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ATG Interviews George Machovec

Thomas Gilson

College of Charleston, gilsont@cofc.edu

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Interview — Jim Stephens
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developed two communities — The Town of Mt Laurel and the Alys Beach Community. These properties are both managed by **EBSCO Realty**, a licensed real estate broker in the state of Alabama. In cooperation with **EBSCO** managers, **EBSCO Realty** oversees the legal, financial and maintenance management of all properties used by **EBSCO**.

Located in North Shelby County, The Town of Mt Laurel is a traditional neighborhood development designed with the qualities of small town life — homes with front porches, safe and friendly tree-lined streets, and a pedestrian-oriented town center — while providing all of today's needs for comfortable living, including the latest communications technology.

Alys Beach is located 1/3 mile west of Rosemary Beach in Northwest Florida. It is approximately 160 acres and extends from the Gulf of Mexico across Hwy. 30A to pristine environmental preserve land along the north boundary.

EBSCO Industries' Manufacturing group includes: commercial printing through **EBSCO Media and Tinker Business Forms**; hunting and fishing products distributed under **PRADCO Outdoor Brands, Carry-Lite Decoys & Accessories, Code Blue, Green Mountain Rifle Barrel Co., Knight & Hale Game Calls, Knight Rifles, Moultrie Feeders and Summit Treestands**; looseleaf binders and information packaging through **Vulcan Information Packaging**; point-of-purchase, trade show and literature display through **Siegel Display Products and Vulcan Industries**; promotional products supplier **Vitronic/Four Seasons**; sign sales and manufacturing through **J.M. Stewart Corporation** and **Wayne Industries**; specialty furniture through **H. Wilson Company** and **Luxor**; and steel joist manufacturer **Valley Joist**.

The **General Services Group** includes: in-

surance company **S.S. Nesbitt & Co.**, magazine publishing business **Grand View Media Group**; magazine subscription services through **EBSCO Reception Room Subscription Services, EBSCO Magazine Express and Vulcan Service**; military products and services through **Military Service Company**; printing/binding/laminating equipment and supplies through **NSC International**; promotional merchandise through **EBSCO Promotional Products**; and publishing-related services **MetaPress, Publisher Promotion & Fulfillment, EBSCO Consumer Magazine Services, Publishers' Warehouse** and **EBSCO TeleServices**.

We are diversified. We are a conglomerate. This is not because it is the thing to do or not the thing to do. It is because over the years we have seen opportunities, we have moved to them, and it has worked for us.

In the early 1960s, we redefined the mission of **EBSCO Information Services**. That definition became to service any multi-title institutional buyer from the elementary school to the university, no matter where located, with any serial publication or periodical or newspaper or journal, regardless of frequency, regardless of the media of publication or the nation of origin.

We still have ample room for growth in North America. We see tremendous opportunity in Europe, Latin America, Australia and the Far East, especially China. We see continued growth in reacquiring the e-journal business that has tried its hand at going direct. We are also experiencing growth in related areas of the business such as the service we offer through **MetaPress**, e-resource management tools such as **A-to-Z**, and databases.

We now offer rapid 24-hour order entry of new e-journal orders and rapid payment with the goal being immediate activation of e-journal orders. A 60-day waiting period doesn't cut it in the e-journal world. We recognize that and we're putting systems and services in place to

expedite this process. We also offer bulk loading of orders and have already established bulk activation with a significant number of e-journal providers. We're adding electronic journal specialists to each of our U.S. regional offices to handle publisher packages.

Our philosophy is guided by seven core values. These are:

1. Customer First
2. Sales
3. Growth
4. Profitability
5. Engineering...Seek Positive Change
6. Thrift
7. People - The Right People Are The Difference

ATG: *I notice that you have a timeline up on the Web. How come it doesn't mention your acquisition of RoweCom, Faxon, etc.? Can you tell us how this acquisition is proceeding?*

JS: We are proud to have been part of a solution to a crisis in the industry emanating from the apparent low integrity of another. It was no easy task and was completed by many pulling together including publishers, former **RoweCom** customers as represented by their creditor's committee and **EBSCO**. We incurred much in cost. We have gained customers who we seek to keep through good value, innovative products and superior service. Thus far, we are pleased with the feedback from our new customers. With the recent end of our fiscal year, we can say the acquisition is complete and our timeline will be updated.

ATG: *Tell us about your view of future business directions that EBSCO might undertake.*

JS: Adhere to our values — try to possess a character of humility, honesty, aggressiveness, industry, thrift and Charlestonian courtesy.

ATG Interviews George Machovec

Associate Director, Colorado Alliance of Research Libraries

Managing Editor, *The Charleston Advisor*

<george@coalliance.org>

by **Tom Gilson** (Head, Reference Services, Robert Scott Small Library, College of Charleston, Charleston, SC 29424; Phone: 843-953-8014; Fax: 843-953-8019) <gilson@cofc.edu>

ATG: *It seems that the database reviews in the*

Charleston Advisor run the gamut of subject areas. Is that a conscious effort, or are you merely reflecting the marketplace? Do you have a percentage mix that you aim for?

