2015

Oregon Trails--Out of Sight, Out of Mind

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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.

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. Began 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 Bunnelle likewise provided an interesting landscape view of 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
I know there is interest. I sell or trade what grandsons and occasionally to others when an increasing variety of books to one of my collections are ephemeral by design. I give my library as interests change, for some of my in the hundreds), I am constantly winnowing a hoarder simply because I accumulate books my shelves. I prefer the book as artifact and, companions whose personalities and qualities can - I write this, surrounded by real books, com-

ditions but I have more books than I could ever begin to read. I don’t belong to Bibliophiles Anonymous because, even if there were such an organization, I don’t want to kick my habit.
eBooks? Sure, they are inexpensive and easy to download, but are they handsomely bound (photos of dust jackets and covers don’t count)? Can I download a signed or inscribed first edition? What about a finely printed and bound, numbered and signed book by a favorite author? I can’t download a second-hand copy with a certain provenance and some margin-
lia that somehow binds me to a stranger with whom I share a common interest, be it subject or author.
I would like to think that when I am gone, as we all must go, my grandson will have kept some of the books that I have shared with him. He’ll be sitting near a book case and his eyes will settle on the floor, but not off desks and tables.

I am a bibliophile; therefore, I collect books. My book shelves are lined with good intentions but I have more books than I could ever begin to read. I don’t belong to Bibliophiles Anonymous because, even if there were such an organization, I don’t want to kick my habit.

The eBook is a marvelous bit of technology itself, but is not in the same league as the old-fashioned yet never out of fashion codex, a perfect technology that replaced the scroll and, moving from manuscripts to type-set pages and book, led to a literacy rate far beyond what had existed up until then. The eBook, as a reading technology, is a step backwards compared to the codex and is really nothing more than a fancy scroll.

As I write this, I look around my small, book-filled office. Two of my book cases have to be moved soon to allow workers access when replacing one of my windows. I will be boxing several hundred volumes, carefully handling each one, so it will likely be a slow process. I’ll hate to see them disappear, but on the bright side, I can look forward to unpacking them, light streaming though my new window, as I lovingly re-assemble that part of my library and feel the room warm with their renewed presence.

I can to a couple of favorite booksellers, and I donate the rest to St. Vinnie’s, my favorite charitable organization. Despite such thinning, I am chronically short of shelf space and stack and double shelf books just to keep them off the floor, but not off desks and tables.

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I would like to think that when I am gone, as we all must go, my grandson will have kept some of the books that I have shared with him. He’ll be sitting near a book case and his eyes will settle on Mr. Midshipman Hornblower, for example. He will take it off the shelf, blow real or imaginary dust off the top edge, open it, and remember, as he begins reading, that his grandfather had enjoyed that very same copy.

He’ll smile and suggest to one of his children or grandchildren that he or she might enjoy a vicarious adventure on the high seas and hand the book on to another generation.

I wonder how many of those downloaded books ever get read, never mind about getting rid of them. Out of sight, out of mind. The few eBooks that I have on my readers just sit there or do whatever 1s and 0s and pixels do when no one is watching.

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Despite what some people might call hoarding but I call collecting (I am a reader and a bibliophile and cannot, by definition, be a hoarder simply because I accumulate books in the hundreds), I am constantly winnowing my library as interests change, for some of my collections are ephemeral by design. I give an increasing variety of books to one of my grandsons and occasionally to others when I know there is interest. I sell or trade what