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Convenient, Communitarian, Interactive, & Media Rich Collections

by **Daniel R. Lee** (Interim Team Leader for Undergraduate Services, University of Arizona Libraries; Phone: 520-621-6433) <leed@u.library.arizona.edu>

“... *Sims is way more fun than TV because TV gets so boring — you just stare at a screen and watch and watch and watch.*” — **Francesca Rookwood**, age 9.

“*Making characters is a lot more fun than watching TV. And with commercials you have to wait. I don't like to wait.*” — **Richard Rookwood**, age 6.¹

They may be a bit young now, but **Francesca** and **Richard** are our future undergraduates. By the time they get to our colleges and universities, they aren't likely to change their attitude about what they like to do and how they like to learn. The information resources we make available to them and direct them to will have to meet their expectations if we want to continue to engage them and remain central to the University's mission. So what will future undergraduates expect from our collections?

First, I believe it is safe to say they will want convenient access. Six year-old **Richards'** comment about the desirability of waiting separates him from few. We want convenience; our current students want convenience; our faculty want convenience. They tell us this in our **LibQUAL+™** results. They tell us this when we ask how often they come to our library buildings. They tell us this when we see the clear shift away from print and to electronic resources. Gate counts go up when libraries open Information (or Learning) Commons. In recent focus groups conducted at the **University of Arizona** students told us that one of the primary reasons they fill up our Information Commons is also convenience. They use our desktop computers so they don't have to lug their laptops around.

Until recently convenience has been all about format, about selecting electronic access whenever we have a choice. Format is still important, but now we must ensure that we can deliver information to students' information appliance of choice. Portable devices such as **Tablet PCs**, **PDAs**, handheld gaming devices, and even cell phones are becoming primary means of receiving, viewing, and reading content of all sorts. Convenience is also about more than format and now encompasses being available in our users' usual workflow. They look for, and expect to find, information, including library resources through the major search engines. Links to resources will need to be pushed to them, but only according to parameters they choose. If students have a place to go for course related information such as a course manage-

ment system, library resources should be linked from there. The materials we buy, borrow, or build for students will need to be viewable in the tools they use, and available where they normally look, or risk being ignored.

None of this is truly new. Saving our users' time has been an operating principle of libraries for a long time. A more recent trend that is leading to new ways of discovering and using information is the growth of social software. Sites like **MySpace**, **Facebook**, **flickr**, **del.icio.us**, and even **Amazon** and **Wikipedia** are changing user expectations of how content is created, presented, and used. As **Joseph Ugoretz** has pointed out in a recent blog posting, “our students are using these tools . . .

whether we have thought about them or not.”² These sites build peer communities and promote communal creation of content through reader participation and personalization.

Because of the growing popularity of these tools, expectations are already building for including reader reviews with our links to resources. Expectations are also building for other opportunities to build on and otherwise interact with content. This presents a significant challenge to our standard notion of authority that will have an enormous impact on our collections. Not only will the tools we provide to access and interact with library resources be different, but the resources themselves will be changed.

Some in the scholarly publishing community are already responding. In a recent piece in the *Chronicle of Higher Education* **Kate Wittenberg** of **Columbia University Press** called on fellow academic publishers to “be thinking about new ways to organize, store, and deliver our content” in light of changing student behavior.³ She suggests projects and partnerships, such as teaming with gaming companies to produce the next generation of textbooks, that will lead publishers into the new environment. **Nature Publishing** is currently testing a

community building site for researchers in Boston using a suite of social software tools including personal profile pages for those who register, social networking tools, blog hosting, and highlighting news and events of local interest.⁴

Then there are the researchers at the Institute for the Future of the Book.

“*Imagine an online Harry Potter in which readers can keep personal blogs, engage in live chats in the margins, annotate the text collectively, compose alternate endings and contribute to communal glossaries, and repositories of lore. Or an electronic Moby Dick that allows teachers to create a virtual seminar around the text while connecting students to a vast library of scholarly resources. Or a new kind of book, native to the network, that we have not yet conceived — one that employs multiple media forms, and grows and changes over time.*”⁵

Rather than just hypothesizing this future, they are taking steps to make it happen. Coming soon is their idea of the “networked book” that takes further advantage of the social soft-

“A more recent trend that is leading to new ways of discovering and using information is the growth of social software.”

ware currently available. Sometime this summer they are planning to release open-source software, they're calling it **Sophie**, which will enable authors to create interactive books with structures the author designs and controls. Authors will be able to create a standard linear text. Or they can index the text and create different access points that rearrange the text by topic. Readers will be able to add links between books created using **Sophie** whether or not the other book is on the same or a remote computer. Readers will also be able to add commentary of their own, create communal annotations, or, perhaps, even edit the original text. **Sophie** will be extensible so that **RSS** feeds could be added, or the book could be updated by a blog outside of the software.⁶

