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Library Marketplace -- Booksellers Who Blog

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collaboration permits multiple overlapping descriptions. The example always used is that of a photograph of a puppy, which could be described as “puppy” and “cute,” and could be found along either axis.

What Has This to Do With Scholarship and Research?

I am profoundly skeptical of the idea that users will create a better index of scholarly information on the fly than a publishing system that works to a taxonomy honed over many years by scholars. However, the formal index is slow to change, and does not react to changes in disciplines very quickly, or to new areas of knowledge. Tagging is immediate. If tagging becomes second nature to researchers, the index can evolve in real time. Can publishers use folksonomies to complement conventional indexes? Yes, but only if tagging is widespread and intensive, so that new index terms become widely used and gather authority through use. Folksonomies comprise a resource for publishers. Provided that they are subject to a proper review process, they can be of considerable value as navigational aids to the literature. User input makes better products!

There are some features of **Web 2.0** that are already being used by scholarly publishers:

- **RSS (Really Simple Syndication)** includes blogs, news feeds, and podcasts — a collection of Web-based services used to provide frequently updated information. Readers register for a feed. The service presents the reader with content that is new since the previous time they checked.
- One type of **RSS** is the blog. Blogs are already commonplace. Many companies — not just publishers — are using them to find out what their customers really think, and to feed this information back into product development. In the journal sphere, they can point readers to content and invite discussion about it.
- While digital technology has been used in production for a long time, narrow niches of interest are now much easier to reach online. *The Long Tail* is a reality in journal usage, as it is in the sale of books via **Amazon**.

Web 2.0 throws down a challenge to publishers' management of copyright. Publishers have — not unreasonably, as it is the bedrock on which they base their businesses — been obsessed with protecting their intellectual property rights. As Web technologies have developed, this has come to be seen as simply limiting re-use and preventing innovation. Publishers may have to reconsider their position and are likely to lower the barriers to use as they recognize that benefits accrue from collective adoption of content. Creative Commons licenses show how this might be done.

Content or Function?

It has become almost a cliché to say that

“content is king,” whoever controls the content controls the way it is used and paid for. I am not sure that this is true any more. And it certainly is a cultural attitude that inhibits publishers from taking a fundamental look at their business models.

It seems to me that the key to the future of the scholarly journal is to build functionality around the basic content. Readers are faced with more content, and less time to use it. That content may be freely available from repositories. So readers want tools that analyze and structure content in ways that make it useful to them. Publishers should add value to what they publish by adding workflow tools. **CSA Illustrata** enables searching for charts, graphs and illustrations in articles. The **Royal Society of Chemistry** has started to index images, table and compounds in its publications for search and download. Publishers have to adopt and adapt these technologies to their publishing, while maintaining the effectiveness and authority of the peer review process that underpins scholarly publishing.

My personal view is that publishers have much to do to understand and use these new technologies. The content itself is still important, but will almost certainly be less valuable in the longer run than the functionality they add to that basic peer-reviewed content: supporting datasets, taxonomies, deep indexing and linking to other relevant resources, searchability, tools for downloading, analyzing and manipulating data, facilities to build communities within the discipline that extend beyond the journal article, etc. There are already good examples of what can be done:

- the **Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)**

has married its books and journals with the underlying economic data on which they are based and tools that enable the user to find, download and model data in a way that would simply be impossible in print;

- **Knovel** is an aggregator of engineering reference material published by a wide range of publishers. The whole database is deeply indexed both by keywords and by data values and properties. Data, physical and chemical properties, tables and graphs are held in such a way that the user can undertake complex engineering calculations in a matter of minutes — calculations that might take the best part of a day using paper-based information. It is widely used in corporate markets, where its value lies in enhancing productivity.
- **Alexander Street Press** publishes databases in the humanities — especially music, women's studies and history. It sees folksonomies as a resource to update and improve its indexing on a continuous basis, and its use of **Web 2.0** techniques to build communities of interest, illustrate that this technology applies as much in the humanities and social sciences as in science, technology and medicine.

