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Issues in Vendor/Library Relations -- 100 Chefs

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me during my three years of Army service beginning with the **Ft. Dix Library** that I frequented after I finished basic training and was spending another eight weeks learning to send and receive Morse code. Not only could I check out books to read in the barracks, I could listen to music in the listening room and was able to attend a lecture on the poetry of **Robert Frost**. You will do lots of silly things when you are a lonely soldier.

My next station was Ft. Benning, Georgia and jump school. Even there I had a few brief hours to sit in the library and read **Thomas Wolfe** and forget for a while the heat and the physical and mental ordeals designed to make someone jump out of an airplane without a second's hesitation.

My favorite Army library was in Fulda, Germany. I spent more time there, physically, than at any of the other libraries and even had my correspondence school tests proctored there. I will not claim that I spent all my free time in the library and fellow members of the 84th U.S. Army Band probably didn't know that I went there at all. They were more aware of my commitment to bettering German-American relations by spending as much time and money as I could in the various night spots with names like "Atelier," "Palette," "Sofie's," and "The Hole in the Wall." It may not have been the best of times, but they were good times, and I have the list of books I read that year to prove it.

Those libraries and reading experiences did not directly lead me to becoming a librarian, even though I remarked more than once in high school that I wanted to have my own library one day, but they did help me get into college where that part-time job in the **Bancroft Library** led directly to an interest in becoming a librarian. And yes, it is all personal.

Bet You Missed It

Press Clippings — In the News — Carefully Selected by Your Crack Staff of News Sleuths

Column Editor: **Pamela M. Rose, M.L.S.** (Web Services & Library Promotion Coordinator, University at Buffalo; Phone: 716-829-2408 x129; Fax: 716-829-2211) <pmrose@acsu.buffalo.edu> wings.buffalo.edu/~pmrose

Column Editor's Note: Hey, are you reading this? Your esteemed column editor would like to know what you think! Zip off a quick email to <pmrose@buffalo.edu>. Does BYMI fill your needs? Do you have any suggestions for changes? I'm listening! — PR

MAY AS WELL SWITCH IF YOU'RE LOSING THE FIGHT by Bruce Strauch (The Citadel)

When the big city Wi-Fi craze began to build momentum, large telecom and cable companies nearly had a cow. What they were charging \$40 a month for was now being slashed to \$15 or even free if you were in St. Cloud, Florida. Instinctively they tried to stop it through regulatory legislation shoved through state governments. But they lost at every turn.

So now that **AT&T**, **Cox Communications**, and **Time Warner** are seeing markets lost to **Google** and **EarthLink** they want to jump on the bandwagon.

See — **Amol Sharma**, "Companies That Fought Cities on Wi-Fi, Now Rush to Join In," *The Wall Street Journal*, March 20, 2006, p. B1.

YES, HUMANS CARRY MORE PARASITES AND PATHOGENS THAN DOGS by Bruce Strauch (The Citadel)

How do you cook alligator? Just how long can you keep sushi before serving? And can a document shredder be used to tear up tortillas, egg rolls and wonton skins for shredded tortillas et al. on dishes?

These and other vital health questions for restaurants may now get a rapid response at www.foodsafetyweb.info. There an elite lineup of microbiologists, chefs, restaurateurs and regulators from thirty countries are standing by to grapple with the complex world of food and disease.

See — **Jane Zhang**, "Today's Question: How Do You Properly Cook an Alligator?" *The Wall Street Journal*, March 20, 2006, p.A1.

Editor's Note: Some *Bet You Missed Its* had to be cut from this issue. Watch for more *Bet You Missed Its* in June! — KS

Issues in Vendor/Library Relations — 100 Chefs

Column Editor: **Bob Nardini** (Senior Vice President & Head Bibliographer, YBP Library Services, 999 Maple Street, Contoocook, NH 03229; Phone: 800-258-3774 x. 3251; Fax: 603-746-5628) <rnardini@ybp.com>

Among the various types of **Google** envy, some are a lot more prevalent than others. You can **Google** that term, in fact. ("**Google**," as our newly-made cliché has it, is verb as well as noun, and for all I know adverb, adjective, preposition, and every other part of speech.) If you do, you will see that the term mainly applies to businesses — direct competitors — who suffer **Google** envy because they wish they had thought of some of the things that **Google** thought of first. This is a relatively small group of people, of course.

