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Pelikan's Antidisambiguation--"Horses for Courses"

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An anonymous librarian had a perceptive observation about the differing importance of pleasure reading for children and adults. “Early literacy programs are important and, to get children excited about reading, programs are created to get kids reading for pleasure; however, once we pass the threshold into adulthood, the joy of reading is no longer a large concern.” She listed some programs to encourage adult reading, but they lack the educational focus of those for children such as *Battle of the Books* (**Faye VanRavenswaay**).

Only two librarians commented on the Pew Report, *Libraries at the Crossroads*, whose summary report about what Americans wanted from their public libraries did not include pleasure reading. (I quoted from this report in my first article.) **Cynthia Bierniek** replied that it included the statistic that “78% believe that libraries are effective at promoting literacy and the love of reading” though I will once again point out that at a certain point pleasure reading may not significantly enhance literacy for adults. A librarian who wishes to remain anonymous observed that “the Pew study reflects a more ‘high-minded’ view of what libraries should be doing. So it seems it’s not just librarians who aren’t bragging about pleasure reading, the study participants don’t seem to be doing that either.” The person also said that both librarians and the public may be taking pleasure reading for granted.

One of my key points was the fact that public libraries don’t take credit for their huge success and popularity in making pleasure reading available, one of the surest guarantees of their continued existence. Four librarians gave the following reasons for this. **Megan Buck** made three points: “I think voters are more likely to vote for a millage if they believe the library is providing opportunities for education and self-improvement that are not available (even for a fee) somewhere in the community.” The second is that grant funders “don’t care about how popular your library is; they want to know what ‘good deeds’ your library is doing and providing for the community.” Finally, “I think that people want to know that their tax dollars are going to contribute to the greater good — an overall improvement in society — an increase in education, safer environment for their children, or an overall equalization of the population.” **Cynthia Orr** expressed a similar concern that “public libraries over the years have been afraid to brag about providing best sellers and genre fiction because they felt vulnerable to critics who



would call that ‘trash’ or even ‘porn’ and possibly go after funding.” A third anonymous librarian is even more blunt: “Your article is going to claim librarians should try to convince local governments to support public libraries to provide little old ladies with Harlequin romances and old men with Westerns. The only recreation Americans are willing to support with tax money is sports.” **Amy Alcensius** provided a different reason. “Maybe we don’t brag or advertise about how we fulfill the need for pleasure reading because the readers in the community are already users and don’t need any more convincing.”

On the other hand, I concur with the more nuanced viewpoint from **Carlie Hoffman**. “I also think that the publicity has to do with the audience. When public libraries are publicizing to other libraries or to government and other funding entities, they tend to focus on being good stewards of tax dollars, economic impacts, and bridging the digital divide. When public libraries are publicizing to the general community, they focus more on recreational reading (and viewing and listening)...” **Darwin McGuire** confirmed this opinion when she said much the same thing: “We tailor our message to the audience. In our millage..., we will be emphasizing the popular services...” The decision to choose the message appropriate for the intended audience is one of the secrets of successful communication, especially in this case when both messages are accurate.

I will end with a few comments on the fact that the success of the library depends upon providing pleasure reading. **Deborah Battisti** said this well. “Folks who want information use us once or occasionally. Folks who want to read for recreation use us regularly; and it’s because ... they save money getting books at the library.” While several librarians said the library should give patrons what they want, **Kimberly Schaaf** said it best: “The main idea here is that if a patron walks away from the library unsatisfied because we didn’t have that best seller or movie, then they probably won’t come back. If they don’t come back, then where do we stand when the millage expires?”

To conclude, I wish to thank all those who responded to my request for comments. The librarians above provide additional insights on pleasure reading and mostly support my contention that pleasure reading is an important but often overlooked key function of public libraries. While providing pleasure reading may not be as “trendy” as 3D printing or maker spaces, it makes economic sense for the community and will play a critical role in assuring the continued existence of public libraries. 🌱

Pelikan’s Antidisambiguation — “Horses for Courses”

Column Editor: **Michael P. Pelikan** (Penn State) <mp10@psu.edu>

“How many of those do you have?”

