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At Brunning: People & Technology--At the Only Edge that Means Anything/How we Understand What We Do

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comparing SAGs at different types of academic libraries, such as community colleges, research universities, and liberal arts institutions. A holistic review of advisory groups beyond academia, including public and school libraries, might be of interest. In addition, assessment of SAGs is an area that is relatively under-studied. Future research could include tracking the success of outreach efforts suggested by SAGs, for example by measuring the knowledge of library policies and their popularity across campus. Libraries that use Lib-QUAL or other assessment tools and create a SAG could compare student satisfaction before and after the SAG's creation. A focus on SAG members could also be illuminating — librarians could study students to determine if membership affects student retention, academic achievement, information literacy skills, or other measures of student success. Overall, any attempt to measure the efficacy of SAGs as outreach and community-building tools, perhaps in comparison to other outreach options, would be a worthwhile addition to current library literature. For more on our research with SAGs at NYUAD, read

the IGI Global article "Friends with Benefits: Fostering Community in an Academic Library with a Student Advisory Group."

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@Brunning: People & Technology

At the Only Edge that Means Anything / How We Understand What We Do

by **Dennis Brunning** (Director, The Design School Library, Arizona State University) <dennis.brunning@gmail.com>

Annals of Conspicuous Consumption: My iPhone 6S Plus

"Lord, won't you buy me a Mercedes-Benz, my friends all drive Porsches, I must make amends." — **Janis Joplin**

Don't drool on my iPhone 6S Plus. Do not swipe, tap, or jiggle. And don't roll your eyes, snub your nose, turn away. If you do — and you will — it means you probably own an android phone or worse still, for you, another iPhone, say, an iPhone 6. You are out of cycle and you know it. Step aside.

My time for renewal had arrived, wouldn't you know it, just when S models came out. Really, it's as exciting as driving a Tesla S silently by your neighbors. The Tesla is simply an iPhone with wheels.

It's fate, I'm sure of it, how **Apple** rolls these shiny gadgets out, with enfant terrible assurance they will prevail.

My Verizon Wireless customer rep handled the swap as smoothly as a high-end drug pusher or jewel thief. Once my cell phone number was typed into, yes, an iPad Air 2, standard tool now in these stores, we were off and running to our satisfaction goal. Yes, **Mr. Brunning**, we can cut data costs remarkably, you don't watch **Netflix** do you? Warm smile. Yes, we can save you at least \$80.00 a month — give that data to

someone else, yes? But how about the product of the month, the **Dr. Dre** mono-stereo globe? Fits in your hand, cranks out pure 100 watts of delicious **Beyoncé** or for you, from the looks of you, some sweet **Leonard Cohen**, am I right?

Yes, right, throw it in.

And your wife, **Mr. Brunning**, the lovely **Mrs. Brunning**, that Wi-Fi only iPad Mini with so many months left on its contract. I'll bet she'd like better, easier, more convenient connectivity, correcto?

How did he know this? Why yes, the iPhone as Wi-Fi hot spot is as convenient as the monthly magazine arriving days late, news old, with long articles so long to read. Yes, yes, yes, at any moment around **Apple** products we become **Molly Bloom** aroused into ecstatic regions, powered by the élan vital which is nowadays iPhone releases.

Eduardo, the rep, showed genuine envy as he prepped the new phone, cradling it in one hand as he tapped tapped tapped on the iPad Air 2 in the other. Like a jeweler he squared up the InstaShield Glass by Zagg, 19.95, and pressed out air bubbles to bond it like invisible anti-crack strength to the iPhone Gorilla glass display. And I won't marvel at how smoothly he slipped my new iPhone 6S Plus into its Tech2 case, one we together had selected

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as slowly and comprehensively as a couple picking a home on HGTV's House Hunters.

"I'm crazy jealous, Sir, crazy jealous. My iPhone 6 is showing wear, my Tweets ever so slow..."

Now now I cooed. Just think we could be one of them, as I pointed to a thrifty couple off to Hawaii for their 50th anniversary and buying twin Samsung Galaxies. We laughed quietly. Samsungs. Hawaii. So droid...

We are chosen, we the owners of iPhones, chosen. We are members of the Apple Nation, an eco-system based on the highest value and worth of immaculate glass, sheathed in the best plastic money can buy, uber designed so that thinking is computing is believing.

There are two moments in life now when transcendent merges with the innate, when life explodes into joy greater than a contact high.

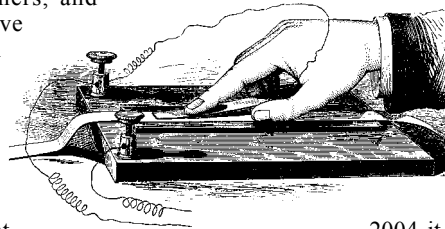
So, can we bill your Amex \$895.00 **Mr. Bunning**, yes, just sign with your finger here. Yes, awkward. Everyone says that.

