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Back Talk-The IFLA Trend Report

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Too many words, the student will get nothing. Exactly why is anybody's guess. A few of us attended a Google education class conducted by young Googlers at **Colorado State** last January. They urged us not to use sentences, as Google, contrary to popular belief, didn't work well with natural language searches.

We were also told to go easy on quotation marks, the favorite trick of the advanced librarian searcher. It seems Google works with tiered indexes; the more-often-searched terms and clicked results are searched first. Using quotation marks forces the search engine to dig deep into that part of the black box that is seldom helpful for popular results. You've entered Google's junk drawer.

Search by wire, just like fly-by-wire, works when it works. Decision making becomes cloudy when you can't show sky and horizon.

Your Links:

http://www.wired.com/threatlevel/2013/05/nsa-manual-on-hacking-internet/

Wired article on NSA's in-house Google search tips manual. There is a link to the pdf and **Amazon** sells it at the Kindle store.

http://guides.library.colostate-pueblo.edu/googlesearch

Webinar recordings from the **Colorado State University** Google Seminars on search and all things Google…

http://www.amazon.com/Fly-Wire-William-Langewiesche/dp/B0055X5XZO

Amazon link to **William Langewiesche's** book on how commercial aviation gets you from place to place usually safely but with huge missteps of errors in the human machine agreement…

Handicapping the Hyde Park OA Derby

The Lineup:

Rick (Humble Pie Not) Anderson

Jean Claude Guedon University of Montreal (Boom Boom G)

The Low Country Palmetto Classic will be a two-horse race on the carpeted track at Frances Marion Downs. All other entries have scratched from utter exhaustion of the topic. Pre-race betting places the entries even. **Rick (Humble Pie Not) Anderson** has trained substantially for the race, working the winter season in all the venues — Lib-License, Scholarly Kitchen, and the monthly conferences of an interim Dean. **Guedon (Boom Boom G)** has kept pace with slow, persistent ripostes on Lib-License to any diss on green open access.

Sources beyond approach report that **Guedon** will bust out first from the gate singing a verse or two from **Tom Waits'** *All the World is Green*:

"maybe when our story's over
we'll go somewhere where's it's always spring
the band is playing our song again
and all the world is green.

Applause and laughs will erupt at the first turn as the simultaneous French translation by **Stevan Harnad** via Skype kicks in. Nonplussed, and sipping a noncaffenated drink, **Humble Pie Not** nudges the backstretch rail with a solid imitation of a young Hegel fully attuned to the objective world. **Anderson** gait signals the fans how it is in his humble opinion. **Humble Pie Not** will edge the lead only to fall back as his second sentence channels the older Hegel (B2849.I3 H46 2003) laying down the theory of theories that encourages no objections — keine Einwände.

Boom Boom G Guedon, no slouch, and taking in loving stride the rhythmic slap of **Harnad's** omnipresent green whip, will attack the crowd with even nastier tales of bad STM behavior including **Elsevier**, the fat Dutchman, secret funding of the Finch report. Over Skype the crowd will hear, loudly, **Harnard's** cursing the Finchnados and demanding an open access market riot..."aux armes bibliotecaires!"

As they enter the stretch, the crowd, stunned into confused silence, wondering if they've covered their bets in this race that will take a century to finish. The contestants are frothing at the mouth, their hearts taking a pounding from their Lasik-laced arguments. It will be a stunning photo finish, won by a nose. 🐎

Now at **New York University's Shanghai Campus**, about 99.9% of the materials immediately accessible by our students and teachers are digital. Certainly the first trend, new technologies expand and limit who has access to information is correct in our case. Our students can enjoy the opportunity to access nearly a million volumes of eBooks, tens and tens of thousands of academic journal titles, have excerpts of millions of other books scanned for them from **NYC**, and can electronically place requests for other books to be delivered from the home campus using a courier service. Because of this, we are cognizant of our need to make sure our students are trained to take full advantage of all these information riches. I am still not so sure about the second trend about online education bringing about an end to traditional forms of education. In China, at least, there is an enormous amount of online education (my 2001 dissertation focused on the library and information needs of the hundreds of thousands of **Television University** students in China), but they clearly want flesh-and-blood teachers and are willing to pay premium fees to get them.

