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Bet You Missed It -- Press Clippings -- In the News -- Carefully Selected by Your Crack Team of News Sleuths

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RISKY BUSINESS

by **Sandra Beehler** (Lewis & Clark College)

Japanese entrepreneur **Masayoshi Son** lost most of his multi-billion dollar fortune when the dot.com bubble burst, but going bust has not diminished his eagerness to pursue risky visions. He spent more than \$2 billion building an Ethernet network that offers high speed (12 megabits a second) DSL access to ordinary consumers in Japan at very low cost. Along with Internet access, he offers voice-over-IP (in direct competition to phone companies) and is poised to deliver TV- and video-over-IP services. Already deeply in debt, **Softbank** (Son's main holding company) has had recourse to some suspiciously creative accounting and been forced to sell off some of its more lucrative holdings. **Son** may be setting the pace in this game, but there is doubt as to whether he can stay the course.

See — "Fat Pipe Dream" by **Brendan I Koerner** in *Wired*, Aug 2003, p. 84-86.

LAVA LAMP LOTTERY

by **Sandra Beehler** (Lewis & Clark College)

Lotteries, polling, simulation, encryption—all make use of the mathematical phenomena known as random numbers. Generating a sequence of numbers with no recognizable pattern may sound easy—and indeed it can be done with a pair of dice—but skyrocketing demand in the twentieth & twenty-first centuries has fueled the search for ever more efficient random number generators (RNGs). Currently many RNGs use some source of white noise as the base for their sequences. In 1996 **Landon Noll**, a cryptographer at **Silicon Graphics**, introduced a system based on Lava Lites (lava lamps). This year **Noll** and fellow expert **Simon Cooper** came up with an even more sophisticated RNG called **LavaRnd**, which employs a Webcam with its lens cap on, and which they are giving away at www.lavarnd.org.

See — "Totally Random" by **Tom McNichol** in *Wired*, Aug 2003, p. 88-89.

EIGHT YEAR CAVE QUEST

by **Pamela M. Rose** (University at Buffalo)

It took eight years to overcome floods, drought and bush fires, but **Paul Tacon** and colleagues at the **Australian Museum** in Sydney finally reached **Eagles Reach** at **Wollemi National Park** in New South Wales to document 4000-year-old cave drawings first discovered by a bush walker. Accessible only on foot over mountainous terrain, the 203 images include charcoal drawings of kangaroos and lizards, and depictions of half-human, half-animal creatures.

See — "For art's sake" in People section edited by **Yudhijit Bhattacharjee** in *Science*, July 25, 2003, p.461.

STOP THE STRUGGLE

by **Sandra Beehler** (Lewis & Clark College)

The coming to power in 1989 of Liberia's **Charles Taylor** marked the beginning of fighting that has spread from Liberia to surrounding West African countries of Sierra Leone, Ivory Coast, and Guinea. The French stepped in to maintain a fragile peace in Ivory Coast, likewise the British intervened in Sierra Leone; Guinea's government managed to sustain itself. The article presents a strong argument for U.S. intervention to get rid of **Taylor** before the continuing bloodshed in Liberia again spreads to the entire region. In fact, **Taylor** and Liberian forces loyal to him have been the instigators of much of West Africa's recent struggles; it is time for him to face the consequences of his deeds.

See — "A Region in Flames" in *The Economist*, July 5-12, 2003, p. 22-24.

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to obtain archived versions of electronic titles in the event the vendor loses licensing rights or no longer does business with the library. The existence of a statewide organization with an archive of a substantive number of titles helps to mitigate this concern—without such a capability, the attractiveness of ending print subscriptions might diminish. Some libraries also are concerned that patrons may not have access to a full run of journals, either because electronic copies are not browseable in the stacks, or patrons comfortable with the Internet will not browse hard copies of journals. Concerns with offsite storage center on browseability and on concerns that delays in obtaining articles might deter patrons who might otherwise have used the articles. Nevertheless, feedback has been largely positive. Libraries responding to the survey frequently noted that the most frequently expressed concerns about titles were that patrons wanted more titles and/or that they wanted more available electronically—something that these strategies may help to enable.

Endnotes

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3. Hill, J.B.; Madarash-Hill, Cherie; Hayes, Nancy. "Remote Storage of Serials: It's Impact on Use." *Serials Librarian* 39:1 (2000) 29.
4. Ackerman, L.G. "Is Age an Appropriate Criterion for Moving Journals to Storage?" *Collection Management* 26:3 (Fall 2001) 176-177, 180.
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7. *What is OhioLINK?* (2003) Available from <http://www.ohiolink.edu/about/what-is-ol.html>. Accessed July 9, 2003.
8. Hill, 32.

