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ASA Annual Conference 2012: Best Way to Predict the Future Is To Invent It

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Against the Grain

“Linking Publishers, Vendors and Librarians”

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ASA Annual Conference 2012: Best Way to Predict the Future Is to Invent It

by **Nawin Gupta** (ASA Secretary General and Conference Organizer)
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The annual conference of the **Association of Subscription Agents and Intermediaries** has become the international event that draws a broad spectrum of publishers, agents and intermediaries, librarians, and others who facilitate transfer of knowledge to a growing global audience. The theme of the 2012 conference, held 27-28 February in London, was “Best Way to Predict the Future Is to Invent It.” Featuring 17 speakers, the two-day program was organized around five session themes: Context Not Containers, The Semantic Web, Libraries – What Next, eBooks – Onwards & Upwards, and New Roles for the Modern Intermediary. This issue of *Against the Grain* is pleased to publish six papers from the conference that were submitted to *ATG*.

Brian O’Leary — Context First: A Unified Theory of Publishing — talks about publishing being unduly governed by the nature of the container — the physical book.

Although demand for digital content has grown substantially, publishers continue to treat digital formats as a derived or secondary use. As a result, context is truncated or excluded, reducing the degree to which content can be discovered and consumed. At the same time, content abundance places pressure on publishers to find new and more effective ways to market content products. **O’Leary** explains why publishers must start now to revise their content workflows so that they can link to and maintain context while creating and distributing both physical and digital products.

Daniel Mayer — From Discovery to Delivery: Publishing Opportunities on the Semantic Web — addresses how semantics have emerged as a critical technology for the online distribution of content and have entered mainstream adoption by publishers, in particular to power advanced information access features on their portals and to package

their content innovatively. He discusses the key current applications for semantics on the Web, including some not present in the original vision, and underscores underlying trends shaping how we shall manage, distribute, and access information in the future.

Chris Banks — Spaces and Clouds: The Library as a Destination and Launch Pad — discusses why in an increasingly digital age the library as a physical entity — one with the right spaces and facilities and services to meet a variety of study and research needs — is as important as it has ever been. She examines the emerging trends at the **University of Aberdeen** — an institution which has invested strongly

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If Rumors Were Horses

After nearly twenty years of “highly gratifying and thoroughly enjoyable work with **Casalini Libri**,” the gorgeous and vivacious **Colleen Campbell** will be moving on to new professional challenges. Her last day at **Casalini** will be February 27th. Word is that **Colleen** will be joining **Ithaka** and that she will be based in Berlin. Good luck, **Colleen**, and please keep in touch!

Colleen has been a key assistant of the **Fiesole Collection Development Retreats** along with all the charming **Casalini** famiglia including **Michele** and **Barbara Casalini**. I hope that **Colleen** will continue to join us at the Retreats! Speaking of the **Fiesole Collection Development Retreats**, just saw that **Tilburg University (TiU)** is now running **OCLC WorldShare Management Services**, making it the first Euro-

pean library to adopt the cloud-based library management solution. **Tilburg** was ranked among the top 500 universities in the world in 2012. The incredible **Mel Collier** was the director of libraries during the **2010 Fiesole Retreat**. **Mel** is “retired” except he is always busy, like most retired librarians I know!

www.tilburgunivrsity.edu/
www.oclc.org
<http://www.casalini.it/retreat/>



Was sad to learn of the retirement of longtime executive, **Bob Campbell**, senior publisher, **John Wiley & Sons, Inc.** **Campbell** has worked in the publishing industry for the last 44 years, ever since he graduated with a degree in zoology from **Aberdeen University** in 1968 and joined **Blackwell Scientific Publications (BSP)**. In building the **BSP publication business**, **Campbell**

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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**

MOBILE PHONE LITRA'CHER by Bruce Strauch (The Citadel)

Margaret Atwood (*The Handmaid's Tale*), at age 74, is still in the literary action. Fascinated by **Wattpad** and adolescents who read stories on their iPhones, she tried — you guessed it — a **Zombie** story — *The Happy Zombie Sunrise Home*. So far, she has gotten a mere 80,000 reads, which is nothing next to **Abigail Gibb's** vampire saga *The Dark Heroine*, with 4.8 million. And **Abigail** got a six-figure contract with **HarperCollins**.

See — **Alexandra Alter**, "A Literary Star Dabbles in Web Publishing," *The Wall Street Journal*, Nov. 23, 2012, p.D5.

