February 2003

A Year in Review

Daniel P. Halloran

Blackwell Book Services, dan.halloran@blackwell.com

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

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

Recommended Citation

Halloran, Daniel P. (2003) "A Year in Review," *Against the Grain*: Vol. 15: Iss. 1, Article 6.

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.7771/2380-176X.4240>

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.

REMEMBER WHEN?

Subscription Agencies were *service* businesses and your account was as important as any other account your agency handled?

Basch Subscriptions, Inc. provides serial *service* that saves you and your library both time and money. Any agency will take your order, only **Basch Subscriptions, Inc.** will prove its commitment every day with the personal service you deserve.

Services for Libraries and Publishers
Basch Subscriptions, Inc.

88 N. Main Street
Concord, NH 03301

Phone: (603) 229-0662

Fax: (603) 226-9443

E-Mail: Subs@Basch.com

Rumors

from page 16

and reading **John's** book makes me have to agree. Congratulations on its publication, **John**, and Good Luck!

Did y'all happen to see the full-page write-up that was in **LJ's** News column (December 2002, p. 18) about the **2002 Charleston Conference**? Titled "More Bytes Than Books in Charleston," the report gives you a good glimpse inside of the Conference. It was written by the astute **Brian Kenney** who attended the Conference this past year! And, of course, I hope you all read the joint report by **Joanne Eustis** and **Arlene Moore Sievers** in **ATG**, Dec. 2002/Jan. 2003, p.76-77. The next Conference is already "heating up."

And, speaking of the conference, got a great hand-written note (very rare indeed, wonder if it'll be worth something someday) from the exuberant **John Perry Smith** (President, **Total Information**) <JPS@TotalInformation.com> who told me that the **2002 Conference** was the most optimistic Conference that he's attended in a long while and suggesting a **Vendor Panel** like we had for 2002 for 2003. Sounds good to me!

Got a great note from **Michael D. Cooper**, President of **BUSCA, Inc.**, the other day. He was talking about snow in the Finger Lakes where the company is headquartered, as well as the fact that **BUSCA** is now an **OCLC PromptCat Service** provider and that **BUSCA** has received their first electronic data interchange order from a **Cornell University Library** via the **Endeavor/Voyager** system. Great to catch a glimpse of **Michael** in Charleston this past year and hope to see him back **November 6-8, 2003**.

continued on page 34

A Year in Review

by **Daniel P. Halloran** (President, Blackwell Book Services, Inc., 6024 SW Jean Rd., Bldg. G, Lake Oswego, OR 97035; Phone: 503-684-1140 x.1201) <Dan.Halloran@Blackwell.com>

Was this the year of the economy, e-content, vanishing eBooks, or of shelf-ready processing finally gaining the acceptance it deserves? It was probably all the above. The biggest story was the faltering U.S. economy and its effect on the stock market, state budgets, returns on endowments, and ultimately, funds available for purchasing books. But there were other stories as well:

E-content, other than eBooks, took a big bite out of library budgets and librarians' time as they grappled with how to manage it. Copyright concerns and licensing models continue to give librarians sleepless nights.

eBooks had difficulty finding a sustainable business model and a format acceptable to the average reader. The ebook market is still looking for its product.

Increasingly, librarians are discovering that shelf-ready processing of books is an easy way to control costs and get books into the hands of readers quickly. Librarians are gaining the notice of university administrators as they demonstrate ways to improve service and save money.

In the end, it was a year like many in the recent past: lots of change, strained resources, and the prospect for more of the same.

The U.S. economy stumbled causing serious losses in the stock markets. The fall was not limited to dotcoms but affected the total market. During the historically long U.S. bull market, taxes on capital gains had become a significant source of tax revenue. Now, with fewer capital gains, tax receipts fell, undermining many state budgets and the budgets of universities and libraries as well. The lack of capital gains also affected those universities and libraries dependent on returns from their endowments. The tragedy of 9/11 only made the situation worse.