Readers are looking for ease of use and effectiveness: not just convenience, but efficiency, interactivity and applicability. They want to be able to apply the tools that come with the product to their own work. This is not just about saving time, but also about enhancing productivity. It is the creation of convenience, and the productive use of time, that will differentiate publishers from repositories. 🐜

Library Marketplace — Booksellers Who Blog

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Column Editor's Note: Names of Websites and blogs are in bold italic and use their own given names. It is best to Google them to get to their sites. I will give the url where there is any confusion. — JR

In the last “**Library Marketplace**” column I tried to show some of the ways libraries could highlight their book collections through simple measures such as creating more exciting displays for their books or participating in an active social engagement with patrons. In this column I am going to do a 180, or rather a 90 degree turn, and focus on some of the Websites that booksellers of all types use that might be of interest to librarians. The Web has become a great way to publicize and sell books, so I will try to highlight some of the tools that publishers and booksellers utilize to explore the marketplace and to connect to it.

Many of the vendors and publishers I spoke to for this column said that they depend mainly on Listservs and password protected Websites, as is to be expected in the commercial sphere, where there is a fee for access to such valuable information. Some of the bigger publishers even have internal news services to keep them up to date on industry news and trends. In addition, many publishers indicated that they were mainly concerned with electronic rights issues and licensing of their products and so paid more attention to licensing sites. Sound familiar? I will try to touch on some of those, but will mainly try to point out free sites dealing purely with books that will be of interest to booksellers as well as librarians.

Neilsen Books Scan and **Pub Alley** are two of the major tools used by publishers to keep track of their books in the marketplace and to

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test the waters for new titles. Both sites carry sales data from most of the bookstores in the US and from wholesalers, showing in stock quantities and weekly sales figures. From this data publishers can decide whether a book should go to reprint or if they need to prepare for a slew of returns. With *Pub Alley* they can track the sales of their competitors' books. This data can help in the decision whether to publish a similar title or hold back. It can also help publishers find niches that aren't being covered.

First and most popular among sites available to the general public is *Publishers Weekly*. Librarians and booksellers both put this at the top of their list for current publishing and bookselling news. Print and online subscriptions can be combined for a slightly higher fee. *PW Daily* is a free service with breaking news in the industry. One recent article of note covered **Michael Powell's** presentation at PNBA where he exhorted booksellers to become better marketers of their services. Booksellers said they are starting to use social Websites such as *MySpace* to market their stores and **Bantam Dell Publishing Group** is opening a virtual bookstore in *SecondLife* where browsers can pick up and read from current publications.

Another publishing industry site is the *Book Standard*. It is an excellent source for news about publishing mergers and buyouts. They are located in Chicago and have a leg up on some of the latest private banking buyouts, such as the **Baker & Taylor** sales of late. The site covers breaking news from publishers worldwide. Recent articles included one about the "widget" that **Random House** offers for a "listen inside the book" type service for their audio books and another article about a new publishing initiative in Britain for short stories offered as stand alone books.

Another popular site is *Google Alerts* where breaking news on selected subjects can be automatically selected and emailed. The service is very thorough and ferrets out listing from thousands of news sources and it is free. Another popular site is *AL Direct* the ALA weekly newsletter. It is free with ALA membership. This is a great way for publishers to stay on top of breaking news in the library world. Likewise the *Chronicle of Higher Education's* (<http://chronicle.com/news/>) and its daily emails keep many publishers up to date on current academic issues. The service is free with a print subscription.

There are many blogs on the net that deal with bookselling and publishing. They run the gamut from "zine" type fun and games to more serious industry oriented sites. I will try to cover some of both.

Shelf Life (www.inprint.co.uk/thebook-guide/shelf_life.shtml) is a UK site offering news from across the



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We know that your requirements for a subscription agent have changed...
...and we have developed and maintained the personalized customer service to meet your requirements.

