2014

The Against the Grain Taking Stock: Annual Report Issue

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Against the Grain

"Linking Publishers, Vendors and Librarians"

The Against the Grain Taking Stock — Annual Report Issue

Guest Editors: **Tom Gilson** (Associate Editor, *Against the Grain*) <gilson@cofc.edu>

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This issue is about the changes that are happening all around us. Our first article by **Nancy K. Herther** is entitled, "University Presses Facing 'Enormous Tectonic Shift' in Publishing." Are university presses and university libraries at a very basic point of departure? Can university presses remain true to their vision while partnering with libraries? Should they be partnering with libraries?

Our second article "Information Management Trends and Benchmarks 2013" is a brief but fascinating look at Information Management Trends and Benchmarks across corporate, governmental agencies, academic and healthcare institutions. After the recession, this report takes stock of past and future trends and impacts.

For our next two feature articles in this issue, we are publishing edited versions of two of the **2013 Charleston Conference Interviews from the Penthouse Suite**. As many of you know, these interviews are part of a series of original video interviews conducted by several *Against the Grain* and **Charleston Conference** stalwarts before, during, and after the main conference itself. (The 2013 Interviews in their entirety will be posted on the **Charleston Conference Website** www.katina.info/conference. Stay tuned to the **ATG NewsChannel** for further developments! <http://www.against-the-grain.com>)

Our first interview is with **Jim O'Donnell**, Former Provost, **Georgetown University** and was conducted by **Tom Gilson** and **Albert**

Joy. Dr. O'Donnell has several provocative comments to make about libraries and librarians. Wearing his "provost hat," **Jim** brings a campus-wide perspective to the concerns we share with observations that are insightful and informed.

Our second Penthouse interview is with **Kari Paulson**, VP, General Manager, eBooks at **ProQuest**. **Kari** brings us up-to-date on **ProQuest's** acquisition of **EBL** and the progress of **EBL's** merger with **ebRARY**. She discusses her role as a key player

continued on page 10

If Rumors Were Horses

Saw that the gorgeous **Mary Sauer-Games** is now Sr. Director, **PsycINFO** at the **American Psychological Association**. She was appointed this February. **Mary** was formerly Vice President, Publishing - Humanities, STM and Dissertations at **ProQuest**. Many undergraduates these days are majoring in psychology which is a diverse discipline, grounded in science, but with nearly boundless applications in everyday life. I was interested to learn that **APA** was founded in July 1892 at **Clark University**. Its first president was **G. Stanley Hall** and it began with 31 members. After World War II, it expanded and grew quickly. Today, **APA** is the world's largest association of psychologists, with 54 divisions and more than 134,000 researchers, educators, clinicians, consultants and students as its members. The awesome **Linda Beebe** was one of my favorite **APA** friends. **Linda** was retired Senior Director, **PsycINFO** and she retired in December 2012 and is into quite a few new endeavors according to LinkedIn. I am positive that **Mary Sauer-Games** will be an equally good friend! Congratulations, **Mary**! <http://www.apa.org/>

Pictured is **Mike Markwith** at Hyde Park Corner in London.

Moving right along, when I was poking around the **APA** Website, I noticed that there was a link to an article in the **Huffington Post** called "An Olympian's Happiness Is No Different From Yours" which caught my eye because of the recent Olympics and all that. And also because the incredible

continued on page 6

What To Look For In This Issue:

Libraries, Learning, and Literacy	44
Demand-Driven Access to Journal Articles.....	58
Online Acquisitions Tools: What Are Library Service Providers Thinking?	66
COUNTER: Basic Explanations to Disabuse Expectations	74

Interviews

Jim O'Donnell.....	20
Kari Paulson.....	26
Rolf Janke	29
Jennifer Lohmann	31

Profiles Encouraged

Jim O'Donnell.....	22
Southwest Regional Library	32

1043-2094(201402)26:1:1-2

Now publishers may relent and just give **Google** the electronic copy, but what control is this of their warehouse?

My own problem is what do I do with all the books I own and those in-print books I want to buy from the second-sale bookstores? May I scan them into my own desktops that are gathering dust in my garage? May I run snippets of this information from my own Website that runs on these desktops gathering dust in my garage?

I won't scan the page that in every book declares that I can't put this book into any electronic system for retrieval. You know me, Iowa boy who wouldn't disobey a no-trespassing sign unless it was to retrieve a book thrown by a bully over the barbed wire fence in the farmer's field. I know the farmer meant it, but of course he would have to catch me. **Judge Chen** just took down that trespassing sign, if only for **Google**. Those guys — they walk on water and all over copyright.

Mobile Me: the OS Wars

Progress in genuine mobile platforms for academic eBooks moved slowly. As mobile devices take over the computing market, our people have yet to come up with handy apps to take the reading and research experience over to mobile screens.

The roll-out of Windows 8, **Microsoft's** answer, hasn't helped. If you've bought a Windows 8 device, it's rather brilliant in its blend of desktop and mobile touchscreen, but Windows it isn't. The touch tiles and 64-bit speed create a super-charged interface to an integrated Web environment, especially if one elects to use Office 2013, Internet Explorer all nestled in the software as a services cloud of Skydrive.

