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@Brunning: People & Technology: At the Only Edge that Means Anything / How We Understand What We Do

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One has to resort to adding the subcategory of Feminism & Feminist Theory or perhaps Gender Studies from the Social Science codes along with some more generic codes from Philosophy, perhaps Political if that fits the subject of the particular book. One guesses that the BISAC committee members were used to browsing in the sections of retail bookstores that use “New Age” instead of “Philosophy” as designators, given the number of codes dedicated to various types of Eastern religions. While the BISAC committee ignored “Movements” as a subcategory in either Political Science or Sociology, curiously 9 of the 34 subcategories in Philosophy are devoted to them, though it is difficult to understand in what way Rationalism and Utilitarianism, to name two of the tertiary subcategories, constitute “movements” in any ordinary sense. It seems peculiar, to say the least, to carve out a special subcategory for Good & Evil and for Body & Mind, when these are merely subjects taken up in Ethics or Philosophy of Religion and Epistemology, respectively. So, too, for Free Will & Determinism. Have you ever seen a shelf in a bookstore with those designations? And then there is a subcategory of Criticism. What on earth does that mean to philosophy? What were the BISAC folks thinking?

It seems clear that the BISAC committee was much more interested in books that actually get onto the shelves of many bricks-and-mortar bookstores than in scholarly books. Juvenile Fiction and Nonfiction both get literally hundreds of secondary and tertiary subcategories devoted to them, well in excess of all the “academic” categories combined. Under both main categories, for instance, there are 27 tertiary subcategories listed under the secondary subcategory Social Issues (earlier called “Situations”). Reflecting the New Age bent of the BISAC committee, there are 44 subcategories under the main heading of Body, Mind & Spirit, almost 30% more than the entire Philosophy category contains. The evidence for the relative importance accorded by the BISAC committee to trade over academic titles is spread throughout the BISAC coding list.

Why is this a problem? It is because, as **Geoffrey Nunberg** and others have pointed out, the BISAC codes are now becoming so standard that they are being adopted even when applying them is not appropriate and positively harmful, as with **Google’s** decision to use the codes for its proposed bookselling programs under the Settlement agreement despite the acknowledged fact that the largest number of titles included in its mass digitization project are academic, not trade, books. Is there anything we can do to improve the codes and make them more useful for scholarly books? A couple of years ago I approached BISAC’s executive director, **Michael Healey** (now head of the **Book Rights Registry** under the **Google Settlement**), and volunteered to work with the BISAC committee on choosing codes better suited for the academic marketplace and more in keeping with the way scholars themselves think about their fields. The response was “Fine, but you first have to become a member of **BISG**.” The fee at that time for a university press of **Penn State’s** size was around \$1,250. I did not feel it an expenditure I could justify asking the **Press** to pay for the sake of offering advice to **BISG**. I hope that the folks on the BISAC committee will at least find their way to this article and absorb the lessons I want it to convey. 🐼

At the only Edge that Means Anything / How We Understand What We Do

by **Dennis Brunning** (E Humanities Development Librarian, Arizona State University) <dennis.brunning@gmail.com>

Where the Wild Things Are: eBooks Again and Again

She said to keep our eye on the ball, but it’s hard. What game are we playing?

It’s been a long haul, although this year’s progress has made it seem new. Who can remember the early players — **Amazon** with its **Adobe Digital Editions** and the **Microsoft E-Reader**? **Sony** made a small splash with its **E-Reader** sold mostly through **Borders**. **Amazon** scored first and significantly with its **Kindle Reader** and bookstore. Although **Amazon** isn’t talking, industry experts figure more than two million **Kindles** were sold and the sales have nudged total sales a few percentage points.

Until now the game has clung to the ground. In a flat growth industry the growth of eBook sales, although small, looms large. Large enough, that is, to sink **R&D** and marketing money.

Rare in these times, a growth industry.

In fact, eBooks are a technology game, and the techies stand behind its growth and success. Recently **Apple’s** announcement of the **iPad**, its tablet computer based on **iPhone** design and operating system, was enough to convince a few big publishers to rethink and re-negotiate relationships with **Amazon**. **Macmillan** was the first to head out to Seattle, **Amazon** territory, to suggest to **Jeff** and company that **Macmillan** ought to set the price for e-editions — for **Amazon** or any distributor. **Amazon** refused to the point of removing **Macmillan** titles from its bookstore. Within a few hours, though, they backed off and acknowledged that this publisher could set the price. Unlike **Apple** and **iTunes**, **Amazon** blinked and now new pricing models have free range.