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Contact mmarkwith@wtcox.com for more information

whole field of publishing and bookselling. It bills itself as "...what's new in the world of old books and book collecting, links to the news stories that matter." But it is much more than that. Recent articles included one about Chinese students photographing textbook pages in bookshops using their cell phones and then broadcasting them to their fellow students. Other articles included an interview with **R. Crumb** and a piece about **Gabriel Garcia Marquez** mediating a peace effort in Colombia.

Their main focus is the used and rare book trade and in that area they are probably the best source going. If you are a user of **Amazon**, **Advanced Book Exchange** or **Alibris** they have some very useful chat rooms where you can post queries and engage in discussions about used and rare books in general.

Shelf Awareness (www.shelf-awareness.com/news.html) is another blog, this time aimed at the US bookseller market. Here you can find news about bookshops and publishers and the nexus between the two. One recent article highlighted "Small Press Month" and what bookshops could do to encourage small press sales.

One site that I have found particularly helpful is the *The Exchange Online* (<http://aaupblog.aaupnet.org/?cat=9>) the newsletter of the **American Associa-**

tion of University Publishers. Here you will find discussions amongst university press editors and marketers. It's a great site to find out more about the issues that are of concern to such a vital segment of academic publishing. One recent discussion concerned the blogs that publishers such as **Oxford OUPblog** and **MIT MITPresslog** are setting up to encourage discussions about their books.

American Booksellers Association Book-selling This Week is a great site for keeping up to date with **BEA** and **BookSense** news. It is also useful to librarians to keep up with legal issues facing both bookstores and libraries in areas such as censorship. More librarians have been attending **BEA** lately and this site will keep you up to date on programs and speakers.

Now for some of the more fun, au courant, and hip independent blog spots. These sites are great fun for the heated discussions that blogs are famous for. The sites are maintained by true booklovers whose passion shows through in their dedication to keeping books in the forefront of their blogs. Long live uncensored literary blog spots!

Bookseller Chick even though Bookseller Chick works at a chain bookstore she isn't afraid to touch on the more controversial topics in publishing, but she does maintain her anonymity. She recently had a great post on **Starbuck's** entering the publishing world and the effect they can have on first time fiction.

Bookride recently had a very valuable
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Drinking From The Firehose — Too Many Passwords, Too Little Time

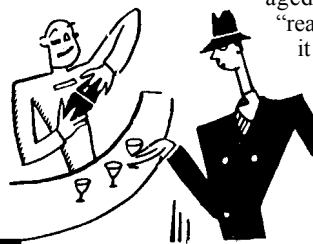
Column Editor: **Eleanor I. Cook** (Appalachian State University, Boone, NC) <cookei@appstate.edu>

The number of passwords that the average librarian must have at his or her fingertips has grown by leaps and bounds in recent years and there is no end in sight. This is a fact of life and we must find a way to manage them better. I suspect there are many people in other professions facing a similar challenge. IT system administrators and bank managers and well, just about anyone who shops or pays bills online with any regularity will find themselves collecting a hodgepodge of passwords to recall.

The experts often say that you should never write down passwords. Excuse me? As of this writing, I have 97 unique (almost) passwords — 34 of them are for travel and shopping sites, 23 of them are for credit cards and other personal finance and ID purposes, and 40 of them are specifically library work-related. To this latter category I add regularly as we increase the number of databases and e-journal platforms. Therefore, that advice is completely unhelpful to me, as there is no way on this earth I could possibly keep up with this many secret codes, no matter

what. The only personal codes I don't have to write down to remember are: My social security number, my home and work telephone numbers, and my ATM PIN. I also can usually recall my main email user name and password and my library ILS username and password but I use these everyday and I have these written down in the same place I have all the other codes I'll never remember, because I believe it is my responsibility to make sure that if something bad happens to me, that someone can get in there if necessary.

As a librarian and faculty member at a university, I am not held to the same strict security standards as people who work in the private sector. I have heard some interesting stories about how strictly passwords are managed out there in the



“real” world and while it makes me shudder (and wonder); I can respect their need for more security in some cases. But so often, companies are moving the li-

ability back onto the individual, so not to have to take the heat.

