Against the Grain

2015

And They Were There--Reports of Meetings

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And They Were There

Reports of Meetings — Frankfurt Book Fair and 34th Annual Charleston Conference

Frankfurt Book Fair — October 16-18, 2015, Germany

Reported by: **Anthony Watkinson** (Principal Consultant, CIBER Research) <anthony.watkinson@btinternet.com>

About a month before all right thinking stakeholders in scholarly communication — except of course the researchers — descend upon Charleston, one sector (the publishers) migrates from all over the world to the **Frankfurt Buch Messe**. It is a tiring time for us. Every year it is suggested that numbers are declining and that its central rationale as a rights fair is no longer so evident in a digital world. Yet every year it becomes clear that it retains its position as *the* world book (and journal) event. The rights people are very busy indeed and the myriads of agents, representatives and sales persons still flock. There were fewer booths in the areas devoted to scholarly publications but overall numbers of visitors were actually up — *http://www.statista.com/statistics/417239/frankfurt-book-fair-exhibitors/* — and **Andrew Albanese** in *Publishers Weekly* reports numbers of "professional visitors" (not German book buyers) rose slightly.

What is in it for librarians? There is a small corner dedicated to their interests see *http://www.book-fair.com/en/fbf/visit/for_professional_visitors/librarians/*. It does not look very exciting in print and nor does it look exciting in reality unless you are based in Germany. It caters mostly for the German language market. However someone with a booth in this area — **Friedemann Weigel** of **Harrassowitz** — told me that he and his colleagues were busier than ever welcoming U.S. librarians looking for expert knowledge. I guess **Barbara Casalini** would say the same thing but I have not asked her. The only librarian I saw going round the publishers was **Mike Keller** of **Stanford** and I assume that he was selling his latest new idea rather than looking to buy new publications — see *http://www.yewno.com/*. The received wisdom is that there was no big news otherwise. The **Springer** booth seemed bigger than ever, which is not surprising because they were encompassing **Nature Publishing Group**. Frankfurt is only an hour away from Springer HQ in Heidelberg. There was a certain amount of gossip about how well the integration is going — mostly negative — but it was only gossip. Maybe some devastating new software was being shown somewhere but I did not spot it.

As usual much of the action for academic publishers happens before the Fair begins, particularly the day before. It centers on the annual STM conference based on the plush Westin Grand. This is where the great and the good gather and some of them even attend the actual meeting rather than having meetings in the big bar downstairs. There were 378 attendees – a record.

Some of the program undoubtedly is of wider interest. Those librarians struggling with APCs and those just interested in how open access is paid for should find the UK example interesting, even if the way the UK government have decided to support the principle of gold has not been fully emulated by any other country. The speaker **Michael Jubb** has been the secretariat of the so-called Finch process — see *http://www.researchinfonet.org/finch/*. His presentation — as usual carefully organised for the reader — was entitled: ***Monitoring the transition to OA in the UK with some Global comparisons*** — see *http://www.stm-assoc.org/events/frankfurt-conference-2015/?presentations*. He told us that UK authors publish in a relatively small number of OA journals available and have a marked preference for hybrid journals. The take-home story is that 70% of UK articles and 78% globally were still published on terms that will keep them behind a paywall. However, "illicit" postings, primarily on sharing sites such as **Research Gate**, on personal Websites and in repositories (least important), raises the number accessible. It is still not possible to confirm the so-called open access advantage as far as citations are concerned.

Other presentations of interest available in video and sometimes also in power point on the site already mentioned included an update of the STM policy on *sharing* by emeritus **American Institute of Physics** supremo **Fred Dylla**, the latest account of the success of the STM outreach **Research4Life** associated with some major U.S. libraries and the WHO, thirty slides in ten minutes for **Laurel Haak** of **ORCID** a presentation by **Caroline Sutton** (Open Access Serial Publishers Association) on a new initiative (see *http://thinkchecksubmit*) to counter *predatory OA* publishers. These enterprises are all worth knowing more about and in most cases, especially the last one, worth support.

