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International Dateline -- An Interview with Michael Mabe

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purchased perpetual access rights. These titles are hosted by OCLC. If it were a simple matter to load them locally and manage the preservation and authentication issues ourselves, it might be tempting.

However, it is not that simple. The service we access through OCLC includes not only the content, but metadata, a search interface, authentication mechanisms, and preservation strategies. Preservation of electronic information is still a very new area. There is no handy procedures manual that anyone can follow yet. Let's not forget that we still have plenty of books in paper form that are in the process of disintegration. Off-the-shelf database / search interface tools that one can easily add archival data to are not available yet, as far as I know.

As an open access advocate, naturally I see that the need for authentication to create accessible archives of purchased information illustrates yet another advantage of open access. With no need for authentication mechanisms, it is much simpler to create a usable archive of books, journals or whatever.

Until recently, I would have thought open access unlikely with books. It seems, however, that even though books have escaped open access advocacy efforts, there are those who are simply plunging ahead with an OA model for books — there are plenty of free online textbooks available already. See my blog posting, **Open Access Textbooks**, at <http://poetic.economics.blogspot.com/2005/12/open-access->

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Thanks for raising an interesting question.

This is one of the areas where a few of us need to forge ahead and experiment — I look forward to reading the other responses.

International Dateline — An Interview with Michael Mabe

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

In May 2006, Michael Mabe took over from Pieter Bolman as CEO of STM, the international STM Publishers association. Michael is very well known in the library and scholarly worlds through his work over the previous seven years as Director of Academic Relations at Elsevier. In this position he played not only an important role in making the case for his company at a time when its business policies were being severely criticised, but he was also a significant contributor to the wider debate on the value of journals in the electronic world. As CEO of STM he will continue to be a leader in this debate.

Having taken an MA after doing research at Oxford into chemical aspects of radiocarbon dating, Michael began his publishing career as a scientific lexicographer working on OUP's *Oxford English Dictionary Supplement* in 1980. After leaving OUP in 1985 he worked in various capacities for the British Standards Institution, Pergamon, and Elsevier, where he was Publish-

ing Director of the international materials science programme. A frequent contributor of both articles and book reviews to *Serials*, *Learned Publishing*, *ASLIB Proceedings* and other journals that cover aspects of scholarly publishing, he speaks regularly on the evolution of the scholarly communications system.

Michael's research interests have covered bibliometrics, user behaviour and the quantitative, historical and sociological analysis of publishing systems and the needs they fulfill for their users. He has been a Visiting Professor at the College of Communication at the University of Tennessee and in the Department of Information Science at City University, London.

In his spare time Michael is trying to speak acceptable Italian, collects rather more acceptable wine and likes to visit Roman archaeological and historical sites. He does not

yet regard

STM publishing as being of primarily historical interest and feels that the rumours of the imminent death of the industry are much exaggerated. Provided that they continue to adapt, Michael envisages STM publishers continuing to play a key role in the research communications process well into the future.

In this interview Peter Shepherd not only explores with Michael the future of the STM publishing world, but also takes him on the occasional detour into the history of the business in which they have both been participants during the past two decades.

PS: What are your three main priorities for STM?

MM: I have three clear priorities for STM: First the organization must proactively advocate the true value added of the STM publisher in the scholarly process and assist STM mem-

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bers in doing this through effective communication and lobbying, where appropriate. Second, we must raise STM's profile as a global association for all STM publishers and outreach to information workers at all levels in all STM publishers. Third, we have to improve the range of services and information for STM Members, including education and training on a global scale and more focused meetings on topics such as "the future of the book." To achieve these I think we have to actively involve the membership and use our Website more effectively as a means of communication.

PS: *STM's membership is largely European and American. How do you plan to involve rapidly developing countries such as China in the future?*

MM: We are vigorously seeking to engage with the Chinese STM community through industry-wide training courses and alliances with trade bodies in China. We already have a relationship with Science Press, the official publisher of the Chinese Academy of Sciences and there is a nascent STM organization in China.

PS: *The role of librarians, agents and publishers in the publishing chain has changed significantly with the advent of online publications and services. How do you see this changing further in the next five years?*

MM: Many of the existing trends are likely to continue, with the overlap of functions already noted: libraries providing "publishing systems," publishers providing archives, agents being squeezed by publishers going direct to libraries, reducing discounts and libraries reluctant to pay service fees. But there is a fourth party now: the research funders. If funders become the principal source of publisher income rather than libraries this will affect the relationships as well. The journal publishing system, which has evolved gradually over the centuries, is likely to become more chaotic in the short term, until a new equilibrium is reached that brings into balance these new forces and influences. There is certainly growing pressure on authors from their institutions and funding agencies to publish their research in specific ways; this could be seen as a threat to academic freedom.

