

October 2016

Back Talk-Library Dreams

Anthony W. Ferguson
anthony.ferguson185@gmail.com

Follow this and additional works at: <http://docs.lib.purdue.edu/atg>

 Part of the [Library and Information Science Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Ferguson, Anthony W. (2013) "Back Talk-Library Dreams," *Against the Grain*: Vol. 25: Iss. 1, Article 15.
DOI: <https://doi.org/10.7771/2380-176X.6416>

This document has been made available through Purdue e-Pubs, a service of the Purdue University Libraries. Please contact epubs@purdue.edu for additional information.

Analyze This ...
from page 84

than clustering eBook management decisions annually, collection reviews may be made in response to vendor offers throughout the fiscal year, and usage reports are pulled and examined to support purchasing decisions per platform as needed.

We are still facing the fact that our select eBook vendors have not congregated around a primary metric. We will now be providing a split metric overview usage report, with the preferred COUNTER Book Report 2 (Number of Successful Section Requests by Month and Title) competing with the second gathered metric of the Book Report 1 (Number of Successful Title Requests by Month and Title). Where the COUNTER Book Report 3 (Turnaways by Month and Title) is applicable, these data may inform future expansion of access, when such options are financially feasible. A single platform currently houses a high percentage of eBook titles under simultaneous usage restriction. This collection has now moved to a platform where the Book Report 3 is available for analysis. Usage for scattered eBooks available on database platforms is not routinely examined or reported, as of now.

Continuity of access is a key factor in analyzing usage and is closely tied to judicious use of collection funds. Raw vendor reports are retained and archived for future reference. Each genre has a dedicated overall fiscal year compilation spreadsheet where the primary arrangement is by vendor or publisher. Ideally, usage statistics would be reductive to one all-encompassing metric. But in the interest of granular examination of usage, for the time being, we are pursuing the worthy goal of comparing apples to apples until such time as that elusive ideal of the one-size-fits-all metric becomes a reality. As we continue to accumulate stored data, time series reporting where grand fiscal year totals are entered into master spreadsheets for continuing e-resources, per genre, allows for usage overview and analysis of trends. Reports in this format must account for such variables as the occasional database and e-journal migration, with the resultant potential overlapping transitional usage data. Other factors challenging continuity in reporting include the detailing or documenting of cancellations or cessations, titles changes, and significant product upgrades.

Future trends and events will necessarily dictate a reflection on existing practices and

against the grain people profile

Coordinator of Electronic Resources & Serials, Leatherby Libraries, Chapman University, Orange, CA 92866
Phone: (714) 532-7769 • Fax: (714) 532-7743
<highsmic@yahoo.com> • <highsmit@chapman.edu>

Cheryl E. Highsmith

BORN AND LIVED: Champaign County, IL, and elsewhere in IL; later in Philadelphia, PA; and now in Orange County, CA.

EARLY LIFE: Champaign, IL.

PROFESSIONAL CAREER AND ACTIVITIES: Active member of ALA-ALCTS and (substantial) academic library experience in both public and technical services positions; certified teacher at the secondary level and member of the AATG.

FAMILY: Mom (a retired librarian); three siblings, including a brother who is a librarian; nieces & nephews.

IN MY SPARE TIME I LIKE: Reading; writing.

FAVORITE BOOKS: Mysteries by a short list of authors; historical non-fiction.

PET PEEVES: Poor planning.

PHILOSOPHY: Do it right the first time.

MOST MEMORABLE CAREER ACHIEVEMENT: As I am submitting this profile, one thing does not stand out, other than chairing a committee and making an award presentation at ALA Annual 2012. This article might supersede that, and there are other possibilities. Let's just say I have a lot of "irons in the fire."

GOAL I HOPE TO ACHIEVE FIVE YEARS FROM NOW: Book/book chapter publication(s).

