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On the Road -- Wearing a Russian Hat to the Revolution: Libraries, Gaming, and Learning, Oh My!

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fit within their scope. For these services and, by extension, the researchers who use them, the journal as journal holds little interest because parts of the issue are not relevant to the subject focus of the access tool.

The journal becomes even less important when a resource presents a collection of completely disembodied articles on a defined subject. I could find but one example, *All-About-Psychology.com* (<http://www.all-about-psychology.com/psychology-journal-articles.html>). It describes itself as: "Written and regularly updated by a lecturer in psychology, this Website was launched in March 2008 and is designed to help anybody looking for informed and detailed information on psychology."

One vision for the future includes collections like the one above but with much greater academic respectability. One option would be for publishers to sell collections of articles in the same way that they now sell collections of eBooks. A major journal publisher might bring together all the articles on an important topic such as "biology" or "criminal justice" that would be of interest to a broad audience. I could see these collections being created for both undergraduate and master's level research; they would have less value for advanced researchers on specialized topics. Such a collection might be of particular interest to

smaller academic libraries that could not afford to subscribe to all the journals from which the articles were taken. The publisher would most likely already either own the copyright or have some clause in the contract to allow them to reuse the articles.

A second option would be for publishers to work together to create such article collections or for compilers, either on their own or as part of a vendor initiative, to select the articles in the same way that libraries have anthologies of English literature. These collections might have increased respectability if experts in the field did the selection. One issue would be obtaining the permissions, though I would hope that publishers would welcome another revenue stream.

The next step could be a complete disassociation of the article from the journal. In some ways, this model would borrow many features of open-access publishing. Some review board, perhaps monitored by a professional organization in the discipline, would evaluate articles submitted to it with the same care, including peer review, as do editors in the current system. Articles after review and editing would enter into a subject-based collection. I see two potential business models that are not mutually exclusive. The first would be to charge a fee (I would hope that it would be as low as possible) for each submitted article. The second would be for the database's owner to sell access in the same way as the commercial publishers do. I would consider this to be a much less preferable

option, unless the subscription price were kept low. The main obstacle to any such initiative would be the need for university committees to accept such publications as counting toward tenure and promotion. (As an aside, I hope a similar system appears for scholarly monographs.) As for access, sponsors might license standard database indexing software and could perhaps allow them to be indexed in **Google Scholar** and any similar services. Finally, the authors should have permission to include them in institutional repositories.

A final possibility for a disciplinary collection as described above would be to find some way to include less formal publications. I find myself reading more informal literature these days than formal articles. Discussion list posts, blogs, and ezines provide more current and, many times, more honest accounts of what is going on in the field. Admittedly, many of them won't have great permanent value, but perhaps a way could be found to remove outdated content, though the ability to store cheaply vast quantities of information might make purging the collection unnecessary.

Understanding the full implications for scholarly communication of the transition from the physical to the digital world may take some time. Digital publications are bringing about new research habits that have already done much to disassociate the article from its container, the scholarly journal. The next logical step would be for the article to stand on its own as the basic unit of serial publication. 🌱

On the Road — Wearing a Russian Hat to the Revolution: Libraries, Gaming, and Learning, Oh My!

by **Jared Alexander Seay** (Reference Librarian and Head, Media Collections, Addlestone Library, College of Charleston, Charleston, SC 29424) <seayj@cofc.edu> <http://blogs.cofc.edu/seayj/>

I had come for the library gaming, but I stayed for the revolution. It was 11:30 at night in December, and I was lost in Chicago. I was also becoming overwhelmed with that panicky feeling that I had no idea of where I was or where to go next. I had flown into O'Hare a few hours before for a conference and, owing to my total lack of experience with the CTA, I had taken the wrong train (or rather stayed on the right train too long) and ended up at the end of the line somewhere on the south side of the city. I had then compounded my mistake by boldly leaving the terminal and walking out into the street to look for a cab.