Finally, many librarians might like to find out what aspirations and intentions of some top STM publishers are really exposed to on their home ground. If you are, go to the video of the CEOs panel chaired by STM CEO **Michael Mabe**. **Ron Mobed** of **Elsevier**, **Philip Carpenter** of **Wiley** and **Brian Crawford** of **ACS** were the heavyweights. The camera lingered on some implicit disagreements.

At the Fair itself there are some "hotspots" on the floor with the booths and lots of rooms for hire. The **Copyright Clearance Centre** chose the latter option and got together a group of players in a town meeting to discuss the "the new wave" of Open Access. By far the best talk came from **Melinda Kenneway** from **Kudos** — see *https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Zx6QnmbgAAk&feature=youtu.be*. **Kudos** envision a new open environment. The new reality is competition among authors. **Toby Green** of **OECD** described the next battle ground between publishers as the one which can deliver impact. **Dr. Ralf Schimmer** from the **Max Planck Digital Library** was the only librarian visible: he argued for the library role in helping authors with the transition.

In another room **EDItEUR**, the international *standards* organization, which is concerned in particular with book and journal information exchange, held a number of meetings including an open event. It is not really an occasion for the casual passer-by but a lot of importance is included in their recent newsletter at *http://www.editeur.org/files/about/EDItEUR%20November%202015%20Newsletter.html*. Some **EDItEUR** initiatives such as the suite of ONIX standards — really important to publisher — and the new THEMA subject headings should be better known among the library community.

Hotspot speakers included two presentations from **Thomson Reuters** — still lively even if threatened with divestment. They were selling **InCites** (*http://researchanalytics.thomsonreuters.com/incites/*) and also the **Emerging Sources Citation Index** (*http://wokinfo.com/products_tools/multidisciplinary/esci/*). **Semantico** was promoting **SAMS Sigma** and the merits of single sign-on which could help researchers rather a lot. Finally, and rather different, **Matt Cockerill**, former publishing director of **BioMed Central**, soft-launched *1000 cookbooks* (*http://app.1000cookbooks.com/about*). This is a rare exercise in semantic enrichment for the general public.

Issues in Book and Serial Acquisition, "The Importance of Being Earnest" — Francis Marion Hotel, Embassy Suites Historic Downtown, Courtyard Marriott Historic District, Addlestone Library, College of Charleston, and School of Science and Mathematics Building, Charleston, SC — November 5-8, 2014

Charleston Conference Reports compiled by: **Ramune K. Kubilius** (Northwestern University, Galter Health Sciences Library) <r-kubilius@northwestern.edu>

Column Editor's Note: Thank you to all of the **Charleston Conference** attendees who agreed to write short reports that highlight sessions they attended at the 2014 conference. All attempts were made to provide a broad coverage of sessions, and notes are included in the reports to reflect known changes in the session titles or presenters, highlighting those that were not printed in the conference's final program (though some may have been reflected in the online program). Please visit the **Conference Website**, *http://www. charlestonlibraryconference.com*, for the online conference schedule from which there are links to many presentations' PowerPoint slides and handouts, plenary session videos, and conference reports by the **2014 Charleston Conference** blogger, **Donald T. Hawkins**. Visit the conference blog at: *http://www.against_the_grain.com/category/ chsconfblog/*. The **2014 Charleston Conference Proceedings** will be published in partnership with **Purdue University Press** in 2015 (*http://docs.lib. purdue.edu/charleston/*).

In this issue of **ATG** you will find the final installment of 2014 conference reports. The first five installments can be found in **ATG v.27#1, February 2015**, **v.27#2, April 2015**, **v.27#3, June 2015**, **v.27#4, September 2015**, and **v.27#5, November 2015**. Watch for reports from the **2015 Charleston Conference** to begin publishing in the **February 2016** issue of **ATG**. — **RKK**

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 7, 2014
(continued from previous installment)
AFTERNOON CONCURRENT SESSIONS 2

Speaking Our Piece: Libraries and Publishers on Their Relationship in the STM Market — Presented by **M. Kathleen Kern** (Librarian, University of Illinois)