HOW/WHERE DO I SEE THE INDUSTRY IN FIVE YEARS: Fewer service positions identifiable as librarians; consolidation of services and content access points via vendor/publisher mergers or otherwise; library acquisitions increasingly driven by patron options/selections made at the point-of-use. 🍌



drive procedures. Emerging and expanding services models, such as patron-driven acquisition (PDA), may influence renewals and prove to be a more cost-effective and responsive option than outright subscriptions or purchases. We would actively consider implementation of a proprietary third-party usage gathering or loading tool, pending available funding. We recently launched a discovery service, and after I have the opportunity to review its impact on the recorded usage of electronic resources, I will act on my observations and suggest refinements for in-house usage gathering, reporting, and analysis, accordingly. The now-combined format coverage of the COUNTER Code of Practice for e-Resources: Release 4, with the

deadline date for implementation of 31 Dec. 2013, will inform a reexamination of internal practices, a realignment of reporting priorities, as needed, and the anticipated incorporation of new vendor-provided reports into the mix.

Driven by ever-changing vendor options, the e-resource landscape will continue to evolve. A flexible approach in the management of electronic collections will entail being proactive in exploring new options, while reacting analytically to the data content of usage reports. For the immediate future, the "orange," "apple," and "banana" representing the three genres remain in the usage statistics mix, but may be joined in the future by new ingredients. 🍌

Back Talk
from page 86

save some money and appear to be generous by helping the other libraries. Added to all of this was the advent of open-access materials including the riches of the Web, open-access journals, and now the mass availability of millions of non-commercial eBooks.

I began this piece by examining Dr. King's dreams and how they have been largely realized. We then moved into a brief review of how libraries and the profession followed suit and made it possible for America's black readers and librarians to join and enrich the mainstream. While there is much yet to be done, I think this is remarkable and is due to the fact that, as my non-librarian wife often remarks, librarians are such nice people. While

these changes have been extraordinary, I think the advent of so much non-commercial and relatively affordable commercial e-content is equally amazing. We often talk about the need for "even playing fields." While I don't think they completely exist, I do believe that with the advent of the Web we are much closer to achieving the dream of all librarians: To help people to find the information they need. 🍌



Column Editor: **Anthony (Tony) W. Ferguson** (Library and Information Science Consultant, 15419 S. Via Rancho Grande, Sahuarita, AZ 85629; Phone: 520-561-6411; former Hong Kong University Librarian) <anthony.ferguson185@gmail.com>

While thinking about writing this **Back Talk** column, I was also watching reports concerning **Martin Luther King's** 1963 "I have a Dream" speech, **President Obama's** second inauguration speech, and the 150th anniversary of the signing of the Emancipation Proclamation. **Dr. King** hoped that Americans would work, pray, stand, struggle, and if need be, go to jail together, so that all men would be equal, so that the sons of slaves and slave owners might sit together as brothers, so that there would be freedom and justice for all, so that people would be judged by their character and not by the color of their skin, and so that black and white children could play together as brothers and sisters.

As I reflected upon these hopes for America voiced by **King** some 50 years ago, the year I graduated from high school, I thought that while we have not fully achieved all of his dreamed for goals, America had made real progress: local laws allowing job discrimination have been struck down, combined black and white church congregations are common, workers of all colors march together to fight for their rights, black and white politicians in the former slave states do work together, sports teams are integrated, and while the issues of racial quotas, diversity, affirmative action and reverse discrimination are still hot topics, and the reelection of a black president.

With these thoughts in mind I then turned to the problem at hand: My need for a **Back Talk** column and so I began to wonder about the amount of social progress that had been achieved in the library and information field.

There is an very informative two-part article freely available on race and librarianship by **Lipscomb** in the *Journal of the Medical Library Association* (**Lipscomb, Carolyn E. Race and Librarianship: Part 1** www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC442167/ and **Part 2** www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC1175796/). In 1936 when the **American Library Association (ALA)** held its annual meeting in Richmond Virginia, it took special steps to invite black librarians to take part in the conference. However, while Virginia laws permitted blacks and whites to attend conference

sessions together as long as they sat in separate sections, they could not stay at the same hotels nor could they eat meals in the same dining rooms. Subsequently, due to the uproar this produced, **ALA** established a Committee on Racial Discrimination and resolved that in the future they would not hold their conference where attendees could not be treated equally. In 1954 **ALA** also "banned" states from having black and white chapters, and Georgia and Alabama withdrew the affiliation to the parent group. In 1961 **ALA** asked its chapters to report on their steps toward integration and urged them to end discrimination within three years. Consequently, Louisiana and Mississippi also disassociated themselves from **ALA** rather than comply. This isn't to say there were not actions within these four states to integrate, but only that the powers of tradition favoring the separation of races dominated the discussions.

