February 2013

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Recommended Citation

Nardini, Bob (2013) "Issues in Vendor/Library Relations: Different," *Against the Grain*: Vol. 25: Iss. 1, Article 50.

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.7771/2380-176X.6451>

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Issues in Vendor/Library Relations — Different

Column Editor: **Bob Nardini** (Vice President, Product Development, Ingram Library Services) <bob.nardini@ingramcontent.com>

"Is Scotland different from England?" I was reading email on my Blackberry while riding from the Edinburgh airport with an English colleague who had arranged for us to visit some Scottish university libraries. So far Scotland hadn't looked different. The distant hills framed by low clouds and gray sky, the open countryside patched by trees, the petrol station off the highway where we had a snack, everything could have been anywhere in the east Midlands of England, which we'd passed through the day before on the way up. Edinburgh's airport greets the visitor passing out of the arrival gates with a celebration of the grandeurs of this capital city, dramatic photographic panels annotated with brief literary tributes, but we didn't glimpse the city at all while driving away, and the airport itself is an unprepossessing aggregation of gate modules, a structure you could swap with mid-sized airports anywhere.

At the rental car counter, my colleague and the agent, having discovered through accent that they were Englishmen, had bantered with one another.

"Yes, I'm English," said the agent, "I hope they let me stay after 2014."

"And I hope they let me in," said my colleague. "I'll bring my passport."

They were referring to Scottish independence, or the chance of it. Should the Scots be free of the English? Centuries ago, the issue was taken up with lance and battle axe. In our more tranquil century the question will be settled through the ballot box, when in the autumn of 2014 Scottish voters as young as sixteen will be asked to determine their future by answering whether they agree or disagree that "Scotland should be an independent country."

Scotland has sixty institutions of higher education. Some are among the most famous universities in the world. Others serve the farthest outer reaches of today's United Kingdom. The **University of the Highlands and Islands**, for example, has a western campus on the Isle of Skye operating in Gaelic. Its northernmost campus is a marine center located on the Shetland Islands, an archipelago near the North Sea oil fields, closer to the Arctic Circle than to London, whose culture is as Scandinavian as it is Scottish. Fortunately, most of Scotland's universities are not so remote. From Edinburgh it's possible to reach many of them with ease, and our itinerary called for visits to four libraries in two days.

We drove north from the airport toward the Firth Road Bridge, a span across the Firth of Forth before a turn east through towns like Auchtermuchty and Cupar, whose shops clung to the High Street as shops do throughout the U.K. At one point, among the restaurants offering curry or fish and chips, we spotted another advertising "southern fried chicken." That was different, if not particularly Scottish.

Our destination was the town of St. Andrews and the university of that name, a seat of learning founded in 1413 where centuries later **Prince William** met **Kate Middleton**. Now a few years past that event and celebrating its 600th anniversary, the **St. Andrew's** Website boasts, "We were founded: before the printing press, before the battle of Agincourt, before the construction of the Forbidden City in Beijing, before the construction of Machu Picchu in Peru, before **Columbus** arrived in the Americas, and before **Joan of Arc** waged battle."

All well and good, but what a visitor really notices while entering St. Andrews, next to the ancient spires and towers of university and town, is a golf course. Like the university, golfing is also about 600 years old in St. Andrews, and its Old Course, among the world's most famous golfing venues, boasts the North Sea itself as the principal hazard along much of its length. These venerable links wrap the coastline above the town in spectacular fashion before concluding at an 18th hole with easy access to a comfortable clubhouse and several hotels. My own was full of golfing memorabilia, and my room had a name, "**Jamie Anderson**," who, as a plaque and photographs inside illustrated, won The Open in 1877, 1878, and 1879 but, according to what I read, missed a chance for another when he was not told that the 1880 tournament was on until it was too late for him to enter it.

The university spreads throughout the town, and its main library was a few minutes' walk. The library came into view as we turned down a narrow walkway off the street, a modern building, unlike much of its surroundings, stacked planes of concrete separated by three floors of glass. We were greeted at the entrance, whisked through the turnstile, and escorted to our meeting room, where we encountered our first Scottish librarians, seven of them, seated at a rectangular table waiting for us.

"Why do we get an error message on this page in your system?" We can fix that. "Can you simplify your bibliographic records?" We'll have a look and do what we can. "Can you provide more DVDs?" Yes, we are planning to. "From Uruguay?" No, probably not. "How can we get a full MARC record at point of export?" We'll explain how. "What are your plans to implement RDA?"