Besides the elements of social software that will be built into books created using **Sophie**, institute researchers are also including the ability to imbed multiple and mixed media in works. This is in keeping with another trend that is changing the expectations of our collections. For some time librarians and researchers have talked about linking research data to the articles that report that research. For the most part we were likely thinking about numeric data and, in some fields, still photographs. However, we are all becoming accustomed to seeing audio and video files linked to articles on Websites of the national news outlets. As long as such me-

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If It's Not Digital It Does Not Exist: The Future of Science and Technology Collection Development

by **Johann van Reenen** (Associate Professor, Assistant Dean for Research & Instruction Services, University Libraries, University of New Mexico, Albuquerque, NM; Phone: 505-277-8310) <jreenen@unm.edu>

Emergent behaviors and information systems will change collection development irrevocably. We can attempt to halt them (but they are unstoppable). We can attempt to change their results (although disruptive agents are unpredictable) we can capitalize (our only real option) on these emergent systems. These should be considered seriously — we live in times where what seems undoable, political suicide, or too expensive one day may be our saving grace the next.

As Wilson and Hayward (1999, not verbatim) says:

"The increase in the degree of [electronic] connectedness constitutes the greatest change in life today. For it is not just that there is more change than ever before, but the inter-connectedness has changed the nature of change itself, making it more unplannable and unpredictable, more abrupt and dynamic than



Pictured above is **Johann van Reenen**.

it has ever been or than our traditional organizational systems can handle."

From the publishers view. Many of the author's ideas coincide with the Wittenberg (2006) article:

"While we have been busy attending conferences, workshops, and seminars on every possible aspect of scholarly communication, information technology, digital libraries, and e-publishing, students have been quietly revolutionizing the discovery and use of information. Their behavior, undertaken without consultation or attendance at formal academic events, urgently forces those of us in scholarly publishing to confront some fundamental questions about our organizations, jobs, and assumptions about our work." (Wittenberg 2006)

I have also been reminded (Thank you to **Linda Lewis at UNM**) of the **Janus Conference of 2005** and the **Six Key Challenges for Collection Development in Research Libraries** they arrived at (<http://www.library.cornell.edu/janusconference/>).

Being in the Customer's Space

Our ability to serve information to a variety of devices is crucial. Our customer's space is more and more electronic and found in the handheld device of a Net-Generation student. "Few of our OPACs can handle searching from say a Blackberry!" Whose job is it to arrange technology development that will allow this? For services such as **Google** and **Yahoo!** the question is moot. They are in the customer's space and have beaten us to it!

Libraries need to:

- Set up electronic document delivery, e.g., 80 % same day email delivery. Services such as **RAPID** come close.
- Extend the pool of available monographs through a delivery system such as **Prospector**. The **Colorado Library Alliance** has over seven million items in the combined catalogues that can reach a customer's desk in about the same time it takes her/him to go to the library and get it themselves
- Develop **Amazon** look-alike catalogs that present search results for owned and non-owned items with rich annotations and pointers. Provide options for delivery to home or office.
- Default ILL requests for items two years or newer to an on-the-spot (library credit card?) order as discussed in previous issues of **ATG**. This monograph will be used at least once, which is more than we can say about a large percentage of the books we purchase. Alternatively, partner with say, **Amazon** and **Powells**.
- Purchase electronic book services rather than eBooks themselves, especially in areas that use monographs in "bits and pieces" to check facts or refresh knowledge, e.g., computer and engineering sciences.
- Purchase more materials that engage users such as educational gaming tools and games. Then build information content for these.
- Provide alternative ways to deliver content, e.g., pod-casts to deliver instruction and training.

From Berlin to DC — Open Access

The global O.A movement will influence CD decisions as more content becomes available.

I believe we are nearing a tipping point when academic (including published peer reviewed) content will explode on the Web.


How credible is the OA movement? There is a growing record of accomplishments, culminating, for US libraries, in the **FRPAA** bill before **Congress**. The list includes the **Budapest Open Access Initiative** (December 2001), the **Berlin Declaration on Open Access to Knowledge in the Sciences and Humanities** (October 2003 see: <http://www.zim.mpg.de/openaccess-berlin/>), the **Bethesda Declaration on Open Access Publishing** (2003), and the **National Institutes of Health Rule** (2005) that "requested" grantees put copies of their published articles in the agency's own online repository, <http://www.pubmedcentral.nih.gov/>, **PubMed Central**. This should

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dia help explain the text, make the argument, or verify the claims an author is making in her book, including it will become commonplace.

It will be interesting to see what sort of new creations authors develop with **Sophie** once it

is available. Needless to say, it has the potential to change our notion of the book. If it lives up to the publicity it will certainly be an important tool that will lead to our being able to provide collections that will meet our new undergraduates' expectations. Perhaps these will be in time to meet the **Rookwood** children's expectations by the time they are undergrads. 

Endnotes

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