Then there are those of us, such as librarians and library vendors, who develop and maintain online databases and interfaces, like **Google** does, and who envy the search engine company's resources because we are always being compared to **Google**. Why aren't your searches as fast as **Google's**? Why isn't your interface as nice as **Google's**? How come **Google** can bring out something new so quickly? Sometimes we see figures on the number of servers **Google** has — around 10,000, I think it is — or the number of soft-

ware engineers employed by **Google** — 1,000 or 2,000, maybe, but really, past a certain point, who's counting? If we had just a fraction of **Google's** resources, we grumble, we'd show them then. But we don't, and while it often feels as if we're competing with **Google**, we're really spectator-competitors, with a good seat to watch the show, but as if watching movies, with no chance to match up in real life with the amazingly beautiful actors and actresses on screen who might as well

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inhabit a different planet than ours. And although we can envy with anyone out there, we're not a large group either.

To locate truly widespread **Google** envy, the thing to do is to count everyone who wants to work at **Google**. Now we're talking really big numbers, **Google**-scale numbers. How many millions of us who work somewhere beyond Mountain View, California think we're smart enough, hope we're cool enough, and wish we were young enough — **Google**'s booth at the recent **American Library Association** annual conference in San Antonio appeared to be staffed mainly by bright junior high interns — to have our own crack at those perks offered employees at **Google** headquarters, the yoga classes, the ping pong, the pool tables, the massages, the gym, the lava lamps?

More than all of these things put together, though, we envy the food, the famous free food served for breakfast, lunch, dinner, and snacks at **Google**'s three main cafes and 25 "micro kitchens." It's high-end food, beyond delicious, fresh, hip, fushioned, artful gourmet cuisine prepared in great variety and endless quantity, ordered up to keep everyone close to home base, and work, for as much of the day and night as possible, to fuel the long hours of technical development and business

planning — not to mention roller hockey games — necessary for **Google** to go about the workaday routines of changing the world.

This food aspect of **Google** was described in an article last November 14 in the *Wall Street Journal*, whose lucky reporter visited the **Google** campus on a day when one of several entree offerings was pork loin stuffed with a mixture of sausage, Swiss chard, garlic, white onions, red bell peppers, carrots, oregano, parsley, rosemary, olive oil, white wine, bread crumbs, and herb salt. One vegetarian choice was comprised of eggplant, tomato, onion, and couscous. The day's menus also featured glazed game hens, grilled sea bass, a ground turkey dish, stuffed squid, wild mushroom and caramelized onion bread pudding, pickled asparagus, several designer pizzas, a number of salads and vegetable choices, lobster ravioli, four soups, none of them bringing **Campbell's** to mind, and desserts like key lime mascarpone cannoli. Medieval feasts had nothing on this.

Beyond all the food, though, there was one remarkable detail in the *Journal* article, something that says more than any menu can, or any headcount of software engineers could say about the size, the resources, and the audacity of **Google**. It's this: **Google** employs 100 chefs.

Can you imagine, 100 chefs? Picture them streaming in at break of day toward the kitchen's food preparation islands, outfitted in jaunty hats and crisp whites, flashing specially engineered knives, spoons, spatulas, ladles. Of course they're probably never onsite all at the same time, but what an image. Restaurateurs must envy **Google** too. **Charlie Ayers**, chef for a wealthy Silicon

Valley family when hired away in 1999 to create the **Google** kitchen, got the job in part, according to the *Journal*, by whipping up a

test meal of curried roast pumpkin with Chinese five-spice tofu for founders **Larry Page** and **Sergey Brin**.

Page and **Brin** are of course the geniuses who got it all started with their better idea for a search engine. As everyone knows by now, they met in 1995 at **Stanford**, where they decided to organize all the world's information, incorporated **Google** to that purpose in 1998, turned a nice profit by 2001, and in 2004 raised \$1.7 billion through a public offering that was also a public spectacle. Ever since they've been busy spending that money by building new ways for **Google** to make yet more money.

Among librarians **Google Scholar**, a
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search engine for scholarly literature, and especially **Google Book Search**, a service based on the digitization of millions of books obtained from publishers and five research libraries, have drawn the most attention. But just a little clicking here and there around the **Google** Website reveals an incredible lineup of projects and services underway, some familiar, some unfamiliar, many, like **Scholar** and **Book Search**, still in a beta or somewhat experimental mode. There's blog searching, image searching, map searching, satellite searching, video searching, catalog searching, searching of university Websites. There's **Google** toolbar, **Google** desktop, **Google** messaging, **Google** shopping, **Google** blogging, **Google** software, **Google** news, **Google** mail, and more, everything designed to extend the reach and potential profitability of the company.

New services are one way to grow. Another is to create new **Google** users in all parts of the world. Today in the search engine business, or any business for that matter, this means China, whose ungainly embrace of capitalism and population of 1.3 billion will at some point, everyone figures, make it the world's largest market for practically anything. While China has well over 100 million Internet users today, Internet use is even so considered early stage, meaning that, for **Google**, there's a lot more to this country than special tofu.