I was attending (or attempting to attend) the **Metropolitan Library System's Symposium on Gaming, Learning, and Libraries** in Chicago. It was 2005, and I did not know I was in the vanguard of a revolution at the time. I just knew that had flown all alone to a big, cold city (I'm from Goose Creek, SC. You make the mental picture.) to attend a conference about my two most favorite things in the world: libraries and gaming (not necessarily in that order) in the same place. Heck, in the same room. Only I wasn't in a room.

I was standing on a dark, deserted street, wearing a large Russian hat and gripping tightly to an oversized pull-behind suitcase. A large, black pea coat completed my fashion ensemble. To those in the fashion police, I must say in my defense that (1) I am not a student of fashion (2) I am not used to dressing for cold weather, since in coastal South Carolina no one even owns a heavy coat, much less a "winter hat," and (3) anyway this was the first occasion I had had to wear the "cool" heavy Russian fur hat with fuzzy flaps that my friend from Nevada had sent me some time ago. (For the record I had removed the metal hammer and sickle badge that had been attached to the hat.) Thus, "dressing warm" for me, though effective, had been totally ad-hoc.

I was quite warm despite the biting Chicago wind, even though I looked like a much undisguised Russian agent — or at the very least a very confused Russian citizen. Certainly, I must have appeared an excellent target of opportunity to the Pakistani cab driver.

I first noticed his cab about halfway up the block in the light of the flashing neon

signs that were the only illumination on the street. He had pulled up to a person who had obviously just flagged him down, and I was just starting to feel the impact of my incredible disappointment of not getting to him first. Then, in the flashing lights I actually saw his head turn toward me. I think our minds locked, because I just "knew" what he was obviously thinking at that very second: "Do I pick up the relatively poor local with little chance of any tip? Or do I go for the 'Russian spy guy' with the big suitcase who may be rich or at least culturally confused enough to give me a big tip at the wrong exchange rate?"

He gunned the car in my direction.

Since the guy he had left standing on the street was now waving his arms at the clear insult of being "unworthy" to be picked up in lieu of me, I quickly obliged the cabbie when he said in highly accented English, "I can take you anywhere. Please get in rather quickly with your bag."

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I opened the door, threw in my suitcase (as best as one can throw a very large suitcase), and jumped in. I felt like my next line should most certainly be, "First and Main. And STEP on it!" But, I didn't. This was partly because my hotel was not on First and Main, but mostly because I did not know where it actually was. Wisely, I had printed out the **Google** map information from the Internet, and I immediately produced it for the driver.

"Oh, no, sir," he said. "No need of such information as that. I have a new GPS system. I just type in the name of the hotel, and it takes us right there. No worries."

Very relieved to be in the presence of someone who had a machine that knew where it was going, I pulled out my **Google** map printout of my hotel name and carefully pronounced the name of my hotel. "Millennium Knickerbocker Hotel." (You can see this coming, right?)

Surprisingly, I did not realize I was in trouble until the driver, after fumbling with the first two letters, turned to me and said, "Could you spell that for me very slowly please?"

I tried the spelling several times, but the combination of our accent incompatibility and his obvious unfamiliarity with his GPS, exemplified by frantic button-pushing, was beginning to spell epic fail ("It's okay, I just got this new. It works beautifully, if I put in a correct address. Now...let's see... what button was that? Could you repeat, please?").

Finally I just handed him the paper. The fact that he was now driving very fast with one hand on the wheel, one hand pushing buttons on his GPS, and at least two eyes squinting at the piece of paper, gave me cause for concern. Fortunately, after only what seemed like the better part of an hour (time dilation no doubt being common in high-speed, swerving Chicago cabs), the driver breathed an "aha, got it." **Stephen Hawking's** voice suddenly announced that we should turn left at the next exit ramp in 3.2 miles and then travel 23 miles to our destination.

My relief that we now actually had a destination was tempered by the fact that we were at least 25 miles away from my destination. This feeling was only exacerbated by the taunting glow of the cab fare ticking continuously away on the dashboard. Still, I was technically not lost anymore, and **Stephen Hawking** was in charge. I settled back in my ever-growing expensive seat and watched the sites (such as they were at that time of night) zoom by on Lake Shore Drive.