Reported by: **Erin Wentz** (MCPHS University) <erin.wentz@mcphs.edu>

Exemplifying the intentions behind this conference, **Kern** presented a balanced and thoughtful view of the relationships between librarians and publishers. Tensions between publishers and librarians have a long history; as far back as 1927, people were commenting on issues related to publisher-librarian dealings. **Kern** shared results of interviews she conducted with approximately equal numbers of librarians and publishers regarding those interactions. Attitude, **Kern** found, profoundly affected the negotiation process and the subsequent relationships between publishers and librarians. Participants also linked preparation to successful negotiations. **Kern** shared advice both groups had for librarians and both groups had for publishers. Advice for both groups largely involved getting to know the other side and its circumstances. Individuals representing both groups commented on the budgetary pressures their institutions face. Knowing and understanding both groups' needs facilitates reaching mutually acceptable outcomes.

The Devil is in the Details: Managing Growth of Streaming Media in Library Collections — Presented by **Susan Marcin**, (Columbia University); **Jesse Koennecke** (Cornell University); **Matthew Pavlick** (Columbia University Libraries)

Reported by **Anne Shelley** (Milner Library, Illinois State University) <anne.shelley@ilstu.edu>

In this session, speakers from two universities covered an array of issues that come with a growing streaming video collection. **Koennecke** provided an overview of streaming in libraries, more specifically what content libraries are streaming, and why and how they are doing it. Then, **Pavlick** and **Marcin** shared a very detailed workflow of how their library hosts streaming video files for course reserves. He also covered a number of issues that libraries must consider when hosting video locally, such as managing rights and term licenses, familiarity with content availability from different distributors, the appropriate technology to host and stream files, discovery, communication across departments, and assessing usage.

The Future of Reading and Academic Libraries — Presented by **Tony Horava** (University of Ottawa); **David Durant** (East Carolina University)

Reported by: **Matthew Whitney Haney** (Student, University of South Carolina-Columbia) <mhaney@email.sc.edu>

Not only did this session cover everything stated in the summary, it also provided attendees an understanding of where society is heading with regard to books. Going over multiple points of information about the different ways that individuals read, the presenters noted how certain areas have transitioned quickly to one medium, while other subjects have not. In subjects where linear reading is needed, the printed book still remains dominant, but in subjects where tabular reading is more effective, e-reading is becoming popular. Because of this, the fears that libraries have that deep reading will disappear are unnecessary. What academic libraries need to do is provide a hybrid collection. The hybrid collection will help with scholarship, and though people like the convenience of e-readers, studies show people prefer print. The conclusion they arrived at was that written culture is still vital and vibrant, and print and digital are complementary.

Vendor Negotiations - More Secrets — Presented by **Matt Dunie** (Data-Planet); **David Myers** (DMedia Associates, Inc.); **Michael Gruenberg** (Gruenberg Consulting)

Reported by: **Crystal Hampson** (University of Saskatchewan) <crystal.hampson@usask.ca>

Dunie reported highlights of a survey showing that a strong majority of librarians did not have training on how to deal with vendors and did not plan and document their negotiation objectives, despite spending billions collectively on information every year. In contrast, vendors spend considerable money training employees to sell to libraries. **Gruenberg** then outlined four main items librarians should know before negotiating: their objectives, timetable, team and strategy. Document in advance your objectives such as the desired length of the renewal period and percent price. State non-negotiable terms up front and discuss price at the end. Price and terms must be defensible. The vendor should be able to "defend the price," i.e., explain the components that make up the price. From a legal perspective, **Myers** addressed the three main licensing issues librarians identified in the survey: fair use, authorized users, and indemnification. The library being sued by the vendor is extremely unlikely; some clauses exist to cover potential liability. The library needs to know if their institution has any required terms, e.g., if the law and venue must be your own state. This valuable, information-packed session would warrant more session time and additional time for questions.