Google's difficulties in China are well known. In 2000 the company launched a Chinese-language version of **Google.com**, but government-mandated filtering of search results by Chinese Internet Service Providers made the service slow, unreliable, and at times entirely unavailable, frustrating users. **Google** stood fast, rejecting self-censorship. Meanwhile, though, competitors unhampered by the **Google** value system began to work with the Chinese government. **Google**

watched as its share of the search market in China plunged, while the market share of **Baidu**, **Google's** principal competitor in China, rose from 2.5 to 46 percent. This in a market expected to more than double by 2010.

So **Google** changed course. Earlier this year the company launched **Google.cn**, a version that **Google** itself, like the China-based ISPs, will filter according to Chinese law. Has **Google** done evil here? The company has carefully explained its decision. The Internet is transforming China, for the better. But Chinese Internet users were even so underserved. More information, for them, would be better than less information. Unfiltered, imperfect access to **Google.com** will remain. **Google.cn** will tell users when results have been filtered. **Google** will protect user privacy by not hosting mail and blogging services in China.

It all sounds more reasonable than evil, **Google's** "calibrated" approach to the China problem, as one company official put it in testimony before a U.S. congressional committee. Of course calibration, as **Google** does not deny, includes business measurements as well as ethical judgments. **Google** noted in its China testimony that more than 350 million mobile phones are in use today in that country. A different **Google** official, in a different setting, recently noted that the company's single biggest business opportunity right now was cell phone advertising.

That setting was a meeting of key investment analysts. Investors, **Google** has them now. They're the people who handed over that \$1.7 billion. At last year's meeting for this group, according to the *New York Times* of March 3, 2006, the analysts were put off because the principal speaker was none other than **Charlie Ayers**, the chef, who delivered a presentation on the day's lunch menu. This year, with the **Google** stock price down 20 percent from an earlier high, the centerpiece presentation was delivered by **Google's** chief financial officer, who gave the analysts a "detailed and sober" look at the state of the com-

pany. He assured analysts that **Google's** growth opportunities remain boundless.

Was there really any other choice in China than the one **Google** made? Surely most of us don't consider that decision an "evil" one. And just as surely, as **Google** looks for ways to please investors and maintain growth, it won't be the last tough decision the company will face. Next economic slump, what happens? What about all those neat new beta services? In particular, what about the ones concerning libraries? **Google** investors will understand how important they are. Won't they? They'd lay off a few of those chefs first, wouldn't they?

"Investors have been successful," said one of the investment analysts, "in communicating with the management they can't be this funky renegade company." How long, one might ask, can **Google** remain **Google**? Think of all the industries that revolutionized the world through someone's invention or new idea. Working backwards in rough chronological order, think of computer software, fast food, computer hardware, television networks, airlines, processed food, motion pictures, telephone companies, electric utilities, automobiles, department stores, railroads.

That puts us back in the mid-nineteenth century, meaning that this is getting to be an old story, businesses that start with a burst of excitement and utopian promise but in time become merely backdrop to our lives. At best, these companies are invisible pieces of necessary infrastructure, like sidewalks or banks; at worst, they are objects of ridicule or even contempt. These companies grew, they made choices, they became businesses like any other.

"Don't be evil" is the famous **Google** motto. Nobody I know of thinks of **Larry Page** and **Sergey Brin** as evil men. But these are two smart guys, after all. Early on, they must have known that one day, they'd need the reminder. 🐼

International Dateline — The Importance of Metadata and Interoperability

by **Dr. Peter T. Shepherd** (Project Director, COUNTER) <pt_shepherd@hotmail.com>

In one of the more famously precious exchanges in **Oscar Wilde's** "Importance of Being Ernest," **Cecily** declares her passion for plain speaking with the cliché "When I see a spade I call it a spade," only to be put down by **Gwendoline's** cutting reply "I am glad to say that I have never seen a spade. It is obvious that our social spheres have been widely different." Thus has it been for many of us in the publishing and library world. We all rely on

metadata (data about data), we all use metadata, as a tool it is as indispensable as the spade; but it is something that, on the whole, we assume is taken care of by someone else. We have moved in widely different social spheres.

Such can no longer be the case. The rapid advance of electronic publishing has created a growing need for an expanding range of reliable metadata to support the publishing and management of information resources.¹ In

addition to descriptive metadata to characterize content, we need technical metadata for technical processes, rights metadata for rights resolution and preservation metadata for digital archiving. Occurrences of metadata vary tremendously in richness. The strategic deci-

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