GM: *The Charleston Advisor (TCA)* runs reviews for many different products and services. The only criteria is that they must be Web-based and be of interest to libraries. About 80% of the reviews are for subscription-based ser-

vices and the other 20% are of free services. The purpose behind the reviews of free Websites is to inform librarians about interesting projects or products that might be of interest to their constituents.

TCA runs the gamut in terms of types of products reviewed and their intended audience. Although I don't try for any particular percentages, I do try and make sure that most issues will have something of interest to everyone. This diversity means many different topics, types of services and target customers. Although the largest percentage of **TCA** subscribers is gen-

eral academic libraries there are also a substantial number of public libraries, special libraries, publishers, vendors, consortium offices and others.

We have also started experimenting with some topical issues. **Jill Emery** from the **University of Houston** was a guest special section editor for federated searching products in 2003. However, even with an occasional thematic issue, I still want to have some general reviews and editorials so that the issue will be of interest to someone who may not be interested in that particular theme.

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ATG: From your experience is there a difference in database availability and development among broad categories like sciences, social sciences and humanities?

GM: Certainly most of the early work in database availability and development were in STM (science, technology and medicine) and business areas. However, as time has passed it seems to me that virtually all topics and professions including the social sciences and humanities are being covered. And certainly printed indexes and abstracts are a thing of the past.

ATG: Are there any new database developments or trends that you've noticed?

GM: Yes, there have been a couple of interesting developments over the past few years.

First, retrospective conversion projects such as **JSTOR** are systematically converting full-text backfiles of serials content back to the beginning of each title. **Stanford** and **Google** have a major retrospective conversion of project for materials out of copyright under way and the **Association of Research Libraries (ARL)** is planning a major project to digitize government documents called the **ARL/GPO Digitization Project**. Projects like these and others are changing our landscape and moving libraries deeper and deeper into a digital environment. And second, many academic libraries are moving into institutional repository and other digitization projects. These initiatives certainly open the doors for access to unique materials and may eventually influence the current publishing paradigm but it is unclear how this will play out.

ATG: If you were developing a new database what subject area, or niche, would you shoot for?

GM: There are already so many products and projects on the market it is overwhelming. Areas in which I would like to see development would be in the interrelationship or interoperability between products, services and content. We have many of the possible building blocks in place such as federated searching, link resolution, metadata standards, etc. But much more can be done in this area.

No subject areas immediately come to my mind that are untouched but I'm sure there must be many areas that I've just not considered.

ATG: We hear a lot about the necessity for full text, is there a place for bibliographic databases anymore? Will technologies like **SFX** and link server technology keep them viable?

GM: Traditional indexing/abstracting services still play an important role in scholarly research. Many full-text initiatives are driven by specific primary publishers so they only are interested (and only have the rights) to providing full-text online access to their own materials. In most areas, no one publisher has control of everything.

Some of the advantages of traditional indexing/abstracting services are their ability to cover a broad base of publications from many providers, controlled vocabulary or other schemes for consistent retrieval, many have long historical runs of content that may not be covered in cur-

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rent full-text digitization efforts, and most bibliographic databases offer consistency in formatting and bibliographic description to aid in the research process.

OpenURL link resolution is the "killer app" to keep traditional indexing/abstracting services viable. Institutional link resolvers make it easy for patrons to find out where the full-text resides (whether online or print) and most offer extended services for convenient launching of interlibrary loan requests if the required document is not online.

ATG: Price is always a concern. Are strategies like consortium buying helping libraries, or does that depend on the size of the li-

brary? How is the database provider affected by consortium buying? Are there other strategies libraries are using to cut costs?

GM: As I work in a consortium office, my viewpoints on consortial purchasing are biased. In my experience, consortial purchasing can often save money even for the largest libraries. Hundreds of consortia meet periodically as the **International Coalition of Library Consortia (ICOLC)** for this very purpose to discuss collaborative purchasing, compare notes, view new purchasing opportunities from vendors and share ideas.

Of course there are many pros and cons in
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the consortial purchasing arena that have been well covered in the literature. The general principle is that larger buying groups have more influence in terms of lower unit cost (however it's measured) as well as better terms and conditions. In times of tight budgets this is crucial. Of course some of the obvious drawbacks are that consortial purchasing often takes longer, is more difficult, there is overlapping consortia activity and it takes someone to do it.

Database providers have mixed feelings about consortial purchasing. Most put up with it as there is no choice. Some consortial deals offer a central point of billing. But vendors still often have to court individual libraries to keep them in group deals and technical support is still usually directly between the provider and the end library.

One of the new strategies for cutting costs is for libraries to pay closer attention to what they are actually purchasing. In other words "buy smarter." For example, many aggregators offer overlapping content both in their own product lines as well as when compared with other aggregators. Our **Gold Rush** project (<http://grweb.coalliance.org>) at the **Colorado Alliance of Research Libraries** offers tools to compare content between these services to make smarter purchasing decisions. **Serials Solutions** has also recently released functionality in this area.