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 7, 2014
AFTERNOON CONCURRENT SESSIONS 2

"Punctuality is the thief of time:" The Earnest Pursuit of Social Media in the Library – Presented by **Elyse Profera** (Taylor and Francis Group); **Maria Atilano** (University of North Florida)

Reported by: **Rachel Walden** (Student, University of South Carolina-Columbia) <rachellanewalden@gmail.com>

This session went over the White Paper by **Taylor and Francis** that looked at the challenges and opportunities of using social media in libraries as a communication tool. Using social media in a library setting can increase connections between the library and its users. Some reasons to use social media are to reach users whereever they are, for publicity of library events and services, to seek opinions on the library and its services, to increase usage of materials by promotion, and build a sense of community with users and other institutions. Some challenges are the time commitment required by staff to maintain an online presence and the technology expertise needed to pursue the varied social media platforms. Some tips they gave were to have a variety of messages such as information type posts, asking questions to get interaction and then fun stuff to attract attention. Images are better than a lot of text. There are different tools that can be used to schedule posts ahead of time and arrange for them to go out at specific times, and also tools that can help collect statistics so the library can see what is working well or not working for them. They also suggest having a social media policy with a basic framework on how it will be used for the library and also how results will be tracked to measure effectiveness.

Meeting Researchers Where They Are — Presented by **Lydia Jackson** (SIUE Library); **Rich Gause** (Univ. of Central Florida)

*NOTE: **Lydia Jackson** was not in attendance to present on learning styles.*

Reported by: **Ramona La Roche** (Student, University of South Carolina-Columbia) <rlaroche@email.sc.edu>

Gause provided a link (*http://guides.ucf.edu/charleston2014)* to a poll in the beginning of the session. His focus was Lib Guides which may be published privately or for public viewing. Most of his presentation provided viewers with most recent changes around menus to reduce visual clutter, such as moves of guides to left side of page for databases, where eyes naturally travel. This also makes for a better mobile appearance rather than the guides being on the bottom of the page.

Stats are now available for all databases. Competitors and customers are also listed in terms of marketing to students. Correlations of hit counts for databases are also viewable. Finally, there is a separate guide just for industry analysis.

The session provided very specific changes made for the efficiency of the university's lib guide. Several people appeared to be disappointed regarding the learning style part of the presentation, as was indicated by a few people leaving during the presentation.

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 7, 2014
AFTERNOON PLENARY SESSIONS

The Long Arm of the Law — Presented by **Ann Okerson** (Center for Research Libraries); **William Hannay** (Schiff Hardin LLC); **Laura Quilter** (University of Massachussets Amherst)

Reported by: **Ramune K. Kubilius** (Northwestern University, Galter Health Sciences Library) <r-kubilius@northwestern.edu>

Moderator **Okerson** provided a brief introduction, and then this year's legal update session began. **Quilter**, described in the conference biographical notes as a librarian, lawyer, teacher and geek, provided two jokes and a transformation. Describing First Sale, she said it was an "affair to remember." The audience was updated on cases involving textbook publishers, eBook experiments, and instances where "transformativeness" was triumphant, about law briefs in databases (ruled fair use). **Hanay** provided analysis on the right to be forgotten in this age of the Internet, and the balance between legal interest and the public's right to know. "Invasion of privacy" is a hazy concept. There is false, old and embarrassing information in the online world....A "notice and takedown" is mandated as a safe harbor. How does one describe this issue? "Forget him 'cuz he doesn't want fame" was the musical phrase **Hanay** used. Questions and expert opinions concluded this fast-paced session. Many audience members probably were glad for the update and glad to leave the legal current awareness and analysis duties to the experts...

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 8, 2014
CHARLESTON NEAPOLITANS

The Punishment for Dreamers: Big Data, Retention, and Academic Libraries — Presented by **Adam Murray** (Murray State University Libraries)

Reported by: **Audrey Powers** (University of South Florida) <apowers@usf.edu>

This excellent session by **Murray** provided conference attendees with a methodology in which to prove to administrators of higher education that the academic library has a positive effect on student success. Using *Value of Academic Libraries: A Comprehensive Research Review and Report* (ACRL, 2010), **Murray** selected retention as the criterion by which **Murray State Universities Library** would measure impact on student engagement and retention. The decision to use retention was partially based on the fact that recruiting students costs more than retaining them and that lost student income equates to lost state appropriations, which in turn means that as more vacant lines become available they will go to revenue generating programs. In the end, retention has a direct impact on defaults of student loans.

