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Bet You Missed It -- Press Clippings -- In the News -- Carefully Selected by Your Crack Staff of News Sleuths

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Bet You Missed It

Press Clippings — In the News — Carefully Selected by Your Crack Staff of News Sleuths

Column Editor: **Bruce Strauch** (The Citadel)

Editor's Note: Hey, are y'all reading this? If you know of an article that should be called to *Against the Grain's* attention ... send an email to <kstrauch@comcast.net>. We're listening! — **KS**

VIVE KING CONTENT

by **Bruce Strauch** (The Citadel)

Viacom is demanding **Google** take down 100,000 clips on **YouTube** that violate copyright. Some are laughing; others call it a negotiating tactic.

All the same, the Internet won't stomp TV networks the way it did the music moguls. **YouTube** carries snappy clips of cats flushing toilets, but most are viewed solely by the poster. And it has no proven revenue model. Which is to say **YouTube** is virtually worthless.

TV still has hugely popular shows that gather millions of viewers and advertisers need the platform so badly they will pay big bucks to keep it around.

See — **Paul Vigna**, "Content Will Always Be King," *The Wall Street Journal*, Feb. 21, 2007, p.A16.

EMBRACING BOILED PEANUTS

by **Bruce Strauch** (The Citadel)

For **Charleston Conference** loyalists, be sure to read the entire "Eat, Drink & Be Local" issue of *Charleston* magazine. But especially follow the soaring career path of celebrity food geeks, the **Lee** brothers. They enthuse over boiled peanuts, the official state snack food for S.C., and have developed a boiled peanut and sorghum swirl ice cream. And they have their own cookbook which our daughter uses religiously.

See — **Matt Lee & Ted Lee**, "Beyond Boiled," *Charleston*, Dec. 2006, p.122.

DOING THE DRM SHUFFLE

by **Bruce Strauch** (The Citadel)

Apple's wildly successful **iTunes** protects music from piracy by their version of copy protection (**DRM** generally in the industry) by their technology **FairPlay**. And **iTunes** can only be played on **Apple iPods**. But now Europe is huffing and puffing and demanding they de-link the two so European players can get in the game.

Now under pressure, **Steve Jobs** is saying let's get rid of **DRM** altogether. He says it was the music industry that made him do it. But he could license **FairPlay DRM** to other music player outfits. But he says that would reveal the **FairPlay** mechanism and allow others to pirate it and the whole music biz would pull out of the current licensing deal.

And he knows full well the elimination of **DRM** would be the death of the music industry. So is he just trying to create a diversion?

See — **Paul Kedrosky**, "Pardon My Skepticism," *The Wall Street Journal*, Feb. 10-11, 2006, p. P14.

As I See It! — Even Fewer And Larger

Column Editor: **John Cox** (Managing Director, John Cox Associates Ltd, United Kingdom; Phone: +44 (0) 1327 861184; Fax: +44 (0) 20 8043 1053) <John.E.Cox@btinternet.com>

The pace of consolidation in the scholarly publishing space is moving even faster. Most of us have paid attention only to publishers and vendors. There has been a lot to watch in the last ten years! And now aggregators and indexing services have hit the radar screen.

During 2006, two major players suddenly appeared in the news. **ProQuest** ran into regulatory and financial trouble, and then changed hands. And **Thomson** announced that it was going to exit the education market, and put **Thomson Learning** up for sale; **Gale** is part of **Thomson Learning**. Are these events connected? Do they say anything about the changing ecology of aggregators?

On the face of it, the two are not connected. **Thomson Learning** is the second largest textbook publisher — the biggest is **Pearson**. Its operating performance in recent years has not matched other divisions of **Thomson**. Like most textbook publishers, **Thomson Learn-**

ing has found the migration of its business from print to electronic to be a formidable challenge. It has, in its parent company's eyes, made slow progress in doing so. The **Gale** operation itself, thought of as an aggregator and electronic re-publisher, still has considerable print activity in its reference publishing. Its aggregated databases are caught up in this larger corporate decision.

There are a number of unanswered questions. Will **Thomson** succeed in selling **Thomson Learning** as a whole, or will it have to break it up to find buyers? If a buyer is found for the whole, who will it be? If one of the other major textbook publishers makes an offer, there may be difficult anti-trust and competition issues to contend with. Will a private equity group move in to buy it with the existing management? At least that would not raise any anti-trust or competition issues. It is too early to tell.

ProQuest is a different story. In December **ProQuest Information and Learning** was acquired by the **Cambridge Information Group (CIG)**, which includes the **CSA**,

RefWorks, **Bowker** and **Ulrich** brands. But the story started some time ago. **ProQuest** is a public company. It has spent most of 2006 grappling with accounting irregularities, most of which appeared to reside in its **Information and Learning** unit. It has had to restate its accounts since 2001, and file restated accounts with the **SEC**.

It had already sold its **Business Solutions** unit which provided services to car dealers. When the sale of **Information and Learning** to **CIG** took place, between Thanksgiving and Christmas, we had our minds on festive things.

CIG has announced that it will merge **ProQuest Information and Learning** with **CSA**.

The **CSA** business comprises over 100 databases — mostly bibliographic — in the humanities, social sciences and science. **ProQuest** has a lot of full text products in news, business, economics, social sciences and the humanities. Its products encompass **Chadwyck-Healey**, **SIRS**, **Serial Solutions**, and full text products containing newspapers,

continued on page 78