ATG: *Open access means different things to different people. What is your take on the open access movement? Is it viable only in the sciences, or does it have possibilities in the social sciences or humanities?*

GM: In my view open access publishing simply means any content that is published at no charge to the end-user on the Web. The subject area is irrelevant from my perspective except that I realize that the open access movement has been largely driven by the STM journals because of their high prices. Some try and make more refined definitions such as that the resource must be peer reviewed. This, in my opinion, is more a measure of possible quality or authority. Using my definition, most government documents have been "open access" all along.

As a librarian, like many others, I support the open access movement but publishing does cost money and someone needs to pay somewhere or it will not happen. I'm not against the traditional publishing system I just think that some publishers gouge the library market and have high profit margins.

There are several bills in the U.S. Congress that are addressing the issue of government-funded research. If government funding is used, arguably the published results of that research should be made freely available in an open access source. Unless traditional publishers can accommodate this nuance with some free and some fee-based articles, open access initiatives like **PubMed** may be playing a greater role in their respective areas.

ATG: *In discussing technological change Bill Gates has been quoted as saying "if the*

past 20 years have been impressive, the next 20 will be astounding?" If he is right, how will database publishers and libraries keep up with the accelerating growth of information?

GM: **Bill Gates** is certainly correct as more and more content goes digital. Higher resolution, better contrast, lower cost display devices will certainly make reading material online the standard. Few want to read large amounts of text on a screen with today's technology but when the reader has a look and feel more like paper, things will change.

There are so many possibilities that are very obvious and already possible now in various forms. For example, one could choose to have the textual content turned into audio (great for the visually impaired or those with reading disabilities), full multi-media, downloading through satellite or cell-phone type technology, checking-out and downloading digital content from your library or purchasing from a bookstore, interaction between various existing digital devices (**Blue Tooth** type technology), and the list goes on.

Libraries will still play a key role, unless we drop the ball or legal changes hurt us, because it still costs money to create content. The library should be able to purchase and distribute digital content but there will need to be proper authentication and control techniques in place to protect authors and publishers.

ATG: *What new technological developments will impact libraries and database developers most in the next year? In the next five years?*

GM: Within the next year, most librarians are talking about things such as improved precision in full-text linking with link resolvers, growing use of **RFID** (radio frequency identification) in library applications and better management of electronic subscriptions through electronic resource management (**ERM**) systems.

Within five years, high resolution, high contrast, low weight and low cost ubiquitous display devices will be the most important development. This will be necessary to begin to allow wide scale distribution of digital content. Users have to like it as much or more than paper to switch from paper books and magazines. I think it will happen; it's just a matter of when.

ATG: *What can we expect during the next couple of years from the Charleston Advisor. Can you give us a preview of the type products you will be looking to review? Are there any new features under consideration?*

GM: *The Charleston Advisor* does structured in-depth peer-reviewed reviews of Web-based resources of interest to libraries. As more and more content goes digital, *TCA* will have an increasingly important role in vetting digital resources to help libraries make better decisions on what to purchase.

We will continue our role in covering something of interest to everyone but we may be doing more thematic issues with hot topics as they arise. We do need to keep re-assessing what are the key elements in a review as times keep changing. For example,

when the publication started in 1999, OpenURL link resolution did not even exist so it was not an issue to be considered, whereas now knowing that a resource is OpenURL enabled as either a source or target is crucial.

ATG: *That's about all the questions we have. Is there anything else that you would like to add?*

GM: We are always in need of experienced reviewers for *The Charleston Advisor* and I would very much like to be contacted by those who would like to do reviews.

ATG: *That's great we're sure that there will be some folks who will take you up on that. Thanks for taking the time to talk with us.*

GM: It was my pleasure.

From the Reference Desk

by **Tom Gilson** (Head, Reference Services, Robert Scott Small Library, College of Charleston, Charleston, SC 29424; Phone: 843-953-8014; Fax: 843-953-8019) <gilsont@cofc.edu>

As gas prices hover at all time highs, debate sharpens about the use of energy resources. The production and use of energy has multi-dimensional impacts. It enables us to meet basic needs like warming our homes and driving to work in the morning, and it is essential to industrial and economic growth. But energy use and production also causes damaging environmental side effects. Obviously, this is a complicated and controversial topic. Luckily the reference literature continues to grow in this area.

Elsevier Academic Press has just published a six-volume *Encyclopedia of Energy* (2004, 012176480X, \$1560) edited by **Cutler J. Cleveland**, Director of the **Center for Energy and Environmental Studies** at **Boston University**. **Dr. Cleveland** has assembled over 350 international scholars in an attempt to provide comprehensive coverage in some 400 articles. Reading through the introduction, one gets a sense of the scope of their challenge. **Dr. Cleveland**

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