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eBook: State of Art

Cris Ferguson

Furman University, cferguson13@murraystate.edu

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Against the Grain

c/o Katina Strauch
209 Richardson Avenue
MSC 98, The Citadel
Charleston, SC 29409

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Against the Grain

"Linking Publishers, Vendors and Librarians"

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eBooks: State of the Art

by **Cris Ferguson** (Electronic Resources/Serials Librarian, James B. Duke Library, Furman University, 3300 Poinsett Highway, Greenville, SC 29613; Phone: 864-294-2713) <cris.ferguson@furman.edu>

We would like to thank **Katina** for the opportunity to guest edit this special eBooks issue of *Against the Grain*.

With the announcement that **Google** will be digitizing books from the collections of **Harvard**, **Stanford**, the **University of Michigan**, the **University of Oxford**, and the **New York Public Library** and making them available online, this issue is especially timely. We are all stakeholders in the eBook industry, whether we are publishers, vendors, librarians, or end users. The eBook industry is still evolving, and it remains an important issue for information professionals.

We have compiled ten articles covering a broad spectrum of topics related to eBooks. **Alan Dawson** and **Jake Wallis** contributed a comprehensive list

of factors to take into consideration when creating your own eBooks. **Heather Wicht** wrote up a thoughtful discussion of eBook selection and acquisition, including discussion of pricing models and a list of considerations when selecting eBooks. **Toby Green** and **Matt Brosius**, of **OECD**, highlight the development of the business model that has contributed to the success of the **OECD eBook** product. In her article "eBooks in the Health Sciences," **Ramune Kubilius** explores the various trends and challenges facing health sciences eBook products. She has included an appendix of some health sciences product vendors. Speaking of vendors, **Jill Grogg** and **Beth Ashmore** conducted interviews with over ten different eBook industry insiders, asking tough questions about sales, usability, and the role of libraries in eBook development. **Lynn Connaway** and **Clifton Snyder** in-

vestigate the possibilities of using transaction log statistics from eBook platforms to analyze usage patterns. **Ellen McCullough**, of **xrefer**, recaps "eBooks and E-Content," a panel discussion from the **2004 Charleston Conference**. **Ellen's** paper focuses on eBook usage and ways to enable patron discovery of eBooks. Representing the academic library perspective, **Randle Gedeon** and **Bettina Meyer** at **Western Michigan University** provide a case study of **WMU's** eBooks initiatives. **Wilhelm Widmark**, of the **University Library of Stockholm (SUB)**, describes and evaluates textbooks as eBooks based upon his experiences with a new project in Sweden. Wrapping up the issue, **Brian Clark** and **William Thompson** provide a critique of two eBook services and discuss some areas for improvement for all eBook vendors.

If Rumors Were Horses

As usual, lots is going on. First off, just got an email from that wonderful Chaos woman — **Sandy K. Paul** <Sandy@SKPAssociates.com>. As of February 27, 2005, Sandy will officially be **Sandra K. Money**. After almost two and a half years of being together, John and she are getting married in the company of a small group of friends and family. Sandy will still keep Paul as her professional name and John will be able to get a Green Card, making his frequent visits to the US much less problematic. Anyway, we promised that we would let you all know. Best wishes to the new couple.

And this gets me to the subject of another marriage. A little bird told me that the vivacious **Helen Henderson** <helen@helenhenderson.com> and the smart-as-a-tack **Chris Leamy** were married this past December in Florida after 22 years of living together! Anyway, Helen and Chris are going to Las Vegas for a short honeymoon the first week of March. Congratulations, Helen and Chris! Many happy returns!

Talk about news! **Bob Molyneux** <drdata@molyneux.com> — Dr.Data, no less — is moving to Huntsville, Alabama to work for **Sirsi** as the **Chief Statistician**. He starts on March 1. What,

you ask, is he going to be doing? Bob will be working mostly on the **Normative Data Project** which was announced at the recent **ALA Midwinter** in Boston. The goals of this cooperative effort are to compile transaction-level data from libraries throughout North America; to link library data with geographic and demographic data on communities served by libraries; and, thereby, to empower library decision-makers to compare and contrast their institutions with real-world industry norms on circulation, collections, finances, and other parameters. **NDP** data and reports will be available online in the second quarter of 2005. This was Bob's first idea for a dissertation topic many years ago but he couldn't get data. But the phoenix has risen. Now he gets the data. Bob will be in Charleston in November to tell us all about it! And there is a great article in **Biblio Tech Review** (14 Jan. 2005) which is worth a check out. www.sirsi.com/Newsevents/Releases/20050117 NDP.html
www.librarynormativedata.info/
www.biblio-tech.com/

What To Look For In This Issue:

Selecting and Acquiring eBooks	26
eBooks in the Health Sciences	36
Riding the eBook Wave	41
Textbooks as eBooks	55
I Have Seen the Future and It "Doesn't Quite" Work.....	57
Troubling Choices: Full-text Access and the Old Hard Copy Back Print Runs	60
Is Purchase on Demand a Worthy Model?	75
The Book & the Scholar: Celebrating the Year of the University Press	92
Quick Visit to Libraries in Singapore ...	94

Interviews

Dave Williams	61
Bob Schatz	62
Aileen McHugh	63
Philip Blackwell	65

1043-2094(200502)17:1;1-2

continued on page 6