The questions weren't so different from questions I'd heard at English libraries. For that matter, they weren't so different from North American questions. The librarians were uniformly knowledgeable, sometimes exceptionally so, but the issues they had in mind did not seem local to St. Andrews; nor to Edinburgh, our second stop that first day, where the airport's welcoming panels transformed into the real castles, cathedrals, and monuments of the living city; nor to Stirling, stop one of day two, where towering on a hill above the university was the Wallace Monument, honoring

William Wallace,

who a century prior to the emergence of golf in St. Andrews, had defeated the English at the Battle of Stirling Bridge, inspiring **Mel Gibson** seven centuries later to film *Braveheart*. In Stirling the Scots still show some cheek. Official signage inside the library advised students at one point, "Every time you watch *Jersey Shore*, a book commits suicide."

The **University of Glasgow** was our last appointment of the two days. Scotland's two principal cities are only forty-seven miles apart, a short drive across the narrow waist of the country, highlands to the north, border country to the south. Glasgow, as has been noted often, sometimes but not usually in a complimentary way, lacks the splendors of Edinburgh. As we drove into the city on a dismal, drizzling afternoon, for us at least the effect was certainly the opposite of uplifting. The university's main campus spreads through the city's West End and we parked on a narrow street, where our meter didn't work and the solid stone face of a building adjoining the street was stained dark by the rain on this hard, cold, damp day.

"Dreayyyecch," said our librarian host as we described the weather to him, once safely inside. The word had an emphasis in the vicinity of the first "e" and the rest seemed like an expressive recreation of the dreary physical experience itself. I thought he'd made the word up on the spot, and had perfectly captured the entire effect of standing in a rain that when combined with gray and cold penetrates any outer garment you might try against it, and your soul too. But as I learned later, "dreich" is a real word, a word "chiefly Scottish." As one online dictionary puts it, "A combination of dull, overcast, drizzly, cold, misty, and miserable weather. At least four of the above adjectives must apply before a day is truly dreich."

This day was, we had our four, and the librarian's office, cramped and dimly lit, was not much cheerier. We sat across from him, separated by a desktop crowded with papers and reports and other tailings from the back-room workdays in what was, as our short walk to his office showed, with students occupying every available seat in sight, a heavily used and likely understaffed academic library. We got down to business and I asked about our new customer interface, which was in its test phase. Could I show it to him?

Instead, he showed it to me. He was a beta tester and as I witnessed, an active one. The computer on his desktop was an older model, and his keyboard obviously a well-worn implement. He grabbed it to sign on and attacked the keys with what resembled a series of whacks, as if he were trying to revive an injured child, or to help **Mel Gibson** subdue the English. He

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I Hear the Train A Comin' — An Interview with Bill Park, CEO DeepDyve

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William (“Bill”) Park is the CEO of **DeepDyve**. He previously served at **Axiom Corporation** (NSDQ: ACXM) where he led the company’s Data, Digital, and Direct Marketing Services Organization. Mr. Park joined Axiom in 2005 thru its acquisition of **Digital Impact** (NSDQ: DIGI), an online marketing services and technology company, where he served as founder, chairman, and CEO since 1997. (Columnist’s Note: I serve as an advisor to DeepDyve.)

What is DeepDyve?

BP: DeepDyve is an online rental service for scientific and scholarly research articles. Our service is designed for the millions of so-called “unaffiliated” users who no longer have convenient and affordable access to authoritative research, such as scientists in small to mid-size biopharma companies, independent researchers, and even employees in departments of Fortune 500 companies who lack subscription access to long-tail content.

What do you mean by “rental service”?

BP: “Renting” enables a user to gain read-only access to the full text of an article via their browser or mobile device. Through our cloud-based service, users are able to view an article for a certain duration of time, but they are unable to print, copy, or download the article. By reducing their access, DeepDyve and our publisher partners are able to offer our users a substantially reduced price compared to purchasing the PDF. Users can either sign up for our Freelancer prepaid package (\$20 for 5 rentals), or our Professional plan (\$40/month for 40 rentals).

What is the company’s history?

BP: DeepDyve is a technology startup based in Silicon Valley. We launched a beta version of our rental service in 2010 with just a handful of titles to assess the viability of this new form of access and business model. Since then, we have added over 100 publishers to our rental program representing over 2,000 journals

and seven million articles. In addition, we also include millions of free papers from open-access sources such as PLoS, ArXiv, PMC, and more.