Murray noted that the library supports high impact factors in the academy, but libraries are not documenting and/or communicating the results. As libraries gather data and align the data with outcomes and institutional priorities, librarians need to learn to communicate the results to the appropriate stakeholders; we need to learn to speak to provosts and deans in order to prove impact.

The study at **Murray State Universities Library** concluded that overall library users are twice as likely to be retained as non-users. Use of the library resources and services increased the odds of retention by 96%, checking out items increased the likelihood of retention by 36% and logging into electronic resources, particularly later in the semester, increased odds of retention by 24%. **Murray** stated that instruction is the gateway to library use and retention success.

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 8, 2014
INNOVATION SESSIONS 1

Collection Data Visualization: Seeing the Forest through the Treemap — Presented by **Jeremy Brown** (Mercer University Libraries); **Geoffrey Timms** (Mercer University Libraries)

Reported by: **Donna Bennett** (Georgia College and State University) <donna.bennett@gcsu.edu>

In this session, two systems librarians from **Mercer University Libraries** presented their homegrown data visualization application which utilizes collection data from their libraries' integrated library system and displays it in real-time as either a treemap or a cartogram on the libraries' collection statistics Webpage. In the treemap display, collection variables are displayed in a square, with data represented by proportionally sized rectangles. The second variable is represented by proportional shading or coloring. In their cartogram version of data visualization, collection data is represented in tall or short skinny rectangles and takes on the appearance of book spines. The relative sizes of the rectangles and the shade of the color are proportional to the data represented. Both the treemap and cartogram displays of the libraries' collection data are intriguing. The presenters plan on adding future enhancements and incorporating new perspectives to their application. While audience members may not be able to return to their own libraries and replicate the presented application, they did leave with more ideas about how they might visualize their collection data.

Metadata for Metahumans: An Introduction to Comic Book Markup Language — Presented by **Jerry Spiller** (Art Institute of Charleston)

Reported by: **Todd Enoch** (University of North Texas) <Todd.Enoch@unt.edu>

This session served as a brief overview of Comic Book Markup Language (CBML), an XML vocabulary based on Text Encoding Initiative (TEI) guidelines. While TEI reflects common document structures and features (chapters, paragraphs, etc.), CBML expands the framework to include features unique to comic books, such as panels, speech and thought balloons, sound effects, etc. CBML can be used to transcribe all of the information present in each panel of a comic book, including character names, dialogue, and diegetic text such as newspaper head-

lines. The presenter walked through several examples of such encoding, giving attendees a good overview of how utilizing CBML could be a useful, if time and labor intensive, tool in providing searchable access to comic book content.

Remote Storage: Leveraging Technology to Maximize Efficiency and Minimize Investments — Presented by **Eric Parker** (Northwestern University, Pritzker Legal Research Center)

Reported by: **Ramune K. Kubilius** (Northwestern University, Galter Health Sciences Library) <r-kubilius@northwestern.edu>

A relatively small but attentive audience listened as **Parker** described a quickly paced move of a law library's print volumes to a university-built remote storage facility called **Oak Grove Library Center**, located 30 miles away. Offsite storage and renovation plans of **Northwestern University's Pritzker Legal Research Center**, initially three to five years in the future, were pre-empted by a Spring 2014 building construction project that rapidly changed the move planning window to one week prior to the delivery of storage facility totes. Fortunately, the process was made smoother, thanks to other **Northwestern University** libraries' expertise with the move to this remote storage facility, and the availability of a university library-developed software program called the Oak Grove Assistant Program (to batch file barcodes and change holdings records). The project involved one laptop, one wireless barcode scanner, and existing library staff working in one to two hour shifts. Text files of scanned barcodes were sent by staff to **Parker** for processing in Oak Grove Assistant and totes were packed in the stacks. The library accomplished a fast-paced move of 5,100 volumes with minimal mistakes. Lessons learned? Include the staff from the start and don't fixate on one approach, since it is necessary to keep thinking of ways to improve. Attendees asked questions about collection decisions, various processes, and about the software used for this moving project.

