **Paul Johnson's** books side-by-side with the Unabomber's or the KKK's!

What drives this debate more than anything else isn't whether the Internet is replacing libraries, or making them obsolete (it does neither), but whether it works well enough to solve an enormous budget ill. Libraries are financial black holes, and even librarians know this. If the Internet can solve the expenditure problem, then university bean-counters can move on to other matters. It doesn't matter whether it solves that problem efficaciously or not, any more than whether fast food is nutritious. Fast food satisfies appetites, and the Internet satisfied the need for information. Fast food gives one the sensation of being full, and 1.3 million "hits" in 2.1 seconds provides the appearance of securing information. But both are full of indigestible fat. Budget cutters at the legislative level ignore whether the provided information is reliable or accurate. It's only later, when constituents are hammering on legislative and other doors that they realize students learning history from the Freeman Web page, or exploring sexual

relations from *weare18.com* was probably not a good idea after all. All that "free" information suddenly pales in comparison to the first storm of controversy they now find themselves in. Meanwhile, the library limps along.

The second answer is that electronic access is still fairly new and anything new almost always edges out (for a time anyway) anything old. Electronic access certainly has great advantages, ubiquity being the most obvious. But it also has many drawbacks, most of which leave me far less optimistic than the magisterial **Umberto Eco**.⁸ **Eco** is right in arguing that the Internet is made up of images, many of which are the alphabet as opposed to pictures. He was also right that electronic access has replaced certain mainstays in libraries, viz., encyclopedias, handbooks and dictionaries. In short, electronic access has *already* replaced two-thirds of the Reference collection, and it is quickly gaining on the last third. Moreover, the inroads electronic access has made into the periodical literature, viz., providing online access to thousands of journal articles, can only be seen as a great boon. No one wants to turn back the clock, or make it impossible to access journals electronically. But simply because one thing works well in one medium does not mean another one will work equally well.

Books will continue to outlast the electronic age for a number of reasons herewith stated bluntly.

*Copyright.*⁹ We touched upon this earlier but now for a fuller explanation. It's not clear now where all this will fall out but it's a sure bet that **Congress** will ignorantly (but I repeat myself) continue to extend copyright. This simply means that those materials falling into public domain will do so *much* later than anticipated, as in a century from now, if not later. Materials not in public domain will, of course, have to have copyright permissions before they can be digitized. In the long run, this is what will

bankrupt most online book ventures. While much published before 1925 will continue to show up, fewer and fewer items published after this date will appear. Those that do will carry a hefty access fee.

Look, for example, at the history of **Questia.com**, mentioned above. The idea behind **Questia** was to offer students online access to 50,000 or so monographs and journals in the Humanities and Social Science that would appeal to the college-age. While offering access to students, libraries were forbidden access early on. Oddly, the 50,000+ titles were mainly ones *libraries had already purchased*. Although the searching is free, "subscriptions" are by the hour, the day, the week, the month or the year. The advantages touted are that students may access entire books and journals, and that this access is 24-hours a day, 7-days a week. The disadvantages are obvious: how many of us will read an entire book online? Further, why would

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you pay for what you have in your library that is open 90+ hours a week and is free? **Questia** has discovered this, laying off more than half its staff.

The Physiology of Reading. Say what you will about evolution, it's still pretty slow. Since the invention of the printing press, humans have read a certain way, with a light over their shoulder. How quickly it will take for our eyes (and minds) to evolve to a point where this is no longer troublesome is anyone's guess.

Print Costs. In the meantime, where are **Al Gore's** tree huggers when you need them? For most libraries, printing costs have risen more than 1,000 percent since 1999 and continue to escalate.

Current Technology. (The graininess of most handheld readers and the life of the book just got longer.) Some will quibble that technology evolves much faster than humans, and so in a few years great readers will emerge. So far, however, nothing of the kind has happened, and mostly because there is no market. Those who have invested large amounts of capital in online access to books have been hugely disappointed before being made terribly impecunious.