Which publishers are participating in the article rental service?

BP: We work with over 100 publishers that range from leading commercial publishers, such as **Springer** and **Wiley**, to society publishers, such as **IEEE**, **ACM**, **AIP**, **APS**, and more. Our content includes STM as well as social sciences. We’re pleased to report that no publisher has ever left our service.

Why do you think publishers are participating?

BP: We believe publishers are participating for several reasons. First, DeepDyve helps support their mission of disseminating their content as widely as possible in a format that is affordable and convenient. Second, publishers have routinely reported that 50% or more of their Website traffic comes from unaffiliated, or so-called “Google,” visitors with less than 0.1% ever converting into a PPV or subscription sale. Clearly, there are many frustrated site visitors. Publishers are responding by offering DeepDyve as an alternative access model that both builds goodwill and does not compete with their existing products and services. Third, serving this market would be challenging for publishers to do on their own. Because these unaffiliated users do not have the budget or resources of traditional institutional users, they require the convenience and affordability of a monthly “one-stop-shop” subscription as opposed to signing up for separate plans across many different publishers. And finally, there is a business opportunity. With tens of millions of unaffiliated users worldwide, a figure that is growing rapidly with the emergence of developing countries, we believe DeepDyve provides a channel to an untapped market of new users.

Aren’t there concerns among content providers that their participation in DeepDyve will erode library subscriptions and pay-per-view sales?

host told us. “We have our own educational system.” The very creation of the United Kingdom, he said, was only so that England could protect its northern border. It all sounded very much like a 2014 vote of Yes. For me it was an on-the-fly tutorial on Scottish home rule, delivered with authority and conviction, passion even, with a warmth to counter the outside Glasgow air.

And it was a reminder of a lesson that every vendor needs reinforced periodically, that despite what on some days can seem a sameness from one call to another, when a library says they are different, they are. 🌱

BP: Yes, this is clearly the top concern of publishers, which is why DeepDyve was careful in creating a service that has markedly different levels of access versus subscriptions and PPV, targeting a distinctly different market of unaffiliated users compared to the publishers’ traditional institutional focus. As we’ve grown, we’ve been able to further validate this distinction through numerous tests we’ve conducted with our partners — and to date, we have yet to see any evidence of cannibalization, which is also why no publisher has ever left our service.

DeepDyve came into the market as “iTunes for academic articles,” with 99-cent rentals. How has the sales model evolved, and why?

BP: When we first launched our service, we told to our partners that we wanted to price rentals at \$0.99 to leverage the iTunes “brand” and automatically convey to users the essence of our service. Later, we tested a variety of other price points ranging from \$0.99 - \$4.99 to find the optimal price, and since then have settled on \$4. In addition, we experimented with several monthly plans which utilized so-called “freemium” models where users could sign up for a free trial. Again, we tested a variety of prices points starting at \$5/month and have settled on more of an “all-you-can-read” plan of \$40/month.

As someone who is relatively new to the scholarly communication space, what strikes you as interesting about this industry?

BP: The industry is at an intersection of several macro trends which have significant implications on the future of scholarly publishing:

- 1) Open Access. What impact will OA have on journal pricing? On research quality?
- 2) Google (Amazon, Apple, Twitter, LinkedIn...): What role will these technology giants have on how users search and access scholarly content? How they conduct research? How can publishers differentiate their offerings or at what level of technology can they compete?
- 3) Customer-centric: We are witnessing a shift from a vendor-centric to a customer-centric world. We actively determine what we watch, when we watch, and our choices are virtually limitless — (ditto of course for news, music, etc). We have more access and controls on our services, and our decisions are derived less and less from “authoritative” sources (the disc jockey on Z100 or the programming chief at NBC) to people within our circle of family, friends, and colleagues. To what extent will these types of changes in our consumer life bleed into our scholarly life? 🌱

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knew our system as well as I did and quickly showed me the strong points — thank goodness he’d liked it. We went on to other points of business, and he knew them all cold as well.

We had some small talk beyond the weather. At each stop across our two days, in fact, we’d asked librarians about the impending referendum, but nobody had seemed too engaged with that and if anything, raising the topic seemed to make people mildly uncomfortable. Not this time. “We have our own health system,” our