She was asking about the various tablet and pad-like devices stacked around the arms of my leather recliner. I did my best to appear to welcome the question. “Well, it depends,” I said, “on what I need to do at any given time.”

“This one’s my main at-home reading device,” I explained, holding up the Kindle Fire HDX 8.9. I held up the Kindle Voyage. “And this one’s for reading when I’m away from home.”

“What about that one?” she asked. “That’s my Android tablet,” I said, showing the Nexus 7, “It’s on cellular as well as wi-fi. And this one,” holding up the Samsung, “is my phone.”

“So four,” she said.

“Well, unless you include the Microsoft Surface, which is mine, or the Latitude

work-laptop with the touch screen, which is the university’s,” I pointed out.

“So six?” she asked. “Sure,” I confessed, “but that’s not that many, really. I mean, how many brushes do you use for your paintings?”

“It’s not the same thing,” she said, “I need those!”

So this is why she’s called an artist and I’m called a geek.

No one would really argue that an artist ought to be restricted to carrying a single brush, or that a photographer ought to be restricted to carrying a single lens — unless, that is, by choice. I might think it odd if the folks next to me at the opera hoisted up a pair of Oberwerk 25x100s, and it would certainly invite comment if, at the star party, you confined your observations to those you could make with

your opera glasses. And yet to carry multiple digital devices seems to give those around you a license to comment on, of all things, your perceived eccentricity.

Our eldest son is a Design major. He’s recently been talking to us about his Typography class. They’ve been exploring historical typography, typographic analysis, and typographic design. He’s loving it, and, with only the slightest prompting, is happy to demonstrate the gulf between what most people, even fairly literate people, know about type, and those who study it formally, with an eye toward becoming practitioners of type.

So recently I forwarded a couple of URLs to him. The first was toward an article (there are many) about Bookery, **Amazon’s** new

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purpose-built typeface for e-readers. My own exposure to, and reaction to, **Amazon's** previous attempts at typeface selection was confined to mild annoyance, not really caring for any of the fonts available on the Kindle. When they offered the new typeface, Bookerly, I took one glance at it, and thought, "Hmm! Much better!" Even though I couldn't articulate why it looked better, I switched over, and haven't gone back, except to prove to myself that my selection decision rested upon something more substantial than simple newness.

Not surprisingly, the release of Bookerly generated quite a bit of buzz in the typeface-aware corners of the Blogosphere (where they have corners for everything). Overall, the comments have been largely positive, although this may speak, simply, to how miserable the previous typeface offerings really were.

One of the commentaries included a reference to a post on fastcodesign.com. The object of the mention was a study conducted by **Errol Morris** on the effect typography has upon the reader's perception of truth. Here's the link: <http://www.fastcodesign.com/3046365/errol-morris-how-typography-shapes-our-perception-of-truth>.

If it seems surprising that the choice of typeface might influence the perceived credibility of a body of text, it's worth remembering that we've long known the counterpoint to be true: you can make the most lucid, sober statement appear ridiculous by dressing it up in a clownish font. This recalls the early days of laser printers and soft fonts, when serious columnists solemnly advised folks to take it easy, please, with the fonts already, saying, "You don't want it to look like a ransom note!" And they were right.



What all manners of human expression might have in common is the effort and care that can go into the design of capture and preparation for conveyance of ideas. Packing something important for a trip merits some care and thoughtfulness. I've voiced suspicions about this here before. To a blindfolded observer sitting in the studio, a small music ensemble recording session of today would sound very much like one that may have occurred a century earlier. Most telling would be those moments immediately before and following the musical piece itself: the moment of silence and concentration preceding the first measure, the moment of suspended relief and reaction immediately following the close. Then someone says, "Let's listen to it!" This is entirely independent of the technology, and, I think, perhaps, approaches universality, and perhaps is unchanging.