There are now over 23 e-readers for sale. Almost every week a new player emerges, new players to stand at the scrimmage line of **Apple**, **Amazon**, and others. Why so many reader wannabees?

Simple. The book’s defining quality, its essence, is portability. No one wants to read books on computers no matter the size of the computer. Compared to smart phones and e-readers, a computer is gargantuan and only semi-portable. You want and need something you can carry and use at will — like a book.

So the device battle is about who can imagine what the reader wants and deliver it through an electronic device, Internet-cool and enabled, and keep that (human) reader.

Keeping the reader is all about the bookstore. Whether the publishers set the price, all those **Amazon Kindle** owners have bought new titles at the \$9.99 price. Whether this will survive and thrive like **iTunes’** 99 cents — let’s let the market and not pundits decide. That **Amazon** sells eBooks to **iPhone** users who simply download an **iPhone** app to use sug-

gests that publishers and reader manufacturers will have an immense market, and customers will have many choices.

For example, **Kindle** frequent customers may want to choose another type of reader that meets their needs — as long as there is a way to read what they buy at **Amazon** on their reader. We bet **Amazon** understands this and is not in the business of selling **Kindles**. They are in the business of selling **Amazon** books, whether print or electronic. **Apple** and **Google** are aware of this aspect of competition with **Amazon** and at the moment seem to be “open.” But remember the essence of each company. Both are technology companies who leverage what they do to make the most money. **Apple** will want to sell **iPads** and **iPhones**. They may package books with them, but the object will be to move hardware. **Google** is all about adwords and adsense. Whether by the Web, mobile Internet, or whatever new technology comes around, they want to sell ads.

So a new caveat emptor emerges. The consumer now has a plethora of stuff to consider, choices to be made. You’ll just have to contend with constant device upgrades and a welter of ads assaulting your senses. And librarians — at the rainbow’s end, books from all places and a brimming box of devices and distribution.

It’s wild.

Your links:

Tracking the E-Readers:

<http://ereaderguide.info/>

<http://www.digital-book-readers.com/>

E-Reader Formats:

<http://www.ebookmall.com/choose-format/>

The E-Book Publishing Space:

<http://www.ebookcrossroads.com/epublishers.html>

Annals of Search: Google Uber Alles?

It doesn’t take much for **Google’s** competitors to cry monopoly. **Microsoft**, no stranger to this state of being, would dearly love to keep **Google’s** legal staff — numbering some say in the thousands — busy for a decade or two to level the playing field in search advertising.

Googlers who do not see monopoly boast vision with the following optics:

- At best, **Google** has only 60% share of search engine users.
- **Google’s** “math” neutralizes bias — guaranteeing, without human intervention, the best results.
- **Google** is free to consumers — where’s the harm?

As with **Microsoft**, the European Union has led criticism of **Google’s** behavior. The EU was slow to approve **Google’s** acquisition

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The Acquisitions Institute at Timberline Lodge

May 15-18, 2010



Registration information at
libweb.uoregon.edu/ec/aitl

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of **DoubleClick**, the leader in online banner advertising. The EU is particularly concerned about the information **Google** collects and how long it retains this information. In 2008 **Google** yielded to EU pressure to shorten shelf life of this data from 18 to 9 months. And recently the EU has made it plain that whatever class settlement is set by U.S. courts on copyright for online books will not apply to them.

The EU flexes legal and business muscle, and **Google** listens — a response that has eluded U.S. business.

This side of the Atlantic will be monitoring the latest Europe-versus-the-Goliath match. **Foundem**, a specialist search Website founded by **Adam** and **Shivaum Raff**, has filed a complaint against **Google** to the European Commission in Brussels over specific behavior of **Google** and its search engine toward their business.

The problem with **Google** is simple. **Foundem** offers a search engine for jobs, property, consumer products, and vacation planning. It has built its own search algorithms to give users a deeper and more precise search than **Google** or **Bing**. They derive profit when users click from their results to partner sites.