PS: *The scientific research article has proved a very robust building block for the exchange of information and ideas. Do you envisage any fundamental changes in this in the coming five years?*

MM: No, mainly because the article is not merely a communication tool but has important social and rhetorical roles to play in science. Articles are written to persuade a scientific audience that 1) what a singular observer saw on a wet Wednesday is true for everyone at all times and places 2) that the work conducted was done so as an instance of the application of the scientific method 3) that the level of claims the author is making are matched by the level of rigour of the "cross-examination" via peer review. This accounts for why articles are structured as they are and for the language they adopt:

they are "witness" statements in the formal court of scientific opinion. What we are seeing however is an increasing array of data and other non-text elements linked to articles. This will grow, but it will also (and I think already is) causing problems over versioning and authority of datasets. It may well be that we shall see "database journals;" that is to say, databases with editorial boards and editors performing for data the gatekeeping role (registration, validation etc.) currently only seen for journals.

PS: *What is a book and what is a journal in the online environment?*

MM: At the extremes of the spectrum journals and books will remain separate even online. Books, especially monographs or graduate texts, are generally split into relatively long (20-30 or more pages) not usually formally refereed, chapters which may or may not conform to the structural requirements of the rhetorical research article (see 4 above), whereas archival journals (short communications and full paper ones) will generally contain short (less than 20pp) peer-reviewed structured reports of specific research. Where the distinction will become difficult will be in the arena of review journals and reference works where similar types of article are found in both. There used to be a distinction in terms of business model, with books being one-offs and journals continuity products, but since the main viable models for eBooks (and especially for e reference works frequently) involve a subscription approach, this distinction is disappearing.

PS: *Research using COUNTER statistics has shown that the "unsubscribed" journals in publisher Big Deals are actually being quite heavily used. What does this tell us?*

MM: It tells us that the Big Deal is actually a Good Deal for users, and that the historic techniques of collection development have not really embraced the needs of users as revealed by log files. In some cases the titles used are consulted so heavily it is surprising that they were not selected to be subscribed titles. Big Deals are also causing a decline in ILL in some areas, so much so that some libraries are using the saving to pay for their institutional repository efforts.

PS: *Most big deal prices are still based on historic subscription holdings. Is this not now anomalous? In the immortal words of Willie Whitelaw (notable as one of the last Gentlemen to serve in a British Cabinet, and renowned for his non sequiturs), is the publishing industry now "examining alternative anomalies?"*

MM: The issue is to do with comfort zones and the cost of transition from old models to new. Alternative approaches to pricing collections via usage or via file user analyses always give winners and losers among library customers. No one wants to be a loser so the anomalous historic holdings remain as the last point that everyone agreed on as a basis for setting a price. Almost all approaches to new models will have this problem; the challenge for the STM community is to come up with a new model and a transition plan that is acceptable to all parties.

This is proving to be difficult.

PS: *What has been the impact of Google Scholar on STM publishers?*

MM: Google Scholar has really emphasised the major difference between digital documents and paper ones: their infinite perfect reproducibility and ease of change. One copy of a journal article can serve the world and earlier versions of documents can be altered to resemble the final one. While final publisher copies or near final author ones were strewn around the digital universe, like the proverbial needles in the haystack this posed little threat to the publishers' versions. The advent of tools that effectively allow the easy location of these unofficial copies poses real problems. Recent work by Elsevier (the Core Trends Survey of 6,400 researchers worldwide) indicated that about 14% of journal articles are freely available on the Web in final version through Google Scholar. The moves towards self-archiving when combined with the possibilities of search could effectively light a bonfire under the viability of the peer reviewed journal and the subscription model, with adverse consequences for both science (viability of peer review) and publishers. The Google phenomenon, in terms of scholarly information, is currently largely restricted to undergraduates; the evidence is that when they become professional researchers they tend to adopt the customs and practices of their professional community in terms of information resources.

PS: *Will China participate fully in the existing journal system, as it appears that they have plans to start up their own?*

MM: They certainly appear to be participating; their contribution in terms of papers has risen from less than 1% to near 5% in the last decade and looks to rise still further. They are starting their own titles but there are still enormous rewards for Chinese scientists who get papers into the top non-Chinese titles in terms of salaries and promotions. Association with the top international journal brands helps the individual scientist establish his own brand, whether he is in the USA or China. At a more philosophical level it remains to be seen whether having a significant mass of Chinese scholars will alter the nature of an essentially Western Post Renaissance model that depends upon notions of the individual scholar and their ownership of ideas.

PS: *Is it a good thing or a bad thing that politicians have become so interested in STM publishing?*

MM: Probably bad, since politicians are by nature looking for simplistic solutions that garner votes and give good sound bites. Such thinking will not help a sophisticated arena of publishing like STM where the apparently simple is not what it seems. "Public funding = public access" is a good example of this. No one is suggesting that the UK Government funding of the Olympics will mean free tickets to see the Games, yet funding research and funding publishing are frequently confused, and they are not the same.