With all the news about **Edward Snowden** and **NSA** snooping into databases, and the amount of time and effort spent in some countries of the world to control access to information, I don't think I need to say much about the boundaries of privacy and data protection, the

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In November of 2012, **IFLA** initiated "a comprehensive literature review which surveyed recent studies and reports on emerging [information] trends and compiled an extensive bibliography of relevant documentation." They recently published an overview of the conclusions reached by panels of experts who have examined these materials: "Riding the Waves or Caught in the Tide? Navigating the Evolving Information Environment. Insights from the **IFLA** Trend Report." *http://trends.ifla.org/files/trends/assets/insights-from-the-ifla-trend-report_v2.pdf*

Their purpose in publishing this preliminary examination of these documents is to invite the international library community to read and react and to indicate what it all has to say about the future of libraries. Over the course of the next year **IFLA** will be helping organize sessions around the world to do just that. They want us to indicate how we feel 'libraries will develop to remain relevant in the new information landscape."

Having just read it, I am not sure how to react. It is filled with both dire and exciting/hopeful predictions. Among the more worrisome ones are the following:

- Governments and companies can now "follow someone in their daily life simply with image recognition, their mobile phone, their credit card and their Internet use," and Facebook, YouTube, Second Life platforms are currently magnifying these capabilities.
- Library e-lending data provides an enormous amount of information about how people are learning and thinking.
- People trust automated search technologies, but everything is revealed about the information habits of readers when such databases are hacked by companies and governments.

- Institutions like libraries and universities are being replaced by online information providers and Massive Online Courses (MOOCS).
- Local content is ignored by the global Internet.
- Advances in automated machine translation opens the door to those who want to limit or twist what is translated.
- The Internet allows fringe groups to organize and disrupt society in ways that were not possible before.
- Knowledge that was preserved for thousands of years, when converted to digital formats, is susceptible to "bit rot." "The great pace of technological change has left its information pathways littered with the likes of old formats, outdated software, broken URLs, corrupted Webpages and discarded files." (p. 8)

The Trend Report also shines light on the wonderful things taking place in our digital space:

- "In 2010, the quantity of information transmitted globally exceeded one zettabyte for the first time, and is expected to double every two years." (p.3)
- "The amount of new digital content created in 2011 amounts to several million times that contained in all books ever written." (p. 3)
- Web-based education greatly enhances the teacher's ability to understand what students are learning and what they are having problems comprehending.
- Increased communication between competing peoples holds the possibility that conflicts and wars can be avoided.

- Mobile technologies make it possible for more people to access digital content than ever before.
- Machine translation erases boundaries that prevented international communication for so long.
- "Access barriers for the elderly, the visually impaired, new migrants, and economically disadvantaged can be reduced." (p. 8)

The Report itself identifies five key trends identified by a panel of outside/non librarian information science experts: (p.4)

1. Because of the information literacy skills required, and the knowledge and abilities needed to commercially take advantage of the opportunities provided by this new "digital universe" are so critical, "new technologies will both expand and limit who has access to information."
2. Because of its rapid growth, "online education will democratize and disrupt global learning."
3. Because as we all take advantage of all this digital information, information about our use patterns and indeed about ourselves is collected by companies and governments, "the boundaries of privacy and data protection will be redefined."
4. Because the amount of communication between peoples in our new digital universe has increased exponentially, "hyper-connected societies will listen to and empower new voices and groups."
5. Because the number and variety of mobile devices and sensors built into the infrastructure around us, "the global information economy will be transformed by new technologies."

Frankly, as I read through this Trend Report, I wasn't sure if this wasn't just a "Henny Penny" story in which the "sky is falling" and the world is about to end. We know that we are *doing things differently* because of changes in the breadth and depth of the digital universe, but will these changes result in whole segments of society being disenfranchised? Will universities disappear? Will governments and companies deprive us of all privacy and perhaps take action when we participate in activities seen as wrongful? Will our political systems fall into chaos because all the old power groups are disenfranchised? The other thought I had was maybe I should start reading old **Kurt Vonnegut** *Sirens of Titan* novels and focus all my free time reading science fiction in order to gain insight into the world in which we are about to live.

But let's get back to the purpose of **IFLA's** sharing the report: They want us to indicate how we feel "libraries will develop to remain relevant in the new information landscape."