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 8, 2014
INNOVATION SESSIONS 2

Collection Development and Data Visualization: How Interactive Graphic Displays are Transforming Collection Development Decisions — Presented by **Paulina Borrego** (UMass Amherst); **Rachel Lewellen** (UMass Amherst)

Reported by: **Donna Bennett** (Georgia College and State University) <donna.bennett@gcsu.edu>

The presenters shared their experiences using Tableau software to present and analyze collection development data. Applying data visualization to collection development data has proven to be transformative for them because it makes the data more accessible and easier to interpret and share. Tableau does not require programming. Neither presenter was a systems librarian, and each found Tableau simple to use. Spreadsheets and dashboards for the same data were compared. The colorful charts and graphs created by Tableau presented their collection development data in a much less cluttered and more understandable way. Information that might be hard to interpret when viewing a spreadsheet becomes almost obvious using data visualization. Learning all the options available in Tableau takes time. Tableau is available as a free download for testing as well as paid versions. Data must be properly structured for use in Tableau. The case for using data visualization to present information was well made in this session, and many useful ways to analyze collection development data was shared.

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 8, 2014
CHARLESTON SEMINAR

Charleston Seminar: Being Earnest with our Collections: Determining Key Challenges and Best Practices — Presented by **Anthony Watkinson**, Moderator (CIBER Research); **Michael Arthur**, Moderator (University of Central Florida); **Rick Anderson** (University of Utah); **James Bunnelle** (Lewis & Clark College);

Jill Grogg (The University of Alabama Libraries); Jonathan Harwell (Rollins College); Michael Levine-Clark (University of Denver); Robert H. McDonald (Indiana University); Rebecca Seger (Oxford University Press)

Sessions: *Panel 1- Ebooks: Key Challenges, Future Possibilities* — Presented by Michael Levine-Clark and Rebecca Seger; *Panel 2 -Transitioning from Legacy Systems to Cloud Infrastructure* — Presented by Jill Grogg and Robert McDonald; *Panel 3 - Lightning Round: Alternative Serial Distribution Models for Libraries* — Presented by Jonathan Harwell and Jim Bunnelle; *Depth Perception in Academic Libraries: A Two-Dimensional Model* — Presented by Rick Anderson

NOTE: Advanced registration was required for this limited seating session.

Reported by: **Ramune K. Kubilius** (Northwestern University, Galter Health Sciences Library) <r-kubilius@northwestern.edu>

The 2014 conference featured some changes affecting Saturday afternoon programming that for many years concluded with a Rump Session. In 2014 a "registration required" event called "Charleston Seminar" was offered after the concluding conference sessions. Begun first with a buffet lunch, the session started with an introduction by moderators **Watkinson** and **Arthur** and proceeded into a two-hour session that incorporated a list of speakers (some speaking in tandem) invited to talk outside the box and engage attendees in discussions. As happens with experiments and innovations, a few bumps were likely not anticipated in planning this session. For example, it turned out that not all of the speakers (and attendees as well) were able to commit for the whole time block, so there was a "Grand Central Station" feel to the session. Still, during their allotted times speakers made interesting observations and proposals about key challenges and best practices. Levine-Clark and Seger ably overviewed key challenges of eBooks: multiple models, platform sustainability concerns, libraries' core value aims regarding permission to loan, preservation, and course adoption. One conclusion? We need more publisher and library communication. Harwell and Bumelle likewise provided an interesting landscape view of serials: the shifting role of serial vendors, article level acquisition, supply, revenue and pricing, discovery standards. One audience member made the apt observation that the ArchiX repository (in physics) has become the communication vehicle while journals have become the archive. McDonald talked about some decision points for libraries of moving to the cloud and Grogg talked about negotiating change ("If it's not terrifying, it isn't true change") and suggested that we should be modern day samurai (utilizing "ordered flexibility"). Anderson concluded with observations taken from his article "Depth perception in academic libraries: a two-dimensional matrix model." He offered spatial and temporal vectors and questions which we can ask ourselves to properly position the missions (and quadrants) of our host institutions, the library's, and our preferences and inclinations in order to see how they align. In essence, the three choices he offered were: stay and sublimate (stay and work to change), try to undermine, or leave. For 2015 and beyond, the **Charleston Conference** planning committee will have some choices to make after examining and evaluating the 2014 Saturday afternoon session and how successfully this type of session does (or doesn't quite) fit into the larger conference ecosystem. 🌳