*Postscript: The iPhone 6S Plus is an incredible device, sized nicely to still carry around like the slender smartphone yet big enough to allow a larger screen and other onboard hardware that improve already great features — better camera, better speaker, better microphone. If foreign students, especially Chinese students, who use their phones almost exclusively as computers, do foretell the direction of library computing, we've taken the wrong turn. Given how my Chinese students' eyes pop at the sight of my iPhone 6S Plus — while they research, read, write their coursework — what better way to go out of style in style but with **Apple's** latest bon mot in handheld computing...*

Let's Read

Public Library and other Stories by **Ali Smith** (Hamish Hamilton, 240 pages). There isn't a short story called Public Library however much we wish — it's such an elegant crystalline title. The public library is everywhere yet not there. Stories are about people who grew up with a public library and mourn its demise in today's UK. It's about the thrill of a first library card, an adult ticket for getting books to read. It's about finding freedom in the democracy of the library's spaces, reading books that inspired, taught, and empowered one with knowledge that was more than one's self. A major theme throughout is the serendipity of discovery in a library's stacks and its adult parent distraction. And throughout is the author's concern with a bureaucracy — modern officialdom — a faceless system that substitutes automated voices for reference, stressing efficiency and cost savings over joy and common "human" sense. **Ali Smith** wrote these stories over a twelve-year period that saw closing over 1,000 UK public libraries. It documents the toll obliquely and forever in smart, concise stories.

Part of Our Lives: A People's History of the American Public Library by **Wayne Wiegand** (Oxford University Press). **Wiegand**, a historian and library science professor, chronicles the history of American public libraries from the view of its patrons — the kids, parents, adults, teachers, and city officials — who've played an instrumental role in creating a challenged but enduring American institution. **Wiegand** digs deep into memoirs, official papers, newspapers to bring to light many facts often hidden by our assumptions. He's not a fan of city leaders, politicians, library directors who often have shortchanged users in the name of efficiency or political expediency. He finds the average library and librarian colder than they need or should be. This sangfroid, however, is balanced by genuine love for learning, reading, and doing stuff at the public library, enough to preserve a steady if challenged hold in American community life.



Downloads from the Zeitgeist — Auld Lang Zine Edition 2015-2016

Drones, Robots, Autonomous Vehicles — 2015 marks the year Artificial Intelligence (AI) went mainstream. A day did not pass without a news story on our future of driverless cars, drone delivery of goods, thinking services brought to us by **IBM Watson**, or the toil of Robots and their toll on the labor force. Some of us love the thought of a world where we are served; like *Oblomov* we like the leisure above all struggle. Others are just smitten by the efficiency, the sustainability gains, the idea that we've mapped the genome as applied to everything we think and do.

Unread books — with the recent appellate court decision affirming **Google's** right to scan 20 million library books without payment to authors, fair use now extended to snippets revealed at **Google's** algorithmic wisdom — **Google's** all-knowing eye rather than yours — we move closer to understanding **Umberto Eco's** decades-old idea of the unread book. Unread books are where the action is, an antilibRARY of what you don't know. It's out there, waiting for you to read if only you can find it. For centuries this meant finding the book, on its shelf, in a library. **Eco** is a demanding reader — knowledge is what remains to be read. **Google** can add billions of books but we don't approach **Eco's** goal. It's asymptotically unreachable under the current understanding.

Bureaucrats and books — it's the new B&B but don't order it from your bartender. Books and bureaucrats is the new actionable item. It's an inverse relationship. Readers read, bureaucrats move. You identify each by the simple question, "where are the books?" No disrespect meant to either, it's just as the kids say "what it is." Bartender, another B&B!

Warehousing books — Writer and librarian **Barbara Fister** advised us in 2004 to avoid describing our Internet response to warehousing books as warehousing our books. A decade later our books are off-site, warehoused, and it's been a good business for those that build them and a fait accompli without much fuss. **Worried Fister**, our warehouses admit our stock-in-trade, books, are more storage than hot business ready for retail. In

2004 it was rhetorical, in 2015 phenomenological books in themselves existing for themselves, existing practically speaking as meta-data in our catalogs. This is retail in reverse, what results in Dollar Stores.

Dark Internet — Mom refused to let us watch *Dark Shadows*, you know, the spooky soap opera of the 60s, which played on the portable Sylvania TV next to your sister's Princess phone. Ah, by today's standards and its Dark Internet — home of human organ sales, human trafficking, human baby factories — it seems an idyllic time of innocent neck puncturing and innocent devilry in dark rooms, away from Mom and a bright brilliant afternoon after school. Be aware of the dark Internet, its parallel universe where the post-**Google** library may relocate, where unjacked jackets of best sellers await the bit torrent librarian's cataloging and circulating. "Kids, you aren't in that dark library are you? Mom texts from anywhere." No, we're just playing *Dark Shadows* on **Netflix**...

Snippets — over a decade in becoming — should we call it law, practice, publishing concept? — the snippet goes forward from the **Google Book Settlement** as a new form of publishing and reading. It's an automated abstract nothing new about that yet its length, easily one or two average chapters minus continuity. Brings a whole new meaning to learning and reading. Yes, he's smart but what he knows seems, well, so chopped up, like he just skimmed it all.

Improbable Library — Or improbable libraries. A photographic essay by a UK journalist and son of two librarians denotes odd instances in the digital era of place and books and connotes astonishing ways librarians around the world are reaching readers.

Martian Librarian — could be played by **Matt Damon**, why not? But now born on the red planet, schooled in the planetary decimal system, and newly arrived on earth pondering all the libraries found in the Mars like industrial parks of a print-less planet Earth. **Martian Librarian** finds poster board and fashions signage above a large industrialized door of the even larger sheet metal warehouse. Public Library. 🌱