With the adept help of **Stephen Hawking** and the cabbie's cat-like-response turns (apparently it is not necessary to slow down much when one is driving a cab through Chicago turns) we arrived at the front door of the Millennium Knickerbocker Hotel at 163 East Walton Place. I knew so immediately because **Stephen Hawking** said so. "In 300 feet arrive at your destination."

I gave the cabbie a few bills that somewhat exceeded the actual fare and told him to "keep the change." I used my best "experienced cab rider / Bogart voice." This voice and the con-

fidence behind it were totally fake, since this was only the third time in my life I had been in a cab. I think he must have expected a bit more from a "Russian spy dude," but I figured I'd play the "dumb tourist" part and let him assume I was just clueless. This was pretty much the truth anyway.

The driver graciously accepted my fare despite his obvious disappointment, and a doorman in a smartly-pressed, gold-braided uniform and matching hat opened my door. Like me, he looked like he was straight out of central castings, except his outfit was much better. I stepped into the imposing doorway edifice of the Millennium Knickerbocker Hotel and entered the antechamber of the revolution. (Cue Russian revolutionary music.)

Okay, it was just a lobby. Or was it? The revolution was real enough. For the first time the practical and philosophical connections between gaming and libraries were being officially recognized and put on display. Tellingly, it was being hosted by a public library system. Public libraries are always at the bloody cutting edge when it comes to library innovation, and this was grand innovation in 2005.

To be sure, in the context of the whole universe and everything, digital games were — and are — taking over the world. **Sid Meier**, the "father of computer gaming" and the original designer of "Civilization," the most popular computer game ever, said as much himself. Specifically, in a recent CNN interview, in which he briefly outlined how he was going to use a **Facebook** version of his game to increase his take of the takeover, he said, "Games are taking over the world." He should know.

Digital games now permeate virtually (pun fully-intended) every niche of society from business and entertainment to the military-industrial complex. As entertainment, digital games have overtaken and surpassed Hollywood movies as the primary source of popular entertainment. Every Hollywood blockbuster released has a game associated with it. Indeed, many movies are themselves based on video games. The U.S. Army has been one of the earliest and biggest investors in gaming use and technology for training and recruitment. The "America's Army" video game, originally designed by the Army as a public relations initiative to let potential recruits virtually experience army training and combat, has gone massively viral. It is now a phenomenon unto itself, complete with online communities and graphic novels. Business and industry use games and gaming as training and promotional tools. Marketers have even coined the term "gamification" for the fast-evolving process in which games are used for "non-game applications" — such as promoting products — by engaging consumers and encouraging "desired behaviors" and "taking advantage of humans' psychological predisposition to engage in gaming."

Enter libraries and academia: the library-educational industry complex. Flashback to the revolution....

The 2005 Chicago **Metropolitan Library System's Symposium on Gaming, Learning,**

and Libraries Symposium that December was a laboratory of ideas and practices — equal parts nursery and inspiration chamber. But, it was also a call-to-arms for all libraries — academic and public — to engage this phenomenon — or die. There were 131 librarians and fellow travelers there that week including some heavyweight names in the library innovation / gaming arena.

Jenny Levine, the shifted librarian, goddess herself, whose tireless efforts made the symposium happen, was leading the charge with her fellow MLS conspirators.

Library strategist **George Needham** of OCLC explained what librarians can learn from gamers. **Scott Nicholson** of the **Library Game Lab** of Syracuse offered assessment tools and reported on the data about use of games and gaming by all kinds of libraries. He also demonstrated some fantastic games (digital and analog) currently being used in libraries.

The rock star of library gaming has to be **Eli Neiburger** of **Ann Arbor District Library** who spoke passionately about the need for libraries to intimately involve their patrons. **Neiburger**, the technology director at AADL, had been running wildly successful library gaming tournaments and experiences. In a statement he made the first day of the conference, **Neiburger** summed up the whole reason we were there. Concerning the process of engaging younger library patrons he said, "If you don't offer them something that has value to them now, you're going to be irrelevant to them for the rest of their lives."