This impression is bolstered by work presented at <http://firstsounds.org>. These are people who've applied 21st-century technology to surviving examples of 19th-century attempts to capture sound, such as those in 1860 by **Édouard-Léon Scott de Martinville**

in Paris. In work pre-dating **Bell**, he devised a mechanism to produce a visual representation of sound waves. The wizards associated with firstsounds.org, **David Giovannoni**, **Patrick Feaster**, **Richard Martin**, and **Meagan Hennessy**, figured out a way to take surviving artifacts produced in those early experiments, recover the waveforms stored in them, and render them as sound, making it possible to hear what may very well be the earliest existing examples of recordings of the human voice. Included at the end of one of the clips is what appears to be a spoken epithet, produced in disgust at the end of what might be history's first botched take, captured for all eternity. Universal, indeed.

There are similar examples in other areas, durable practices that have survived the evolution of their host technology's evolution over time. The act of sitting for a portrait, is unchanged in many respects, from paint to still photography, except, perhaps, for the welcome departure of the head clamps that were employed in early photographic portraiture owing to the slow emulsions and long exposure times of that era. Another universal quality is that of directionality: most things have a front end or front side, they "point" in a particular direction and orient themselves in that direction as they move. Most conveyance requires at least one

party to be "watching where they're going," indeed, we pay the driver to do that — it's a selling point, "Leave the driving to us!"

Consider the editing process connected with the published word. Somebody, usually one who demonstrates an aptitude, if not an eagerness, reads the text

for errors. This protects the end-reader from having to be the first one ever to have read the thing (although I've spoken with many professors who feel they've frequently been the first even to glance at the "finished" works they receive).

And here we arrive at one of the promises of e-text, long potential, and now made actual. If you have a Kindle, have you ever noticed the appearance in your "library" of a work you know to have been part of the library for some time, yet here, displayed as recent, even bearing the label, "New"? What's that about?

Well, in looking into the Bookerly release, one of the things you find is that along with the typeface, **Amazon** has also introduced a new page layout engine to render it. The new page layout engine comes as a software update. Among other things, it has done away with the old engine's obsession with achieving full line justification by inserting spaces between words to pad out the length of a line. The result often just looked weird, and was a matter of annoyance and complaint among those who notice and comment on such things. Ah, but to take full advantage of the new page rendering algorithms, it has been necessary to re-encode the e-texts, presumably adding tags needed to direct the enhanced rendering process. This means that works in your "library" that have

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laboration, particularly across departments. One idea is setting material funds aside for new faculty in addition to their usual departmental funds.

It was interesting to hear about collaborations between librarians and vendors reaching out to faculty and students, however, the sales pitch information detracted from what I think we could have learned in this session.

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 5, 2015
AFTERNOON NEAPOLITAN SESSIONS

Innovations in Open Access Monographs, Archives and Journals — Presented by **Rick Anderson** (University of Utah); **Brian Hole** (Ubiquity Press); **David Parker** (Alexander Street); **Alison Mudditt** (University of California Press); **Jack Montgomery** (Facilitator, Western Kentucky University)

Reported by: **Crystal Hampson** (University of Saskatchewan)
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Mudditt opened this inspiring session on alternative models of OA publishing by describing the context for monographs publishing where the transition to open access is happening at the same time as the transition to digital Open access fits **UC Press'** mission to democratize content and disseminate scholarship. However, OA models for STM journals (disciplines with large research grants) do not fit the humanities reality. **Mudditt** described **UC Press'** Luminos model for OA book publishing. Contributions are made from the author's institution, a subsidy from its library, a subsidy from **UC Press** and revenue from print sales. Authors want to be read, not just published. **UC Press** hopes to demonstrate that OA can be better than traditional monographs. **Hole** described the Open Library of Humanities platform, a very cost efficient platform supported as a charitable organization, publishing without article processing charges for authors. OLH hopes to create a global community of humanities publishing. Publishing can be cheaper. **Parker** described archival OA publishing using two models: government or institution funded, and the sales threshold model which has delayed OA. An example is Anthropology Commons, which has delayed OA, 10% of sales contributed to sponsor future OA publishing, and underwriting by some contributors.