JULIA CHILD OF MEXICO by Bruce Strauch (The Citadel)

89-year-old British-born **Diana Kennedy** has passed the last 55 years in Mexico collecting recipes from cooks across the country. She lives in an adobe house with an outdoor kitchen, wood-fired grills, and adobe beehive ovens. A rainwater tank is the only water source.

With the eye of an anthropologist and the hand of a home cook, she has learned it all and put it down in nine books. Top chefs from around the world knock on her kitchen door to learn what she calls *comida casera* — honest food. See e.g., *Nothing Fancy* (Dial Press, 1984), *My Mexico* (Clarkson Potter, 1998).

See — **Beth Kracklauer**, "The Expat," *Saveur (Special Issue Mexico)*, p.56.

WOMAN'S WRATH by Bruce Strauch (The Citadel)

And if you're in the mood for novels about vengeful women: **Helen Zahavi**, *Dirty Weekend* (1991); **Anita Shreve**, *The Weight of Water* (1997); **Helen Dunmore**, *Your Blue-Eyed Boy* (1998); **Charles Dickens**, *Great Expectations* (1861); **Kate Pullinger**, *Weird Sister* (1999).

See — **Louise Doughty**, "Five Best," *The Wall Street Journal*, Aug. 4-5, 2012, p.C10.

UPENDING HIGHER ED by Bruce Strauch (The Citadel)

2U got its start offering master's degrees from USC and **Georgetown**. Now it's got \$96,000,000(!) in venture capital for online undergrad courses from a consortium of **Duke**, **Northwestern**, and **Vandy**. Who's behind this? **Jeremy Johnson** (age 28), **Princeton Review** founder **John Katzman**, and former **Hooked on Phonics** CEO **Chip Paucek**.

See — **Caroline Howard** and **Michael Noer**, "30 Under 30," *Forbes*, Jan. 21, 2013, p.70.

DREISER AND DESIRE by Bruce Strauch (The Citadel)

Theodore Dreiser was fascinated by tycoon-level wealth. Probably everyone read *An American Tragedy* (1925) in high school about a poor boy yearning for more and murdering his girlfriend after knocking her up. But **Dreiser** spent most of his writing career on his "Trilogy of Desire" (*The Financier*; *The Titan*; *The Stoic*) based on the life of **Charles Tyson Yerkes**, stock speculator and cable car magnate.

Dreiser was still laboring over *The Stoic* when he died in 1945, and it was published posthumously in 1947. But the really good one was *The Financier* with its examination of money, art, glory, and yes, sex — a lot of sex — in the Gilded Age. It included intricate details of 19th-century finance which were cut from the novel when released in 1927.

Now the **University of Illinois Press** has restored the finance stuff. Who says University presses don't serve a useful purpose? For those interested in shorting stocks and the Panic of 1873, this is for you.

See — **Leonard Cassuto**, "A Life Driven by Desire," *The Wall Street Journal*, May 5-6, 2012, p.C13. (**Cassuto** is a professor of English at **Fordham** and editor of *The Cambridge History of the American Novel*.)



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in the physical and digital environments and in the services to support both.

Jill Emery — The Role of the Modern Intermediary and What Constitutes Value in the Library of 2012 — discusses libraries' continuing struggle with the prime issues of journal transfer and platform changes with electronic subscription management. She provides two specific examples that illustrate how local technical services staff hours are spent addressing these issues and proposes ways intermediaries can help improve these situations.

Emery goes on to explore developing areas in libraries and where librarians' focus will be in the next five years.

Ann Lawson — Thriving in Chaos: Intermediaries Delivering Value in a Changing Landscape — discusses how the burgeoning volume of electronic content, in its many forms, is constantly changing the landscape for all involved in the information industry, leading to a reliance on multiple solutions for management and delivery. This is costly and resource-hungry. Our world is becoming ever more complex; money is in short supply; libraries need to develop and implement mechanisms and solutions, either by themselves, in consortia, or to outsource to an intermediary.

She states that to help libraries to thrive in such a chaotic, changing landscape, intermediaries have to be agile and quick to adapt, delivering added value to libraries, institutions, corporations, publishers, and consortia alike.

Pinar Erzin — Adding Value to the Publishers' Business — talks about finding the niche in serving publishers as an agent, without being a traditional subscription agent. She addresses questions: Bridging between libraries and publishers, how does that position sales organizations like Accucoms in the supply chain? Do we compete or do we work together? What are some of the other emerging initiatives being added to the supply chain — for example, small publisher coalitions? 🌐