Now I was in it deep. This was no longer just about playing games in the library. This was about the survival or thriving of the library in an increasingly complex culture. Can you say, "Revolutionary paradigm shift?"

Steven Johnson's 2005 book *Everything Bad is Good for You: How Today's Popular Culture is Actually Making Us Smarter* compellingly explained how and why the (then) \$10 billion video gaming industry (among other forces) is pervading our society and becoming so intrinsic to our daily lives. Today's pop culture media is complex and stimulating and requires a great deal of (readily-accessible) external information to understand. It is all about a higher degree of necessary "cognitive work" that requires engagement and demands interactivity many orders of magnitude beyond what was necessary in the past.

To make themselves relevant, libraries don't just have to tap into this culture. They have to become an integral part of it. Public libraries generally have already discovered this concept as it applies to gaming and are putting it to use for promotional and instructional purposes with as much vigor (albeit with considerably less money) as the entertainment industry, business, and the U.S. Army. They buy and circulate the games themselves for starters. Moreover, by purchasing these systems and hosting game nights, and even game tournaments, public libraries have increased their circulations and — more importantly — their public relevance by attracting both under-represented populations like teenagers and increasing the number

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of both young and older patrons drawn by this new atmosphere. Libraries in K-12 and higher education are now getting into the act, first by supporting increasing research and courses on game design and the use of games in education, and then more directly — public library style — by facilitating gaming events and even collecting and circulating the games themselves.

Libraries need to become what **Neiburger** calls “platforms for the community.” They need to “reinvent themselves...by providing unique user experiences.” Patrons (young and old) require interactive engagement and should see the library as an active place for involvement. Games do this. Academic libraries, with their unique positioning and perception as curriculum support, can use expertise in game techniques and research for teaching and promotion. They can become the “go-to” source for teaching faculty and students. Interactive engagement is the key to maintaining and improving relevancy.

When I walked into that hotel lobby with my stylish Russian hat, I was as excited as I had ever been in my life. I anticipated learning how to immerse myself in library gaming and be paid for it. How cool is that? Incredibly, the experience taught me much more than I expected. Turns out this gaming and libraries phenomenon is emblematic of a cultural paradigm shift for libraries. It's about the future of what libraries are and what they do. Who knew? Gaming is just the biggest (multibillion-dollar) example of how they are going (or should be going) about it.

I think I owe that cabbie a bigger tip.

Postscript

Two years after **Metropolitan Library System's** groundbreaking **Symposium on Gaming, Learning, and Libraries** the **American Library Association** took over the reins (still under the able direction of **Jenny Levine**), and the conference became the **ALA TechSource “first annual” Gaming, Learning, and Libraries Symposium**. The last two such conferences were still held in Chicago, though in a western suburb at a much easier-to-pronounce hotel name and in a much warmer month. For the record, I attended without my Russian hat. 🐻

*Starting in the September issue of **Against the Grain**, I will begin writing a column entitled: “Engaging the Incubator: Media Minding a Library.” The concept is to consider, explain, rant and rave (and even review) all types of non-print media as to collection development, deployment, utilization and effect on and from the library. An issue to be addressed is the general library “paradigm shift” that is becoming necessary as a result of engaging this media. I am using the term “media” to basically mean anything that does not require ink as an interface. This includes videos, streaming technology, games, audio-books, eBooks, e-everything, blogs, social media software, mobile devices and anything that lights up, bleeps, or uses electricity to power its interface or make it work. See you again in September. Viva La Revolution! — JS*

@Brunning: People & Technology

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>

Not in Your Browser — Rolling Stone Magazine Cover to Cover

A 60th birthday brought **Rolling Stone Cover to Cover**, the DVD archive of the music and counterculture magazine, 1967-2007, into use here @Brunning.