A longer term trend of purchasing more electronic resources also affected the year. Two recent studies, one the findings of a **Library Journal 2001** study and the other by the **Primary Research Group (PRG)**,¹ confirm the trend. An article in the September 5, 2002 *Library Journal Academic News Wire* states "... the study shows academic libraries are buying fewer books" and concluded there is "a major shift in library resources toward electronic resources and away from traditional print resources."²

This may be the reason that librarians surveyed for this article seemed concerned with issues around electronic resources while booksellers were concerned with budgets. Librarians talked about the need for tools that would help them systematically track negotiations, terms, adherence to contract terms, and access. The issues of functionality, linking, interlinking, and cross-searching are also of concern.

One bright spot, highlighted by **Ann Okerson**, of the **Yale University Libraries**, "... is the increasing numbers of publishers giving materials for free or very cheaply to all the residents of poor nations." For more information check out the "Developing Nations Initiatives" link at www.library.yale.edu/~llicense/.

Electronic books stumbled last year as the early leaders found their business models and offerings searching for profitability. **netLibrary** ran out of cash before they could reach profitability. Early dotcom-type spending in an attempt to establish its brand, publisher reluctance to give them front list material and multi-user access kept libraries from purchasing. In markets outside the U.S., libraries complained that there was not enough local content and the existing content didn't match local curriculum needs closely enough. **OCLC** stepped in to protect the investments libraries had already made and to try to insure this deserving technology would survive. Latest reports are that **netLibrary** is getting much better publisher cooperation, publishers are being paid promptly and a general positive feeling among many publishers about working with **netLibrary**.

Other companies tried as well, with **Questia** bursting into and out of the market. **ebrary** finally made an appearance and offered a business model interestingly different from **netLibrary**. **ebrary** supported a variety of payment options such as subscription, pay-per-view, pay-per article, copy/print, etc.

And publishers started making their titles available. **Taylor & Francis**, **Kluwer**, and **Oxford University Press** are all making titles available in a PDF format often through a variety of channels.

continued on page 20

However, it may be that the real future for "eBooks" is their inevitable morphing into electronic data files that will be integrated with other electronic content, perhaps by aggregators like **Bell & Howell's Proquest**. Projects that fold e-texts into curriculum packages are slowly gaining acceptance by academic faculties.

An interesting development at the **University of Chicago Press** indicates that a dominant eBook model may have emerged. The **University of Chicago Press** has been granted \$1.5 million by the **Andrew W. Mellon Foundation** to launch the **Chicago Digital Distribution Center**, comprising both the first short-run digital print facility operated through an American university press and the **BiblioVault**, an electronic repository for backlist and current university press titles.

The grant will support the development of the **Chicago Digital Distribution Center (CDDC)** and the **BiblioVault**, as well as the preparation of 5,000 books for short-run digital printing and, eventually, for online searching. The **CDDC** will serve not only Chicago but also the many scholarly presses served by the **Chicago Distribution Center (CDC)**. This new facility will keep books with low demand available and will allow university presses to bring back out-of-print titles as demand warrants,

ensuring that the scholarly community will always have access to work critical to ongoing research and teaching.

In spite of the electronic content explosion, libraries are still buying books. An increasing number of libraries are responding to the budget crunch and stretching their funds by having their books delivered shelf-ready from their book vendors. Libraries can utilize the economies of scale offered by booksellers to get mainstream titles cataloged and processed so they are available for shelving when they arrive. A number of the booksellers I surveyed volunteered that the percentage of books that going through their processing departments reached record levels this year. At **Blackwell** the percentage has gone from 18 in 1998 to 31 last year.

The beauty of outsourcing technical processing of books is that it creates fiscal savings that are demonstrable. University administrators, often chided by business leaders for their lack of financial management savvy, point with pride to the library as a showcase for streamlined workflows and cost effective resource management. Outsourcing library technical services is becoming the most credible way to provide more-with-less. And the upside to outsourcing is that when the good times return to libraries, a well-managed outsourcing plan allows the library to ramp up the volume of purchases without worrying about the load on library support staff.

