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Charleston Conference 2010

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2010 Charleston Conference — 30th Annual Issues in Book and Serial Acquisition

Call For Papers, Ideas, Conference Themes, Panels, Debates, Diatribes, Speakers, Poster Sessions, Preconferences, etc. ...


2010 Proposed Theme — Anything Goes

Wednesday, November 3, 2010 — Preconferences and Vendor Showcase
Thursday-Saturday, November 4-6, 2010 — Main Conference
Francis Marion Hotel & Embassy Suites Historic District, Charleston, SC

If you are interested in leading a discussion, acting as a moderator, coordinating a lively lunch, or would like to make sure we discuss a particular topic, please let us know. The **Charleston Conference** prides itself on creativity, innovation, flexibility, and informality. If there is something you are interested in doing, please try it out on us. We'll probably love it...

The Conference Directors for the **2010 Charleston Conference** include — **Beth Bernhardt**, Principal Director (UNC-Greensboro) <beth_bernhardt@uncg.edu>, **Glenda Alvin** <galvin@Tnstate.edu>, **Adam Chesler** <adam.chesler@cox.net>, **Cris Ferguson** (Furman University) <cris.ferguson@furman.edu>, **David Goodman** <dgoodman@princeton.edu>, **Chuck Hamaker** <cahamake@email.uncg.edu>, **Heidi Hoerman** <hoerman@sc.edu>, **Tony Horava** (University of Ottawa) <thorava@uottawa.ca>, **Ramune Kubilius** (Northwestern Health Sciences Library) <r-kubilius@northwestern.edu>, **Corrie Marsh** <cmarsh12@hotmail.com>, **Heather Miller** (SUNY-Albany) <hmiller@uamail.albany.edu>, **Jack Montgomery** (Western Kentucky University) <jack.montgomery@wku.edu>, **Audrey Powers** (UFS Tampa Library) <apowers@lib.usf.edu>, **John Perry Smith** (Total Information Inc.) <jps@totalinformation.com>, **Anthony Watkinson** (Consultant) <anthony.watkinson@btopenworld.com>, **Katina Strauch** (College of Charleston) <kstrauch@comcast.net> or www.katina.info/conference.

Send ideas by **July 31, 2010**, to any of the Conference Directors listed above.

Or to: **Katina Strauch**, MSC 98, The Citadel, Charleston, SC 29409
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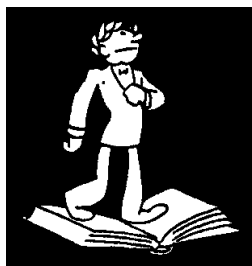
Notes from Mosier — March of the Dinosaurs

Column Editor: **Scott A. Smith** (International Sales, Alibris; Phone: 503-951-8343) <scott.alan.smith@comcast.net>

Before waddling off to graduate school I worked for thirty years as a vendor, so it shouldn't be too surprising to learn I spend time thinking about the vendor world and vendor-library relations. I've been musing of late on the many changes that have occurred with vendors in recent years, and in this month's column I'll share some thoughts and observations with you.

Libraries are customers, and the products and services they buy inform the vendor world that develops to serve them. Sometimes companies are created in response to serve a defined market need, and sometimes companies develop new products and then seek to educate and thereby develop a market. This symbiotic relationship is very simple and straightforward: vendors need libraries and libraries need vendors.

Library buying practices and funding has a lot to do with this. Let's think about book vendors and serials agents. Up until the late 1950s library book vendors existed to serve primarily public and school libraries. Companies like **Baker & Taylor** and **Brodart** sold to academic libraries as well, but the academic slice of the pie chart was very small. When **Richard Abel** founded the company that



bore his name he identified academic libraries as a distinct market segment with unique needs. Many of the products and services still in use today were developed by **Dick** and the many clever people he brought together — e.g., **Don Stave** and the dear, late **Oliver Sitea** — were central to the evolution of the approval plan as we understand it today.

As federal funding of higher education exploded in the 1960s, the academic market became a more powerful force and a magnet for companies looking to sell books. Many of the vendors still serving the market today were established in the 60s and early 70s in response to this opportunity — **Book House**, **Emery-Pratt**, **Midwest**, and **Yankee** are examples.

Journal agents also grew and were largely identified by the markets they served. Thus we had **Faxon** for academic, **EBSCO** for public, **Readmore** for corporate, federal, and medical libraries. Foreign titles typically were sourced with country-of-origin suppliers, such as **B. H. Blackwell** for the UK, **Casalini** for Italy, and **Otto Harrassowitz** for Germany.

EBSCO's transformation from a print-based, public library agent to an undisputed market leader in content creation and

distribution to virtually all market segments is an interesting case in point. Clearly most other agents benefited from **Faxon's** demise. But **EBSCO's** growth was more than simply the luck of having a major competitor implode. They made several strategic business decisions: they expanded their focus to markets where hitherto their presence had been limited, they added electronic journals, content management, and other offerings to their suite of services, and they invested in staff training and development. This did not happen by accident.

In terms of real buying power, library funding has been in decline since the 70s. The consolidation within the book and serials industries (publishers and vendors) is a reflection of more limited budgets, expanding formats, and obsolete vendor systems.

Library automation vendors provide another example of market development and segmentation. Before the advent of the integrated system, companies developed individual modules, such as circulation or stand-alone catalogs. **Innovative Interfaces' Innovacq** product was an acquisitions and serials management system (arguably one of the best ever developed), widely used before their integrated product came to market.

In other cases products were developed before any clearly articulated market need was visible.

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