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People Profile: Anthony (Tony) Ferguson

Editor

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China. **Apabi** allows libraries to offer its users remote access reading capabilities.

Apabi books are sold singly, in collections, or on a subscription basis. The **University of Hong Kong (HKU) Libraries** chose to purchase a basic collection of 30,000 volumes. We subsequently negotiated a consortial arrangement on behalf of the other libraries in Hong Kong. Framed within a loose agreement where each library continues to spend an agreed upon amount within a three-year period allows each library to purchase its own titles. We are still negotiating whether we will be able to share the eBooks within the consortium. While we can't reveal the exact terms of our agreement, in general it provides participants with discounted prices in exchange for a guarantee that a certain volume of materials will be purchased. The books are accessed from a server located in Beijing. Because the bandwidth between Mainland China and Hong Kong was recently upgraded to 155 Mbps from 2 Mbps, we are trying to avoid the need for a separate mirror site in Hong Kong. While the connection between **Apabi** and the **OCLC** of China, (**CALIS: China Academic Library and Information System**),⁶ is not clear, **CALIS** does seem to be supportive of its member libraries acquiring **Apabi** eBooks.

Superstar

Superstar was the pioneer in the production and marketing of eBooks in China. Like many pioneers who leave their own domain and marched into yet unknown areas, **Superstar** discovered that some the companies already in production (i.e., print publishers and their authors) were not too happy with **Superstar**, the newcomer.

Superstar began as the digitizing contractor for an eBook project sponsored by the **National Library of China**. The **National Library** wanted to not only offer its own patrons access to digital books, but wanted to market their digitized books to other libraries throughout the country. The short-lived partnership between **Superstar** and the **National Library** precipitated one of the earliest copyright battles in China. Although some might debate whether a library can legally reformat and digitize its own collection for internal use, the marketing of those books to other libraries produced an outcry from the publishers and authors whose works were now to be resold in the new format. A **Peking University** law professor sued the **National Library** and was awarded RMB \$80,000 in June 2002 because he was not consulted.⁷ Many wondered why **Superstar** was not also sued, but it is supposed that the matter was settled out of court.

No doubt **Superstar's** experience with the **National Library** project taught them two lessons: People were hungry for eBooks. The copyright problem had to be solved. To find solutions **Superstar** decided upon three courses of action to try to solve the copyright issue.

First they sent teams to China's larger cities to secure agreements from individual authors to allow them to include their books within the

against the grain people profile

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Anthony (Tony) Ferguson

BORN & LIVED: Boise, Idaho; Taiwan-Republic of China; Provo, Utah; College Station, Texas; Haworth, New Jersey, Hong Kong, SAR China.

EARLY LIFE: Raised in Boise, Idaho; lived in Taiwan from age 19 to 21.

FAMILY: With wife, parents of six children, grandparents of six more.

EDUCATION: BA in Asian Studies and Political Science (**Brigham Young University**), MA Political Science and MLS (**University of Washington**), Doctorate Education (**Columbia University**, Teachers College)

FIRST JOB: Social Science Librarian.

PROFESSIONAL CAREER AND ACTIVITIES: Spent my early years as a social sciences librarian and then subsequently worked as an Asian Studies Bibliographer; head of collection development, and now Director of a Library. I am also interim Director of IT in Learning.

IN MY SPARE TIME I LIKE TO: Study Chinese, go to movies, explore China.

Favorite books: Books about foreigners in China, Senge, P.M. *The Fifth Discipline*. 1990.

PET PEEVES/WHAT MAKES ME MAD: Unwillingness to cooperate.

Philosophy: A librarian's job is to bring people and information together as quickly and efficiently as possible.

GOAL YOU HOPE TO ACHIEVE FIVE YEARS FROM NOW: Get my University to commit to building a new library.

HOW/WHERE DO I SEE THE INDUSTRY IN FIVE YEARS: Instead of the current 70% print and 30% digital content expenditures, it will be 50/50 at least. Our services are already 60% digital and 40% print — I expect that to go to 80/20. We will be more and more focused on helping people find the right information, not just more and more information.

Superstar collection. To secure their support, they offered these authors several inducements from which they might choose: 1) Free access to the entire database for 10 years; 2) Payment of an agreed upon amount each time their book was checked out; or 3) name the price to be paid by the readers when their books were downloaded. Most authors chose the first option. The second course of action taken by **Superstar** was to agree to pay the **Copyright Protection Centre of China** fees which could then be used to pay publishers for the titles that were digitized.⁸ Thirdly, they agreed to remove any book whose author was unhappy having his book included in the **Superstar** collection. Despite these steps, some librarians in China and Hong Kong are still wary of buying **Superstar** books for fears of being dragged into a lawsuit. Yet, the company is doing good business marketing more than 700,000 volumes in China and a bit more than 350,000 to libraries in foreign countries including Hong Kong.

Unlike **Apabi** and **netLibrary**, **Superstar** does not restrict the number of people who can read at the same time. For Chinese libraries this must be seen as a real advantage as the need to purchase multiple copies is eliminated.

The **Superstar** reader was designed for Chinese books but it handles books written in

western alphabetical scripts as well. The **Superstar** front-end catalog for use outside of China allows searching using traditional Chinese characters. **Superstar** does not permit full-text searching. **Superstar** library users can sign in remotely to use the collection.

One of the major differences between **Superstar** and **Apabi** is the imprint time span coverage. As **Superstar** employs a vacuum cleaner approach to digitizing books in many libraries, whatever those libraries owned is digitized. While **Superstar** began with the **National Library**, it has since moved on to other libraries. Staff members simply go shelf-to-shelf disbinding books published since Liberation (1949). Staff then feed the disbound pages through high speed scanners, rebinding the pages into books and return the rebound books to the shelves. For selected titles, OCR technology make contents of the selected titles more accessible. They then rely on volume by volume cataloging/metadata work to insure bibliographic access. Most of **Superstars'** titles were published before the year 2004. Some were published as early as the Ming (AD 1368 to 1644) and Ching (AD 1644 to 1911) dynasties. Libraries supplying content in this manner become **Superstar** partners.

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