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

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@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>

Annals of Search: Meta-Data 101

More information rather than less counts in book buyer's decision. So claims a press release from **NielsonBook**. This UK Company, a subsidiary of the famed tracking enterprise that gave us sweeps week on television and the "Nielson Family" has turned its trained data eyes on book buyers and their habits, especially for titles in the long tail. How do we find in copyright but out of print (or off shelf) books and charge them to our AMEX?

The data surprised the **Nielson** people. The amount and quality of information about the print edition were critical in buyer's decisions. Specifically, book meta-data increased sales of a sample of backlist titles by 42%.

The wheels are spinning. What about eBooks which have little, hidden, or inconsistent information? The long tail is not only long but dark. Closed stacks with the lights off.

The study confirms what librarians know. Cataloging and classification are essential.

Internet types like engineers at **Google**

gave up on cataloging and classification long before they ever knew about it. It predates the browser era.

Search engineers have never grasped the full implications and value of cataloging and classification. **Google's** PageRank was lifted straight from **Eugene Garfield** and citation indexing. Instead they gave us the sorry tag clouds that cast even a darker cloud over the long tail.

So bravo **Nielson**! Dive deeper into the mysteries of the book and learn more about cataloging and classification. You can't beat growth in sales and we should step forward with what we know that can help.

Consulting anyone?

Annals of Search II: Good-bye to All That (Yellow Pages Edition)

They never stood up well, did they, those telephone directories?

At one time, libraries were supposed to stock a wide variety of them. None of us is sure what dictated the scope and

coverage. For some libraries the collection owed everything to the donation — the kindness of others. For most libraries, though, a vendor of phone directories supplied them. Costs varied — more of them, the geographic reach — yup, a genuinely impressive collection would fill shelves, be costly, and worse — hard to update. Almost as bad as maintaining government documents in three-ring binders.

Well, good-bye to all that with the Internet, right? Anyone who has typed into the **Google** Search box understands the power of **Google** search to produce yellow, white, and blue pages to anything and everything that may at one time have appeared in what we called telephone books.

Yet they keep on coming, delivered in plastic bags, thrown like reverse garbage on your sidewalk and porch. What's up with that?

Let's face it, it's a free book with a long tradition of utility. You can browse it. Your neighbor's business is listed. Someone you know and trust can be called. You discover local information in a context inadmissible through a search engine whose results lean to paid search.

continued on page 66



So welcome those bags of names and numbers, steady them on whatever shelf space you can afford (resource share them around the neighborhood, create your own print libraries). Then recycle.

Your Links:


<http://newsbreaks.infoday.com/Digest/Nielsen-Research-Finds-Metadata-Helps-Increase-Book-Sales-79171.asp>

2012 Predictions?

Ask the Magic-8 Ball!

Marc Prensky's "ban books" op-ed in *Chronicle of Higher Education* catches attention of **Librarian of Congress** who offers Prensky the position of Chief Technologist at the **LOC**. Librarians worldwide confused by "Marc must die" they're reading in the blogosphere...



 Reply hazy, try later...

Secret **Apple** Memo surfaces in **Steve Job's** Porsche SL 55 AMG glove compartment outlining the market strategy for **iPad** — real role as assistive device for baby boomers as an alternate larger screen for aging eyes.

It is decidedly so...

Kindle Fire explodes and sets fire to reference collection at local college library. University Librarians check off things on to-do list.

Most likely...

Same **Kindle** fires observed by aliens light years later who ponder the significance of books burning as they move from electronic books to books printed on thin titanium sheets. Whatever the format, they conclude; they must support alien-driven acquisition (ADA).

Better not tell you now...

Prison pricing offered by Open Access legal publishers. Prisoners now peer review, publish; wardens examining closely publish and perish activities...

Eight ball says, Dennis, really?...

Wilson last library awards go to you, librarians, who kept this essential indexer of older times alive well into the digital era...

Yes — definitely...

During water-boarding **Wikileaks** founder **Julian Assange** confesses to support of green open access. Alarmed that open access might reduce profits on yet-to-be-published memoirs recovered, **Dick Cheney** recommends **Assange's** immediate permanent duct-taping to Guantanamo jail cell and an immediate use of government research money to take research back to the pay side.

As I see it, yes...

With **Ann Oakerson's** move to the **Center for Research Libraries** in Chicago, **Yale**

ceases to be intellectual center of discursive deconstruction of STM publishing.