Being older than a rock era magazine isn't cause to celebrate. But a chance, drink-in-hand, rear-end in Lazy Boy, laptop deployed — to revisit youth, drugs, and rock and roll is indeed celebratory.

Rolling Stone commissioned **Bondi Digital** to present 40 years of **Jan Weiner's** rock icon, a magazine that helped define rock and roll as we know it. Now we can know it digitally.

Although named after **Mick** and **Keith's** enterprise, *Rolling Stone* first issue stars **John Lennon**, its patron saint. **Lennon** made news and noise in *Rolling Stone's* pages; who can forget the stunning cover of **Lennon**, nude and in fetal position snuggled against **Yoko (RS, May)**.

This is the first page the **Bondi Reader** displays after installation. Disc one launches the software and search engine; from there you have the now-expected disc-swapping exercise to access page image. Ought to be in a browser, sure, but there is a certain pleasure in owning your own copy. It's like you have the library's periodicals room.

That said, you have to love microfilm to appreciate **Rolling Stone Cover to Cover**. What you see is much like what you see with microform — a photograph. With software controls you can zoom in or out but the action is like positioning the film for good viewing.

Ironically, fussing with image position and magnification, familiar to everyone with even passing use of a microfilm reader, has its equivalent in DVD readers.

It takes you back to periodical stacks of public and academic libraries. Use for research, use for nostalgia. Use for good reading. Ponder how far we've gone?

Your links:

<http://www.covertocover.com/support/>
<http://bondidigital.com/>

Google Observed...

There is no shortage of books about **Google**. Early reports included **John Battelle's** insider look, “How **Google** and Its Rivals Rewrote the Rules of Business and Transformed Our Culture” which was all roses and no thorns. “What Would **Google** Do?” by **Jeff Jarvis**, along the same lines profiled **Google** as not

only a new technology but a new way of doing business — even of thinking. **Ken Auletta**, the *New Yorker* writer and reporter, took a more measured approach to the behemoth, agreeing with **Battelle** and **Jarvis** but cautiously suggesting the “end of the world as we know it” brought about by **Google** may not be the total deliverance we thought. But it wasn't all bad either; we are “**Googled**.”

Recent times have not been as good for the company. **Google** just lost its case against copyright as we know it by **Judge Denny Chin's** ruling against the settlement. **Google** is now in just about every court in the world waging one form of litigation or another on privacy, data security, and search equity. It's taking some lumps that weren't recorded in the **Battelle**, **Auletta**, or **Jarvis**.

Three books in the last year or two set the tone and outline the shape of things to come for **Google**. **Nick Carr**, who keynoted at the recent **SLA** conference in New Orleans, writes in the “The Shallows: What the Internet is Doing to our Brains,” the Internet, led by **Google**, is filtering how we think at the neurological level. Because **Google** is all about immediate relevant results in a sea of data and information, it has promoted, with its ingenious algorithms that reward popular pages, a sugar high when it comes to what we want to know and consider knowledge. There is no depth to researching on the Internet — only information spread shallow across a huge sea surface of data.

A more comprehensive social, historical, and cultural analysis shows up in **Siva Vaidhyanathan's** *Googlization of Everything: Why We Should Worry*. **Vaidhyanathan's**, media studies professor at **University of Virginia** and noted **Google** “Gadfly,” got an inside look at **Google** through interviews with employees but he also interviews everyone else who writes about **Google**. For librarians his analysis is thorough — walking us through where **Google** fits in the scheme of what we do for a living — searching, finding, and curating information in books, journals, and other important documents. He is especially concerned about the book project, whose impetuous scanning of millions of books and calling it the digital library for all time, ignores copyright, vetting information — all the achievements of publishing and its relationship to knowledge. Stay tuned, we hope to have an awesome interview with the author in at some point this year.

The latest entry into the **Google** slam is **Steven Levy's** “In the Plex: How **Google** Thinks, Works, and Shapes Our Lives.” And it is less critique than a first-hand look at how **Google** got to where it is as a business — and what it may face, as we say, “going forward.”

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