With identity theft such a serious problem, what are we to do? In order to explore this topic with more rigor, I decided to do a little research. I found a number of articles in the popular literature about the way passwords are developed and what the best practices are, but this did not satisfy me completely because some of the advice was the same old thing — don't write them down, and make them unique and hard to crack.¹ Ok, I sort of know this intuitively, but it is too difficult to do this, right? We are all lazy about the way we develop our passwords, but does it really matter?

But then, I met someone who changed my thinking entirely. A colleague of mine at **Appalachian State University** has done some really interesting research that captures the essence of the problems we face with the world of passwords. **Dr. Joseph Cazier** has several scholarly articles already published concerning password security issues and in his most recent study he has demonstrated some disturbing trends in the behavior of every-day citizens that points to the real need we all have for being more careful about how we construct the passwords that serve as barriers to our most sensitive personal information — our bank records, our email accounts, our financial and health records, and so on.

Dr. Cazier is certainly not the first person to explain this to me, least my systems colleagues at the Library feel slighted for essentially telling my coworkers and me the same thing. It's not that I didn't already know that

the best passwords are the hardest to remember or figure out — it's rather that **Dr. Cazier** has actually demonstrated this in an empirical way that can't be ignored.

In one study, **Joseph Cazier** and **Dawn Medlin** used a real data set of customer passwords from an e-commerce system to analyze the strength of the passwords. They were able to crack a majority of the passwords in a relatively short period of time.² In another study by the same authors, password choices were analyzed by gender and trends for password development were discussed.³

If you think you are alone in using your children, grandchildren or pet names as passwords, think again. Apparently the most popular constructs for password creation include these categories: family names; fan names, such as sports teams or entertainment characters; fantasy aspects, including sexual allusions (remember the commercial with the guy on the train trying to quietly tell the person on the other end that his password is “big boy”?) and then finally, cryptic combinations, which is what is considered the best practice for development of passwords. In addition, the categories of “Faith,” “Place,” and “Numbers” figure prominently in the way people develop passwords.⁴

Why is it a problem to use these kinds of passwords? They are easy to guess and the people trying to guess them are using many clever ways to get at your passwords. Besides running software programs looking for common passwords (which is one method) another disturbing but growing method is referred to as “social engineering.” Social engineering is the term used when sensitive information is obtained simply by asking for it — sometimes directly but other times under the guise of some other inquiry for which the victim doesn't understand the real purpose.

In an article soon to be published,⁵ **Cazier** and **Botelho** report on a study they conducted recently in a metropolitan area. They set up a table in front of a large financial institution in a downtown area. Presumably, individuals working at such a company would have received a modicum of security training concerning passwords and the like. The researchers did not hide where they were from or what they were doing — they identified themselves as university researchers and said that they were conducting a study about passwords. They asked people if they wished to fill out a survey and offered them candy, and also a chance to win a free dinner at a local restaurant for completing the survey. They then repeated the study in front of a major hospital (another institution where employees are assumed to have a higher than average understanding of security issues). They also repeated the study with a population of students.

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column on “sleepers” in used bookstores. You will be surprised at how much some seemingly common books are selling for.

Bibliophile Bullpen they recently listed all of those “unlisted” 800#'s for customer service at places like **Amazon**.

Bookstore Tourism (<http://bookstoretourism.blogspot.com/>) What a great site! **Larry Portzline**'s passion for books shows through in every post. Recent article included one on the founding of some new “Book Towns” and a discussion of the merits and demerits of writing in the margins of one's own books.

And last, but not least, **Publishing Insider**, the blog of **Carl Lennertz** at **Harper Collins**. His site is notable for its “insider” approach and also for its great set of links to even more blogs. The universe of book and literary blogs is an important way to stay in touch with the real thing, books.

And just for fun, check out these book related film clips on **YouTube**: “Introducing Le Book,” “Signed 1st Edition,” “March of the Librarians.”

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