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PS: What has been the most memorable moment of your publishing career to date?

MM: I remember fondly being at the heart of the fullerenes revolution in chemistry and materials science long before it became known to science and the public more generally. Working with the late **Richard Smalley** and **Harry Kroto** (who both later got the **Nobel Prize** for their work) in the early 1990s just as the field exploded was exhilarating scientifically and as a publisher. It made me really appreciate that publishers are effectively midwives to scientific discovery.

PS: Is this the end of publisher lunches?

MM: Lunches seem to have faded away during the early 1990s as a more puritanical view of business crept in ("lunch is for wimps") and as many publishers moved from city centres to enterprise parks where there were rarely any restaurants. Elements of the tradition remain at conferences, however, where editors of editorial boards are sometimes entertained to dinner but never as lavishly as some (such as the author **Tom Angus** in his novel *Let Them Eat Cake*) have imagined. The days of **Robert Maxwell's** legendary events are very much in the past. This is one feature of the wider social changes that have taken place in publishing.

LET THEM EAT CAKE

— a novel by Tom Angus

A little learning is a dangerous thing and when combined with a lot of money it can be lethal. The once cozy world of scholarly publishing is now rocked by controversy. For more than three centuries scholars, publishers and librarians worked in harmony. Journals were affordable and science trusted. No longer. Librarians and publishers are at loggerheads and scholarship under pressure. The credibility of a system built up over hundreds of years has been brought to the verge of collapse within the space of a decade. Can publisher greed be the only cause? Or is too much money being thrown at too many researchers with too few original ideas? Will the Internet bring the whole edifice crashing down?

REVIEWS OF LET THEM EAT CAKE

"The story line is strong and grips... In particular there are some wonderful set pieces... Please may we have sequels or prequels?" — **Anthony Watkinson**, in *Learned Publishing*

"Tom Angus has created a set of characters that are second to none in their wild and offbeat eccentricity." — **Jeff Foster**, in *Armchair Interviews*

LET THEM EAT CAKE MAY BE ORDERED IN THE FOLLOWING WAYS:

1. From the Amazon online bookstore www.amazon.com
2. From the AuthorHouse online book shop www.authorhouse.com

Title: Let Them Eat Cake — a novel (January 2005)

Author: Tom Angus

ISBN: 1420810480 (paperback); ISBN: 1420810499 (electronic book, available only from AuthorHouse); Pages: 324 + viii.

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**

COPYRIGHT BATTLES YOU MISSED by Bruce Strauch (The Citadel)

Everyone knows about the squabble with **Google** over the **Google Book Search**. But who's aware of the problem of orphan works — works under copyright whose owner can't be located? US compliance with the **Berne Convention** eliminated the required registration of works for protection. That registration provided a name and address. Risk averse libraries, educators, publishers et al drop orphan works so they are not used in new creative efforts or made available to the public. And the majority of the record of the 20th century culture is orphan.

Can that be true if **Berne** is 1989?

The **Library Copyright Alliance** is recommending a limitation on remedies for orphan works, but **Congress** is not paying much attention.

And then there's the issue of Section 108 of the **Copyright Act** that allows libraries to distribute protected works for scholarship and research. And of course the fight there is over whether digital is covered. The **Association of American Publishers** is threatening suit against **UC-San Diego** over the use of electronic reserves.

See — **Matthew Dames**, JD, MLS, "Beyond Google," *Searcher*, Sept. 2006, p.21.

LOVING BOOKS DIFFERENTLY by Bruce Strauch (The Citadel)

DeLea Sayers is a revolutionary war reenactor who wanted an authentic 18th-century-style journal to write in. Unable to find one, he made his own and joined the world of bookbinding. The subculture is small, but passionate. The national **Guild of Bookworkers** has 900 members all devoted to retaining lost quality through the craft's hands-on nature.

See — **Sheila Flynn**, Associated Press, "Bookbinding Tradition Attracts Modern Enthusiasts," *The Post and Courier*, July 23, 2006, p.6F.

YOU CAN'T FOCUS IN OPEN OFFICES — DUH! by Bruce Strauch (The Citadel)

A proceedings of the **National Academy of Sciences** says you may learn while distracted, but you don't learn well. You can memorize a phone number — declarative learning — or you can punch it in a thousand times — habit learning. Memorization is more practical as you don't need to be at the phone.

Problem is, if you're distracted, declarative learning suffers. Which means new concepts and new information can't be digested.

Which means multi-tasking and open offices are just as awful as everyone knows.

See — **Randolph Schmid**, Associated Press, "Distracted brains may not learn as well," *The Post and Courier*, July, 26, 2006, p.6A.