What they need, though, is business sent to them through **Google**. Whatever they do, they are at odds with **Google's** 200 criteria that evaluate search value and elevate, to prominence, the best links.

Foundem, working with **Google** scientists, claims **Google** can manually over-ride these criteria and boost search results for customers. The business term for this is white listing. Typically, though, **Google** doesn't white list. Human intervention is anathema at the **Googleplex** because it isn't scientific. Or more to the point, it isn't statistical. By numbers alone they've determined search value and to act otherwise would be unfair to users.

Foundem's complaint zeros in on a weakness in **Google's** thinking and procedure when it comes to natural search. A **Google** results page segments results into natural search, adwords search, and universal search. Natural search results derive from the 200 factors of which **PageRank** is the most well-known. These factors try to guarantee the most relevant results display first. **AdWords** is **Google's** data-base of keywords harvested from users. **Google** sells keywords to advertisers who pay to have the best keywords to retrieve their products. These are the familiar text ads listed under Sponsored Links. Universal search are **Google** services links bundled together. These include Maps, **YouTube**, and **Google Book**.

Foundem's simple demand: parity with **Google** products in displayed results.

What they want is the level playing field. In search engine lingo and thinking they want search neutrality. What they want is library search.

The issue behind this legal move — search neutrality on the net. More next issue...

Your Links:

The Foundem Story:

<http://www.searchneutrality.org/foundem-google-story>

<http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/1e672a94-233f-11df-ba8f-00144feab49a.html>

Google on Net Neutrality:

http://www.google.com/help/netneutrality_letter.html

Not So Easy Rider — Digital Research

Entering our library you enter our spin zone. Since we've discovered big-screen televisions to push out library news, views, and attitudes, the pitch has become steep. Our latest: the marketing roll out for our discovery service.

Christened **Library One Search**, the bright yellow, black, and white logo invites users to a world where "research has never been this easy." Doubtless, many of you are or have introduced discovery services at your library and are casting about or even refining your rhetoric to attract your community to this new way of searching.

By all means, avail yourself of practical bells and whistles. You've probably paid a pretty penny for the opportunity.

But go easy on calling it research. Discovery services make a certain type of library search easier. By easy, of course, we mean more "Google like." For example, our **Library One Search**, a Summon product, eliminates the

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Group Therapy — Textbook Purchasing

Column Editor: **Jack G. Montgomery** (Associate Professor, Collection Services Coordinator, WKU Libraries)
<jack.montgomery@wku.edu>

GRIPE: Submitted by **John E. Po-padak II, M.L.I.S.** (Acquisitions Librarian, **W. F. Maag, Jr. Library, Youngstown State University**)

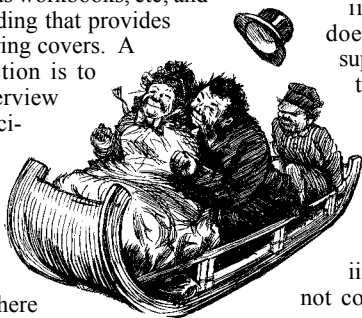
My boss would like me to write up a “textbook purchasing policy” for our library. I was wondering if anyone would share, if a policy is in place, a copy of their policy with me.

RESPONSE:

Submitted by **Lia Hemphill** (Director of Collection Development, **Alvin Sherman Library, Nova Southeastern University**)

Here is our textbook policy.

Textbooks — For the purpose of this policy statement, a textbook is defined as a monograph that indicates in the preface or introduction its design for use in supporting specific courses, and which may have one or more of the following characteristics: use of colors in the text to distinguish main points or supplementary material; provision of questions or answers for review at the ends of chapters; frequent revision schedules (1-3 years); separate supplemental materials such as workbooks, etc; and plastic-over-paper binding that provides colorful but poor-wearing covers. A textbook’s main function is to provide a general overview and summary of a discipline’s literature. The high cost, frequent revision, and generally poor binding make most textbooks a poor investment for the library; however, there



are occasions when very selective acquisition of textbooks may be warranted.

- i. The textbook is recognized as a classic by experts in the field
- ii. The textbook is written by a current NSU faculty member
- iii. Other materials in the curricular area are insufficient
- iv. Materials that support upper-level undergraduate and graduate-level study only.