FREE U.K. RESEARCH REDUX by **Pamela M. Rose** (University at Buffalo)

For 80,000 U.K. university researchers, the news is good: The **Joint Information Systems Committee (JISC)** and **BioMed Central** have forged a landmark deal which will waive the normal article fee for any U.K. researcher publishing in any of **BioMed's** open access journals. Along with the **National Health Service (NHS)** deal forged in March (<http://www.biomedcentral.com/info/about/pr-releases?pr=20030306>), this agreement increases **BioMed Central's** institutional membership program to over 300. Architects of the deal believe that not only will research be more readily available, but will also reduce the costs to institutions for journal subscriptions, allowing them to shift dollars to more critical areas.

See — "U.K. Research Accessible, For Free, For Everyone" press release at **BioMed Central**, <http://www.biomedcentral.com/info/about/pr-releases?pr=20030617>.

BLUNDER, BLUSTER AND BUREAUCRATS

by Pamela M. Rose (University at Buffalo)

Media coverage of the looting and destruction of Iraq's museums and libraries may have obliterated the good news: three weeks before the U.S. attack began, Iraq's Ministry of Culture employees secretly removed over 8,000 precious objects to a secret location, revealed only after the 6th of July to U.S. investigators. The fascinating tale of "misunderstandings, mistakes, surprises and bureaucratic infighting" is revealed in this excellent recounting that chronicles the unfolding of events from January through July.

See — "Mayhem in Mesopotamia" by Andrew Lawler in *Science*, August 1, 2003, pp.582-589.

Library Marketplace — Where Books Come From

An Interview with Toni Brandmill of the National Writers Union

Column Editor: John Riley (Sales Manager, Eastern Book Company)
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It seems as though the writer's perspective has gotten lost in the current debates about the future of publishing, libraries and bookselling. Since writers are where books and journals originate, it seems only fair that we hear from them regarding these debates. In order to find out more about what writers are thinking, I contacted my friend Toni Brandmill, member and trustee of the National Writer's Union.

The National Writer's Union (NWU) was started in 1981 as a UAW Local Chapter that was created for such non-traditional workers as writers and artists. The union now counts over 7,000 members worldwide. Americans, including those living abroad, make up the bulk of their membership. Services that the union offers include working to obtain fair contracts for their members, offering group health insurance, maintaining a database of literary agents, and offering trained advisors in contract negotiation and grievance procedures. NWU has four major divisions: Books, Journalism, Business and Technology, Grievance and Contracts. Within the Books Division there are also caucuses for fiction and poetry. The cost to join is \$95.00 for an author who earns less than \$5,000 per year from his or her writing. Most of the Union's operating funds come from dues, but they also receive some royalty payments from European Union libraries for copies made of NWU members' works. Now that's a novel idea! Picture U.S. libraries paying royalties to authors for copies made of their works on library machines!

ATG: Toni, could you give us some background, aims, history of the Writer's Union and your specific involvement with it?

TB: The NWU was formed 21 years ago as Local 1981 of the UAW/AFL-CIO. One of its main purposes was to organize non-traditional workers, i.e., freelancers and other writers who do not work

for an employer. I have been a member of the NWU for about five years. I became active in the Union initially as a grievance officer and contract advisor (using my law background for the side of good). I have since become the chairperson of my sub-local/unit which includes about 210 members in Western New England. I am also in my second term as one of the Trustees for the National Union.

ATG: Could we discuss some current issues: i.e., "Tasini," changing contracts with publishers (i.e., giving up electronic rights), print on demand and the prospect of books never going out of print and how that might affect the usual practice of copyright reverting to authors when books go out of print?

TB: *Tasini v. Times*, the landmark copyright case which was decided by the Supreme Court of the U.S. in 2001, confirmed that freelancers (journalists who are not staff writers for publications) own the rights to their works, unless they have signed them away by contract. It is therefore a copyright violation for a publisher like the *New York Times* to create a searchable electronic database without first obtaining the rights from the author. One of the repercussions of the *Tasini* decision, however, is that publishers are now demanding electronic rights, in fact, all rights, from writers. Thus, if one wants to write for the *Times*, the *Boston Globe*, the *Washington Post*, indeed most publications, all rights must be turned over, very often without additional compensation. Gone are the days when a writer could substantially supplement her income by reselling her work after the initial publication.

An innovation in the publishing industry is self-publishing and print on demand books. Some authors think of these new "publishers," who are paid by the author for production of a book or the maintenance of a database which makes a book available in a print-on-demand or electronic

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Public Speaking Handbook for Librarians and Information Professionals

Sarah R. Statz. 2003, \$39.95 softcover, appendices, references, bibliography, index, 0-7864-1546-0.

Revolting Librarians Redux

Radical Librarians Speak Out

Edited by Katia Roberto and Jessamyn West. Introduction by Celeste West; Illustrated by Katherine West. 2003, \$35 softcover, illustrations, index, 0-7864-1608-4.

In North Korea

An American Travels through an Imprisoned Nation

Nanchu with Xing Hang. 2003, \$29.95 softcover, photos, appendix, index, 0-7864-1691-2.

North Korea at a Crossroads

Suk Hi Kim. 2003, \$29.95 softcover, tables, readings list, reader aids, appendices, index, 0-7864-1741-2.

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