Well this completes the reports we received from the **2014 Charleston Conference**. *Again we'd like to send a big thank you to all of the attendees who agreed to write short reports that highlight sessions they attended. Presentation material (PowerPoint slides, handouts) and taped session links from many of the 2014 sessions are available online. Visit the* **Conference Website** *at* **www.charlestonlibraryconference.com**. *— KS*

Oregon Trails — Out of Sight, Out of Mind

Column Editor: **Thomas W. Leonhardt** (Retired, Eugene, OR 97404) <oskibear70@gmail.com>

"I told you so," I said to no one in particular as I read the front page story in the September 23, 2015 issue of the *New York Times*. It did my heart good. "The Plot Twist: E-Book Sales Slip, and Print Is Far From Dead"

For decades the death of the book has been predicted with great certainty and almost gleefully, as if we were about to be freed from oppression. One of those false prophets, an innovative leader in library automation, was sure that the book would be gone by the 1990s. Project Gutenberg, a crude data-input method of creating electronic texts (they aren't really books, are they, these digital pretenders?) seemed to be showing the way. **Google** followed with its senseless (but monetarily driven) and still necessarily crude scanning method devoid of consistent quality control as it attempted to digitize every book in the world, aided and abetted by librarians who should have known better, fair use or not as the courts would have it. Was it a fool's errand? There was no quality control over the digitizing but also no quality assessment of what ought to be digitized. Everything in print was equal even though we know it isn't. Who are we to judge? I hear the naysayers now but just as publishers do not publish every manuscript sent to them, knowledgeable librarians do not order every book that is published and would not even if they had the money and space to do so. We are educated in order to exert critical judgements — critical as in critical thinking, that too elusive beast that all colleges promise to teach.

I feel vindicated as I think about the future of the codex, the print book, and about the eBook as an alternative to that perfect technology. As the *New York Times* story suggests, at least for now, the eBook is just that, an alternative, one to be used for certain books and certain times, and not a substitute for the real thing. I can think of a couple of reasons why interest in digital books has abated and why print books will remain the dominant form for many years to come, if not forever, and certainly within my lifetime.

There have been many improvements since those early digitized books made available by **Project Gutenberg** and **Google**. eBooks became digitally-born, and with the advent of the **Kindle** and the **Nook** devices and dirt cheap prices, reading eBooks on those devices became cool and an ostentatious way to announce that one was an early adopter. Why lug that heavy, ungainly paperback aboard an airplane, when you could carry hundreds of eBooks on one slender, lightweight device? It sounded appealing in concept and the design of the apparatus was appealing, too. But you can read only one book at a time, even though those hundreds or so volumes are available while your print library is 30,000 feet below and many miles away. Ironically, those very devices are themselves somewhat threatened by applications loaded onto smart phones and tablet computers.

I never bought a **Kindle** or a **Nook**, but I have both applications on an iPad mini and have downloaded several books for each app. I have even read several of those books, mostly German language Krimis (mysteries) that were not readily available in the U.S. A large selection of titles is available now for all varieties of electronic readers so I could, in fact, find reading material appealing to me, but reading books (I hesitate to call those collections of pixelated words books) on an electronic device is not really enjoyable, even though it can be fun flipping the pages and wondering how it does that. If I had the appropriate reader, I could presumably mark my place and annotate certain passages that I want to go back to but pleasant experience or not, what was I to do