Sadly, **Microsoft's** late entry into the crowded on-the-go mobile environment dominated by **Apple**, **Google**, **Facebook**, and **Twitter** did not push sales of its versatile Surface tablet or the Windows Phone, both of which are very enterprise and consumer friendly. Too many of us are sold on our iPhones, iPads, and Android-based products. True, we probably still use Windows at work on our aging desktops and laptops. We don't need Windows 8 to run these.

Microsoft's new marketing strategy highlights how well Windows 8.1 works with the Surface for work, school, and play. They are pitching it as the little black dress, perfect for many occasions.

Unfortunately, this socialization approach was tried before. Several decades past, **Apple** tried to put at least one Apple II or Mac in many elementary and secondary schools. The thought was to get students used to **Apple** computers and encourage parents, school systems, and colleges to use **Apple** computers as the computer of choice in education. You may remember the **Apple** computer sitting, royalty on a throne, in your classroom. Some may have used it but not many. It was the Wintel era where one chip and one operating system and interface dominated.

Now we have a new computing age where there are several platforms which require loyalty. Shift brands and there go your apps, your data, your data contract.

There can be no **Apple**-only educational platform, just as there can't be a **Google** Android platform. And not every kid can own a Surface, which like the other hardware becomes quickly obsolete.

Downloads from the Meh Zeitgeist 2013

"we've become indifferent to our indifference...whatever"

From anywhere in the world...we get it, there's the Internet, and we're all connected; disconnect at your own peril. Perhaps, though, it would prove wise to limit patron book renewals to the old paper system — you know, outside the NSA's Prism...

Open access: If it's another way of doing business, it's smart and forward-looking. If it's not business and just wealth redistribution, well Houston, we have a problem...

Elsevier as diagnosis for what ails STM publishing: it's like going to the doctor and complaining it hurts when I do this — Doctor: don't do that...

Wearable technology: don't even get it started...what next, the wearableBook? Once read, sell it back to My Sister's Closet?

Google barges and other extraordinary sightings: the **Google** Guys rule a sovereign state that launches spaceships, drives (sic?), driverless cars, and engineers life over death. The big question is REALLY?

healthcare.gov — no joking matter, but finally technology that performs worse than the average library hook-up — the problems, though, highlight the problems of technology trying hard to do something complicated more than uploading photos or videos of talented cats.

Discovery Services: Discovery is pitched all through the IT world. The thought is that it's all there online; we just need to find it. It's our war with **Google**. Sadly, the threat down is way beyond orange. There are too many fronts in the discovery wars — vendor vs. vendor, librarian vs. vendor, and at times skirmishes among librarians for which service and its shortcomings will front their collections with the best discovery service.

Digital Life: like virtual life, on the verge of the oxymoronic. Controlled vocabularies

typically drop the conceptual term that defines the vocabulary. There is no need to include "art" as a term in an art index. At least not belabor its use. Besides, ever been to Second Life or Sim City? Right, that's living...

eBooks: let's just call them books. It would save us a syllable, and aren't we all in for time management? It would also drive attention back to the fact that we are in the book business whatever the platform.

Platform Agnosticism: we love it and flaunt its virtues. Why not? Forever we were stewards of a perfect platform, the book, and now we demand the same ease and consistency for our no-shelf-required books. Digital content is as accessible as the software and hardware allows. Differences here are theological difference systems, hardly agnostic.

BYOD: embraced by business, the bring-your-own-device saves money even as it complicates security. In libraries, it only complicates how we accomplish everything for everyone. In those libraries who have eschewed print books we should have BYOB.

Virtual Reference Service: c'mon, its reference with a computer between the librarian and someone who wants to know something. The assumption that it should and can be this way comes from assumptions that users want this. If we just called it reference service we'd have to work harder at the ways we accomplish it. Besides, the virtual librarian looks nothing like Iron Man or RoboCop, so it can't really be virtual.

Big Data: it's more than big, it's huge, gargantuan, fat. And we collect so much of it, and like hoarders, keep it forever to tell us something about right now. "Information wants to be free" becomes "information wants to fill a bottomless super-sized beverage." We are heading toward data obesity...

Librarianship: not Meh but needs rescue, put into all caps and spoken freely and often. Yes, let's remain **Ranganathian** but clue the listener into the special depths of what the guy pointedly wrote all those years ago.

Next Gen: or any version number to stand in for progress: there will always be another generation and another generation...

Eponymous Empires: no sooner did **Microsoft**, **Intel**, and **IBM** lose their historic cachet than we got the empires of **Google**, **Apple**, **Facebook**, and **Amazon**. The mere mention of any one of these seems to freeze thinking into finite patterns: is this all there is? 🌧

Against the Grain Taking Stock ... from page 1

in the initial discussions as well as the current transition, and then gives us her take on what we can expect in the future from eBooks at **ProQuest**.

As we look back over 2013, we have much to contemplate about our future as librarians, publishers, and vendors. Admittedly, we

are confronted by multiple challenges and accelerating change. However, there are also tremendous opportunities to innovate, re-energize, and play the essential roles in information management and delivery that our patrons and customers have come to rely on. For our part, we here at **ATG** are looking forward to keeping the discussion focused on the most relevant issues and reporting on all the late breaking news. 🌧