Cost. What the above doesn't kill off, cost will. Digitization is an enormously expensive endeavor, much more so than most are willing to admit. Even a modest library of 500,000 will cost over a billion dollars to digitize.¹⁰ Where is this money coming from, and who is going to be responsible for doing it? Before discounting the figures, bear in mind that there are thousands of libraries of this size and larger in the United States alone.

Add to this other factors such as where such a massive site will reside, what will occur when the inevitable downtimes occur, will printing be offered and for how much, is downloading allowed, who will update and oversee the site and so on. The logistics of such a site make the mind whirl.

Plagiarism. No one doubts that the rise in recent years of widespread, even epidemic, plagiarism is linked (should I say, "hotlinked"?) to the proliferation of electronic sites.¹¹ While it's unlikely that this problem will put the genie back in the bottle, the fact that so much is being written about it adds to the angst that will prohibit widespread digitization without other assurances being put in place first.

Portability. We've all seen the Internet ruse about the mobility of the book but the fact of portability has not been jettisoned by electronic access or the ubiquitous handhelds. Handhelds are wonderful as daily reminders, calendars and the like. But books on handhelds simply have not caught on and are not likely to in the near future. While they have certainly gotten smaller, how much smaller they can get remains a problem. For the sake of argument, let's suppose that someone makes a handheld the size of a credit card. Can you read a book on a screen that size? Would you want to read a book on a screen that size, assuming that you could? After all, "Books that you may carry to the fire

and hold readily in your hand, are the most useful after all," said **Johnson**, and who wishes to argue with the great bard?

Been There, Done That. If you're over forty, you certainly recall that about 25 years ago there were doomsayers abounding gleefully that all education would be replaced by television. Educational television — an oxymoron if ever there was one — has fallen, rather I should say, has crashed and burned on its own petard. I would be the first to say that this medium is grossly underused; I would be the second to argue that its benefits were greatly exaggerated.

If you're over forty you also remember that about 30 years ago many of these same folk bringing us this new cyberspace were also miniaturizing libraries. "Libraries will be the size of shoeboxes," we were told, as everything would be microfilmed. Of course much has been microfilmed and microfilm still beats digitization and CD-ROM transfer as a preservation technique hands down. But microfilming was much overrated as well, and the dream or vision — or whatever it is you wish to call it — was never realized, despite the millions that were spent trying to accomplish just this.

Now, here we are again with yet one more round of doomsayers promising us everything while producing only a third of the promise. Forgive me if I remain somewhat dubious of the outcome.

Having said all this, one must not discount what is taking place. There is such a thing as a self-fulfilling prophecy and those who want to see everything digitized may not like being wrong ... again. Many powerful people are pushing this envelope, and I am sad to say that many of them live and work in the profession known as librarianship. While much that **Nicholas Baker** has written is frenetic, his last book, *Double Fold*, was filled with an uncanny accuracy that causes chills to shudder the frame. Sometimes, if you can't be right, just get even, or so the saying has it.

On the one hand we have the onslaught of electronic everythingism, while on the other, we have the astonishing decreasing of adolescent literacy. **Justin Timberlake** of **N-Sync** and **Brittany Spears** fame was asked to name his favorite read. "You mean like a book?" the *enfant terrible* agonized. What I am saying poorly is this: if this generation continues and passes on to the next its formidable print-allergies, it would not be a prophecy to say that a seismic change in print medium could occur. It would be a change that would not be favorable to book-lovers everywhere. We will see the demise of reading before we see the end of books, and this will come not through technology, but at the hands of our insistent dumbing down of the educational process.