Rush Miller, director of Hillman Library at the **University of Pittsburgh**, and a great champion of library efficiency though effective change management has this to say about his library's experience in partnering with suppliers:

At the University Library System, **University of Pittsburgh**, we downsized our technical services department by more than 50%, and saved more than one million dollars, while increasing dramatically our throughput by using the shelf-ready vendor services. We are very pleased with the services we receive and recommend this approach to making technical services functions more cost effective for every academic library.

Was this the year of the economy, of e-content, of vanishing eBooks, or of shelf-ready processing finally becoming mainstream? Yes, but most of all it was a year of change. I suspect that will be the description for many years to come.

Endnotes

1. Primary Research Group, "Survey of Academic Libraries." 2001 and 2002 editions.
2. "Study shows academic libraries are buying fewer books." *Library Journal Academic Newswire*, Sept. 5, 2002.

Acquiring Minds Want to Know — Digital Scholarship

by **Joyce L. Ogburn** (Associate Director of Libraries, Resources, and Collection Management Services, University of Washington Libraries, Seattle, WA 98195-3910; Phone: 206-228-9418 x.9; Fax: 206-685-8727) <jlogburn@u.washington.edu>

Digital Scholarship

A new form of scholarship has emerged in recent years named "digital scholarship." I have seen it defined as online publishing or digitized material presented online, or, in other words, scholarship that appears in a digital form. However, a more compelling definition treats it as scholarship that depends entirely on being digital, i.e., it is created, carried out, and disseminated entirely digitally. In essence, it is not possible without digital technology.

This is an important distinction. Many scholarly materials can be converted to a digital format, and as desirable as that is, most of them function quite well without being digital. Scholarship that is dependent on being digital is different. It is often highly visual and visually oriented. It may contain text but may also be a study of text. It may combine many different data types, systems, and software. Often digital scholarship takes the form of stand alone projects that are not integrated with other digital works. However, there may be nothing that prevents this from happening, rather, by being digital, the possibilities for collaboration, sharing, or re-purposing are enormous.

Digital scholarship has evolved as scholars began to realize the potential of digital technology to transform their work, both research and teaching. The results of digital scholarship are displayed and disseminated digitally, often through a specially developed Website. The results may never be published in a peer reviewed journal or in a scholarly monograph. Information about, or deriving from, the project, may be published. This change in publishing and dissemination of results is part of what makes digital scholarship so different from digitized scholarship.

Many good examples have come out of the **Institute for Advanced Technology** in the Humanities, a center at the **University of Virginia** that is housed in the library. Its goal is "to explore and expand the potential of information technology as a tool for humanities research. To that end, we provide our Fellows with consulting, technical support, applications programming, and networked publishing facilities. We also cultivate partnerships and participate in humanities computing initiatives with libraries, publishers, information technology companies, scholarly organizations, and others interested in

the intersection of computers and cultural heritage." (<http://www.iath.virginia.edu/>)

One of their more famous projects is that of **Edward L. Ayres**, *The Valley of the Shadow: Two Communities in the American Civil War*. This ambitious work captures the experience of two different communities, one Northern and one Southern, throughout the Civil War. It was conceived as a hypermedia archive of newspapers, letters, diaries, photographs, maps, church records, population census, agricultural census, and military records. The site says that "Students can explore every dimension of the conflict and write their own histories, reconstructing the life stories of women, African Americans, farmers, politicians, soldiers, and families. The project is intended for secondary schools, community colleges, libraries, and universities." (<http://jefferson.village.virginia.edu/vshadow2/choosepart.html#story>)

The Valley of the Shadow combines new and digitized sources to create a new work of scholarship. It gains part of its appeal and strength by melding teaching and research — an excellent example of how digital forms of scholar-

continued on page 22