In the early 1960s there were further attempts to integrate public libraries in the deep south. A 1961 "study-in" at the Jackson public library in Mississippi resulted in the arrest of nine black students from a local Christian college. They were ultimately fined \$100 each but given suspended sentences. Subsequently **ALA** amended its Library Bill of Rights to state "The right of an individual to the use of a library should not be denied or abridged because of his race, religion, national origins, or political views." While some libraries continued to maintain separate reading rooms, denying access to certain kinds of books and by removing all desks and chairs so that blacks and whites could not need to sit next to each other, gradually conditions improved and libraries, like the rest of America, integrated. ("Segregated Libraries." Americanwiki.pbworks.com/w/page/32944222/Segregated%20Libraries)

Fast forwarding to the present year, we find that libraries in this regard have changed significantly. In the current version of the African American Library Directors in the USA sponsored by the **University of Kentucky Libraries** there are approximately 150 black directors, assistant directors, and directors of major departments listed. (<http://www.uky.edu/Libraries/NKAA/directors.php>)

While this number is admittedly small compared to the total number of librarians, progress has been made. Based upon census samples, in 1950 there were 990 black librarians, or two percent of the total number of librarians. By 1990, the most recent year for which I could find data, that had changed to 27,958, or nine percent of the total number of librarians. (Oxford University Press. blog.oup.com/2011/06/librarian-census/)

While the number of black library directors might be smaller than many might wish, the quality of those serving or who have served is remarkable. For example, **Robert Wedgeworth** was the Executive Director of the **American Library Association** from 1972 to 1985, the Dean of **Columbia University's** School of Library Service from 1985 to 1992, and the University Librarian and Professor of Library and Information Science at the **University of Illinois** from 1993 to 1999. Another example is **Loretta Parham**, who was just made a member of **OCLC's** Board of Trustees. **Loretta** is currently the Executive Director and Chief Executive Officer at the **Robert W. Woodruff Library-Atlanta University Center, Inc.** She was formerly the CEO and Director of **Vanderbilt University's** library system and chaired **Solinet**.

When my generation of librarians, whether school, public, special or academic, joined the profession in the late 60s and early 70s, I believe we all shared the dream of helping people find the information they needed to be successful. In my own academic library case during the pre-electronic era, the emphasis was on collecting as many primary and secondary source printed materials as possible and teaching students and teachers how to find them once they were added to the collections.

In the early 70s when we started to provide access to electronic databases, we added to our workloads the job of interpreting patron needs when doing their database searches for them. Thankfully, once the databases became more user-friendly we got out of the users' way and let them do their own searches. Then the focus of at least my own work became justifying new funds and redistributing old funds to buy as much of the right electronic full-text information resources as possible. Initially, this meant adding e-journals to our existing print research journal subscriptions. Later we flipped the equation and worked on figuring out for which titles we still needed print copies. We then found that via the "big deal" packages we could get even more content for the same or a bit more money than in the print world. This step toward the acquisition of more and more e-content was then followed by the heady early days of consortial e-journal and eBook buying. For smaller/poorer libraries this was like Christmas, and the larger/richer libraries got to

continued on page 85

ADVERTISERS' INDEX

25	AAAS	23	BEGELL HOUSE PUBLISHERS	13	IGI GLOBAL
9	ADAM MATTHEW DIGITAL	87	BIBLIOLABS	88	MIDWEST LIBRARY SERVICE
47	ALIBRIS	37	THE BOOK HOUSE INC.	41	MODERN LANGUAGE ASSOCIATION
15	AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF PHYSICS	81	BUSCA, INC.	35	RITTENHOUSE
44, 45	AMERICAN PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION	77	THE CHARLESTON ADVISOR	17	SPIE DIGITAL LIBRARY
21	ANNUAL REVIEWS	10	THE CHARLESTON REPORT	11	SUSTAINABLE COLLECTION SERVICES
19	ASME	2	GOLD SPRING HARBOR LAB PRESS	7	SWETS
5	ATG	69	EASTERN BOOK COMPANY	3	YBP LIBRARY SERVICES
73	BASCH SUBSCRIPTIONS, INC.	29	EMERY-PRATT		

For Advertising Information Contact: **Toni Nix**, Ads Manager,
justwrite@lowcountry.com, Phone: 843-835-8604, Fax: 843-835-5892.