Meanwhile, those of us who do love books can breathe a sigh of relief. We can breathe a sigh of relief that this admixture of anti-intellectualism and cyberspace frenzy will not result in the demise of the book, at least not for the next 50 to 100 years. Some changes in reference tools will continue to occur, and the vast majority will be electronically accessible within the next 10 years. Moreover, many of these same

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Endnotes

1. See for example, "Books, What Books?" *Chronicle of Higher Education* Online Colloquy, <http://chronicle.com/colloquy/2002/library/re.htm> and Carlson, Scott, "Do Libraries Really Need Books?" *Chronicle of Higher Education*, 12 July 2002 A31.
2. <http://www.libraryissues.com/sub/LI200003.asp>.
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5. "The Future of the Book." *Salon.com* <http://dir.salon.com/books/special/2000/03/29/future/index.html>.
6. "The Survey Says ... Results of the Spring 2002 Survey of eBook Readers." 14 Aug. 2002, http://www.knowbetter.com/ebook/surveys/2002spring_results.asp.
7. "FBI Interviews Salinger on TWA, Discredits 'Friendly Fire' Document." *CNN Interactive*, 10 Nov. 1996, <http://www.cnn.com/US/9611/09/twa.salinger>.
8. See his "The Future of the Book" from a July 1994 symposium by the same title, held at the University of San Marino. http://www.themodernword.com/eco/eco_future_of_book.html "k.html".
9. For an excellent discussion of this, see Lessig, Lawrence. *The Future of Ideas: The Fate of the Commons in a Connected World* (New York: Random House, 2001).
10. Cost figures vary, but the table at <http://www.clir.org/pubs/reports/pub103/appendix6.html> "html" seems as accurate as anything else, where the per book cost runs as much as \$2,500 per 300-page book!
11. The number of articles on this topic is legion. See, for example, Burnett, Sara. "Dis-honor & Distrust: Student Plagiarism Is Now as Easy as Pointing and Clicking." *Community College Week* (8 July 2002) Vol. 14, Issue 26: 6-9. Fialkoff, Francine and Evan St. Lifer. "Bringing Order to an Unruly Web." *School Library Journal* (May 2002) Vol. 48, Issue 5: S2. "Internet Plagiarism—Is Everyone Doing It? RIT Professor Studies Online Cheating on College Campuses." *Ascribe Higher Education News Service*. (29 Jan. 2002). Gomez, Dina S. "Student Cheating and Plagiarism in the Internet Era: A Wake-Up Call. (It's Just So Easy to Cheat)." *NEA Today* (April 2002) Vol. 19, Issue 7: 42. Vernon, Robert F., Shirley Bigna, and Marshall L. Smith. "Plagiarism and the Web." *Journal of Social Work Education*. (Winter 2001) Vol. 37, Issue 1. Gibelman, Margaret, Sheldon R. Gelman and Jonathan Fast. "The Downside of Cyberspace: Cheating Made Easy." *Journal of Social Work Education* (Fall 1999) Vol. 35, Issue 3. Add to this the number of institutions that have purchased plagiarism detection software and you have the ingredients that spell epidemic.
12. The cost of library materials has risen 145 percent over the last fifteen years. To put this in perspective recall that the nation nearly got dreading socialized medicine, courtesy of the Clintons, merely because the health costs has gone up 65 percent! Do you remember which issue left a nation wringing its hands?

Monster of Non-circulating Library Collections Rears Ugly Head ... Again

by **Phil Davis** (Life Science Librarian, Albert R. Mann Library, Cornell University) <pmd8@cornell.edu>

In economically desperate times, the monster of inefficiency rears its ugly head again to show how wasteful we are. This monster attacks collection librarians for purchasing books that are never used. While this argument is popular (even trendy), it is both unfounded and unproductive.

The pinnacle study frequently cited is the famous (or infamous) Pittsburgh study¹ which found that 40% of books and monographs acquired in 1969 never circulated after six years.

While the authors looked at the properties and attributes of those things that circulated, there was no analysis done on those things that did *not* circulate (the so called "zero class"). Follow-up studies in other libraries^{2,3} have determined that many of their non-circulating items were:

- 1) things that *could not* circulate (i.e. reference materials),
- 2) things that the library didn't purchase (i.e. gifts and exchange),
- 3) things that the library receives out of legal requirement (i.e. government depository), or
- 4) things the library purchases because of a comprehensive collection mission.

