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Charleston Conference Dates

Editor

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Turning Pages: Reflections ...
from page 30

have a responsibility to make accessible what is purchased. Without further, dedicated research on electronic access from the users' perspective, best practices will be slow to emerge. Experience so far suggests that users likely are quite willing to search content on Websites (either library or vendors' Websites), rather than sifting through an OPAC for digital resources. Yet that approach works well only if all eBooks are accessible through one vendor platform or are locally loaded on an institutional server. Once available through a common interface or platform the potential for federated searching of digital books becomes a real alternative to access through the OPAC. At this point there are significant limitations to federated searching but technological innovations are sure to overcome these problems in the foreseeable future. The alternative, namely to encourage users to search the OPAC and link out to specific titles of interest, clearly is not adequate either. When purchasing content in packages one or both options are possible. Purchasing on a title-by-title basis necessitates integration into the catalog. In the short term, both expedient approaches will have to be considered adequate. In the long term, the role and function of our catalog need to be agreed upon. Clarity on this issue is missing and doesn't appear to be on the horizon in the near future. Controversies over the design of next generation catalogs are equally divisive to some in the profession who worry that control and access is being sacrificed to expedience. Meanwhile our users Google and never think of searching a library catalog.

Sub-standard approaches are sub-standard only if users cannot find what they want and need. Technology should provide the capability to scoop relevant metadata from which to create catalog records with sufficient bibliographic detail to accurately identify and access the item. Combine this with digital Table of Contents (TOC) and the user has something to work with. Traditionally we have paid for TOC services as a catalog enrichment service, but why would we do so when the data is already part of the digital item in hand? Using technology to retrieve this data and import into a record allows effective resource management, and is a process well suited to technological automation. From there the user can treat an eBook as comparable to a journal with separate chapters/articles. Surely libraries can manage this process without outsourcing and without human intervention. Control in this fashion requires contracting for eBooks to be locally hosted. Otherwise it requires librarians to contract with our eBook vendors, not for MARC records, but for relevant metadata to create sufficient access points to the electronic book entity being described. In time, if the standardization efforts and consensus evolve, the possibility of upgrading and conforming can be considered. A united voice is needed to make this happen. Perhaps our consortia can lead this initiative as part of contracting for eBook packages. But frankly, if our users

are satisfied perhaps it is not an issue worth pursuing. The goal should be accessibility for the user. They search, they capture, and they print as needed.

In reviewing a recent Weblog by **Lorcan Dempsey**,⁷ he highlighted relevant points:

- Libraries are reducing investment in routine activities to focus on where they can most create value for the user. This leads to a focus on both ends of the value chain: use of resources and creation of resources.
- Cost and complexity need to be driven out of library activity. This drives an interest in standardization and consolidation.

From **Dempsey's** Weblog page it is possible to link to the *DEFF Strategy Discussion Paper*, which referenced the **OCLC Pattern Recognition Scan** from 2003. While neither source specifically deals with the issue of access to eBooks, the overall conclusions are relevant: shift the focus to the user and shift service from "what you see is what you get" to "what you need is what you get." Librarians continue to learn what our users both want and need but the bottom line is that students see eBooks as must-haves. Libraries already are competing with free eBooks from **Google** and other search engines on the Internet; it behooves us to take a lesson from these digital leaders by adopting the obvious approaches available and modifying these approach as users respond to them.

How can electronic book access be expedited compared to earlier efforts with journal Web pages? My biggest fear is that librarians will treat these resources as monographic series — a futile attempt to equate the serial-like nature of electronic content with the marketing and packaging of the content as a "book." While there may have been legitimate reasons to manage these entities in the convoluted

world of series, let's not digitally replicate the confusion.

Despite the slow introduction to electronic books, the current proliferation of purchasing options is waiting to be embraced while progress in managing these resources has stagnated. Since staff comprises the largest component of operating budgets, good business practices suggest that designing workflow processes, which allocate minimal staff and time in handling resources, is to be desired provided that there is no negative impact on identification and access for users. It is up to library staff to ensure eBook access to users is successful to the extent that it matches users' wants and needs. Expedient access options within, and outside of, the catalog must be widely shared and adopted with faith that the longer-term access issues can, and will, be resolved. So, let's work together to set reasonable standards, focus on effective access, reduce the preoccupation with control, and better serve our users. 🐼

Endnotes

1. **Coyle, Karen.** (2007). Resource Description and Access (RDA) Cataloging Rules for the 20th Century. *D-Lib Magazine*, 13 (1/2), Retrieved February 10, 2007 from <http://www.dlib.org/dlib/january07/coyle.html>.
2. **Dinkelman, Andrea and Stacy-Bates, Kristine.** (2007) Accessing E-books through Academic Library Web Sites. *College & Research Libraries* 68 (1) 45-58.
3. **Sharp, Steve.** (2006). E-book: the new serial? *Serials* 19 (1), 8-9. Retrieved from <http://uksg.metapress.com>.
4. **Sharp, Steve.** Ibid., p 9.
5. **Dinkelman, Andrea et al.** Ibid., p 47.
6. **Dinkelman, Andrea et al.** Ibid., p 52.
7. **Lorcan Dempsey's** Weblog on libraries, services and networks. February 5, 2007. Retrieved February 12, 2007 from <http://orweblog.oclc.org/archives/001261.html>.

Rumors
from page 22

at **UNC-Chapel Hill** about archiving print and e-content. We are hoping to have **Michael** write a regular column for *ATG* and perhaps speak during the **2007 Charleston Conference**. Can you believe it's been 37 years since **Bruce** and **Michael** were in Oxford as colleagues?

More visitors. **Pam Cenzler** <pam.cenzler@gmail.com> and her husband, **Doug**, were recently in **Charleston** enjoying the cool weather that we aren't used to. **Pam** is visiting **Melinda Scharstein** and her mother, **Terry**, and we hope to get a minute together to brainstorm about **Pam's** and **Susan Campbell's** mentoring roles at the **2007 Charleston Conference**. Should be fun, right?

continued on page 71

Future Dates for Charleston Conferences

Preconferences and Vendor Showcase

Main Conference

	Preconferences and Vendor Showcase	Main Conference
2007 Conference	7 November	8-10 November
2008 Conference	5 November	6-8 November
2009 Conference	4 November	5-7 November
2010 Conference	3 November	4-6 November