The **Alvin Sherman Library** does not purchase or add to the collection textbooks adopted as required texts for any given course at **NSU**, as the library does not compete with the University Bookstore.

Other types of college-level textbooks deserve special attention, as well:

- i. Anthologies: From time to time, anthologies of collected works, (essays, literature, etc.) may be utilized as course materials. There is a distinction between these monographs and textbooks, as anthologies usually become value-added material to the general collection.
- ii. Workbooks: The library does not collect workbooks that supplement a specific college-level textbook. **ALA’s** definition of a workbook is: “a learning guide, which may contain exercise, problems, practice materials space for recording answers, and, frequently, means of evaluating work done.”
- iii. Coursepacks: The library does not collect coursepacks that supple-

ment course materials. Coursepacks are usually compilations of periodical and newspaper articles, and chapters from books. Content in coursepacks is available from the original sources.

RESPONSE:

Submitted by **Jack Montgomery** (Coordinator, Collection Services, **Helm-Cravens Library, Western Kentucky University**)

This question comes up quite often at the beginning of the semester. Many professors want us to purchase textbooks and keep them on reserve but our official policy is not to buy textbooks. We have a non-competition agreement with our Main campus bookstore.

RESPONSE:

Submitted by **Jennifer Arnold** (Director of Library Services, **Central Piedmont Community College**)

The issue of purchasing textbooks seems to be a perpetual one for libraries. At my own library, we do not, as a general rule, purchase textbooks for a variety of reasons — primarily cost. However, given the unique nature of some of the programs taught at a community college and the limited number of print materials available to support those programs, this is not a hard-and-fast rule. Here is the statement that we include about textbook purchases in our collection development policy:

“The Library does not purchase textbooks adopted for classroom use by the College. The collection does, however, include textbooks. These textbooks are acquired only if they are high-quality materials which supplement the Library’s permanent holdings and can be expected to remain important over time or are the only resource available on a subject.”

The **University of Oregon** includes a similarly worded statement in their collection development policy (<http://libweb.uoregon.edu/colldev/cdpolicies/cdpstate.html>), while **Anne Arundel Community College** offers a version that directs faculty to the option of placing a textbook on reserve (www.aacc.edu/library/file/CollDevPolicy.pdf). **DePaul University Libraries** offer a detailed statement about textbooks in the library in a FAQ that you also might find helpful in developing your own library’s policy (<http://www.lib.depaul.edu/About/displayFAQ.aspx?f=33>).

RESPONSE:

Submitted by **Michael A. Arthur** (Head of Acquisitions and Collections Services, **University of Central Florida Libraries**)

We don’t actively purchase textbooks and they are blocked on our approval plan. However, no doubt they are still arriving mostly from firm order requests. 🌱

<<http://www.against-the-grain.com>>

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plurality of our many databases, presenting a simple search box, for simple search words, that reaches out into all those databases for stunning easy singularity.

Actually we fudge a bit on this. We note, in small font, that **Library One Search** searches most, but not all, of our databases. This disclaimer is a link to more detailed library-speak about coverage that cautions the user that he or she needs to subtract those publishers not participating in the product.

So library search has gotten easier, if by easy we mean searching participative content — or something like that. To be honest, that is quite a handful of stuff, a big bowl of not there. There are two depths to this.

Shallow water fun is the thin data that are harvested and indexed from all of your non-participating content providers. Your discovery service can provide simulacra for your dif-

ficult databases, those ornery ones who wish to meagerly prosper in this brave new world. They can, for example, provide complimentary indexing for products that overlap theirs — we know there are many. They can also crawl the Web and ingest what publishers provide for their Web publications

At a certain point, the substantial holdings of a library online fall off the continental shelf. This is the world of information portals, specialized data sets and databases whose design, purpose, and subscription life address another way of doing content. Here are publishers who don’t need to integrate themselves with the Web or library.

Our sin and cross to bear: we want them. The library’s role in research is to provide both the tools and results of — research. And this is the depth of things where research isn’t easy.

Your Links:

Summon Sites:

<http://lib.asu.edu/one>

<http://www.dartmouth.edu/~library/home/find/summon/> 🌱