With these classes removed, the proportion of non-circulating items becomes very low. So in summary, this argument of the non-circulating library collection is empirically unfounded.

But whether the non-circulating figure is 40% or 20% or 10% still leads us to the second part of the question, "why are librarians so wasteful?"

Circulation studies are all historical in nature. What they give us is a statistical and aggregate snapshot of a population of materials that the library has already acquired. Understanding what has circulated in the past, nevertheless, gives us little or no future predictive ability for future purchases.

It is clear that senior administrators and dubious library efficiency consultants that use the Pittsburgh study as an example of library wastefulness have never read this study — they always forget the key argument presented on page 5 in the introduction:

"...it is not particularly useful for a bibliographer to know that 10% of all the titles (s)he selects will satisfy 90% of client demand for materials in a given discipline, unless s(he) can also be told which 10%. It is useless to tell the acquisitions librarian that half the monographs ordered will never be used, unless you are also in a position to say which 50% to avoid buying. The simple fact is that the available data lack sufficient predictive power to enable the librarian to modify selection practices with assurances that the results will be more responsive to future needs of clients."

Tony Ferguson ("Back Talk — Use Statistics," *Against the Grain*, Sept 2002) provides several arguments for why the academic library mission leads to the purchase of books that may not circulate soon after purchase. But even institutions that lack the scholarly mission of the academic library have the same problems. For-profit bookstores return millions of dollars of unsold books every year to publishers that are not sold to their clientele. They face the same uncertainty as libraries, that new authors and new titles will never be purchased and turn a profit.

If libraries only purchased what they knew would circulate, they would fail to serve academia. They would function like a bookstore that only carried the latest titles from the *NY Times*

best sellers list — a reactionary library, and a poor one at that.

Library collections are born from uncertainty and grow with uncertainty. It is through uncertainty that we best serve the needs of academics and support scholarly research. If this is the reason that we are criticized for wasting library funds, let the efficiency consultants eat their words. 🐼

Endnotes

1. Kent, Allen, Jacob Cohen, K. Leon Montgomery, James G. Williams, Stephen Bulick, Roger R. Flynn, William N. Sabor, and Una Mansfield. *Use of Library Materials: The University of Pittsburgh Study*. Vol. 27, *Books in Library and Information Science*. New York: Marcel Dekker, 1979.
2. Blecic, Deborah D. "Monograph Use at an Academic Health Sciences Library: The First Three Years of Shelf Life." *Bulletin of the Medical Library Association* 88, no. 2 (2000): 145-51.
3. Eldredge, Jonathan D. "The Vital Few Meet the Trivial Many: Unexpected Use Patterns in a Monographs Collection." *Bulletin of the Medical Library Association* 86, no. 4 (1998): 496-503.

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tools will not be available in print formats. This is alarming but not catastrophic. Journals will also go the way of all ion but costs will remain as high as ever.¹²

Books on the other hand will have a different fate, at least for now. There will still be many more obituaries written between now and 100 years from now. But by and large they will be greatly exaggerated. Some will surely argue that we who defend the book defend the wrong thing. Medium is nothing, they will say, only content. And I believe it is just that sort of nonsense that told us soup cans and oddly bent coat-hangers with meta-physical names were art forms. For now, anyway, we will thankfully live yet another generation or two in the "sweet serenity of books." 🐼

Rumors from page 18

ing interview with **Lorin Garson** <l_garson@acs.org> very soon, we hope! Did you know that Bartow's mother lives in Charleston where he was visiting before he went to see his NYC daughter. That **Bartow** sure does get around!

Just heard that the debonair **Craig Flansburg** joined TDNet on January 6. Hurray!

Last but definitely not least, **Ron Chepesiuk** (Winthrop University) <rchepestiuk@compuserve.com> and a long-time contributor to **ATG** has announced that he is gone from Winthrop as of December 31 to embark on a full-time writing and teaching career. Good luck, **Ron**, and we hope to hear a lot more from you! 🐼