My sources say no...

During fourth consecutive blizzard (due to global warming and those book fires), **Brad Eden** bellows "stop stop stop" as he struggles to start **Prius** in fourth consecutive 2011/2012 blizzard in Valpo. Digital natives snuggle warm at home enjoying the convenience of all electronic libraries brought to them by tax dollars. Technology triumphs for most as **Brad's Prius**, once started, won't bust through ice gate.

Signs point to yes...

First book sale of patron driven acquired books takes place. Advertised as gently clicked on...

Without a doubt...

Tea party discovers open access argument about tax funded research must be accessible to all. Tax funded medical research? **Palin** tweets from icy redoubt in the inaccessible north south of **Santa** yet through the cold tubes of Internet, no tax dollars should be used to cure deadbeats. Oops...

It is decidedly so...

**Where the Wild Things Are:
Holiday Edition 2011**

Although still a small percentage of overall sales, the year in eBooks felt like print publishing's retirement party. Print books had reached **Medicare** age and residents are planning accordingly. Maybe it was **Borders** demise, first a few stores, then all of them, in rapid and inexorable succession. Or it was all that reading taking place on smartphones, readers, and tablet computers observed in airports, **Starbucks**, and on the steps of your local public library.

This year, we learned from **Amazon**, that **Kindle** sales had surpassed hardcover sales for the first time. Instant downloads and low prices had pushed the electronic editions into the millions of devices sold.

Apple and **Amazon** are hugely happy about developments. If you are reading anything in e-format it is probably on a **Kindle** or **iBook**. Somewhere a **Nook** is lurking.

If you are a publisher, well, you are selling loads of front list books but making less, in some cases, much less. Hardcovers — well, they're about to be relisted as hard-sellers.

Soon if not already it is going to be difficult identifying the reader device you see in the hands of students and the e-reading public. It will be more difficult to assume bragging rights to be a "first reader" of, say, **Walter Isaacson's** bio of **Steve Jobs**. In paper it is a significantly sized book. In your reader, it is just another folder for your eyes only.

Black Friday, the day of reckoning for retailers, saw huge discounts on the tablet computers that arrived after the **iPad** and eBook readers that post-anticipated the **Kindle**. Want a **BlackBerry Playbook**? Go to **Best Buy** and take home one for \$99.00. In total,

about six million reading devices are in hands of U.S. book public alone.

So what's the game coming up?

• Big publishers, **Penguin** at the lead, have joined **HarperCollins** in putting library programs on hold as they figure on how to virtually "wear" books out. **OverDrive**, the eBook distributor of rank in public libraries is working hard with publishers to assuage fears of piracy and lower revenues. Meanwhile, it's back to reading *Moby Dick* from the **Gutenberg Project** for all you **Sony-reader** readers. Update: *Penguin has backed off somewhat, allowing older books to be lent via library eBook platforms but not the new, front list stuff. Things change...*

• **Barnes and Noble** stores prominently feature **Nook** sales right inside the door. It's like bringing the **Salvation Army** ringers into the warmth, competing for your discretionary cents. Those poor hardcovers just an aisle away they must feel, well, nooked.

• Librarians are becoming increasingly restless to provide greater ease and facility of access to academic eBooks. What students really want is self-reading eBooks but reality requires they read them in more than the chunks present rules and "Web flow control" allows. Librarians have begun hacking the process posting convoluted instructions on how to download an **ebRARY** book to **Kindle** et al. It isn't pretty or even readable, but does evince our dedication to accessibility no matter what, where, or whom...

• **Amazon's** poised to become the **Wal-Mart** of online retail. In books this means shipping more reading devices at attractive pricing.

• A reader's virtual shelf is evolving. One account, a set number of devices, sharing functions. Your **Kindle** desktop a reading environment...

• Patron-driven acquisition will dominate conference presentations in 2012 and the experiment will tip into general acceptance as a reasonable approach to collection development.

A recent *New Yorker* cover captures the inconvenient truth. A young clerk points out a small shelf of books amid shelves of knick knacks, tourist stuff, and reader related accessories to an older shopper. She's standing next to an e-reader display. Both seem puzzled.

Your links:

<http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052970204190504577040110511886588.html>

<http://content.usatoday.com/communities/technologylive/post/2011/09/gartner-ipad-to-dominant-tablet-market-this-holiday-1> 🍁