Shared Print in the Orbis Cascade Alliance and Colorado Alliance — Presented by **Charles Watkinson** (Facilitator, University of Michigan); **Xan Arch** (Reed College); **James Bunnelle** (Lewis & Clark College); **Jill Emery** (Portland State University); **Yem Fong** (University of Colorado Boulder Libraries); **Michael Levine-Clark** (University of Denver); **George Machovec** (Colorado Alliance of Research Libraries)

Report by: **Alison M. Armstrong** (Radford University)
<amarmstro@radford.edu>

The **Orbis Cascade Alliance** presenters were **Arch**, **Bunnelle**, and **Emery**. Their top priorities are cooperative collection development, pooling resources, and space reclamation. There was a collective purchase of 1,000 volumes of 19th Century British Parliamentary Papers they wanted to weed. Several lessons were learned: print documentation is never complete and always have an exit strategy. They made a joint purchase of the e-version. The next step is to decide who, if any of them, will keep the print.

The **Colorado Alliance of Research Libraries** presenters were **Fong**, **Levine-Clark**, and **Machovec**. The impetus for their shared print program was based on space, a strong ILL system, eBooks, and storage facilities. They have designated copies to hold and others to weed to protect last copies. Their comparison tool, Gold Rush, can use

real time data to compare library to library or system to system. It can also be used for new programs for list checking and gap filling and to support requests for additional funds.

PASCAL, is high-density offsite storage. The materials that are there are there to stay and have been identified as last copies.

The session was informative, engaging, and well attended.

Text & Data Mining Contracts – The Issues & The Needs — Presented by: **Meg White** (Facilitator, Rittenhouse Book Distributors); **Nancy Herther** (Moderator, University of Minnesota); **Alicia Wise** (Elsevier); **Daniel Dollar** (Yale University Library); **Darby Orcutt** (North Carolina State University Libraries)

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

Reference was made to an **Elsevier** video, "What is Text Mining?," (bit.ly/1R18CIU), and the LIBER text and mining Website (<http://libereurope.eu/text-data-mining/>). **Dollar** jump-started the presentation with a reminder that the purpose of scholarship is to understand a large corpus of information and that challenges include legal (licensing), pricing, and access issues. The inability to mine is a type of embargo (restriction) on using content. Library support is needed especially for the humanities (more than STM). Digital Humanities Centers can bridge gaps on making raw data interoperable for humanists. Per **Wise**, libraries and publishers work together to support researchers. She highlighted **Elsevier's** aims to provide services beyond content (e.g., its SDM development portal) and a timeline in this arena since 2006. Researcher challenges abound in differing support requirements by discipline and expertise (early adopters needed to write their own code), legal (e.g., user privacy), and financial. **Orcutt** mentioned his institution's mining colloquium and mentioned vendor and library push me/pull me challenges and misunderstandings on capacities, siloed content, librarians' expectations (a lot at no additional cost) vs vendors' thinking (that everyone needs customized service). "Mining" implies new support and new roles. The first step is to advocate for basic access (BAM- the Basic Access Model). Questions to panelists abounded and responses highlighted the spectrum of users and their needs: those who just need the data, those with an interest in getting into mining, and those who need hand holding. One (idealistic?) hope expressed: vendors should consider price at scale with support for users at all levels (i.e., high-end researchers don't need dumbed down systems for mining). 🐼

That's all the reports we have room for in this issue. Watch for more reports from the 2015 Charleston Conference in upcoming issues of Against the Grain. Presentation material (PowerPoint slides, handouts) and taped session links from many of the 2015 sessions are available online. Visit the Conference Website at www.charlestonlibraryconference.com. — KS

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required it, if high enough on some list, have been updated, have received the new encoding, and have been re-downloaded, and hence the "New" label. The notion of updates and soft editions like this has been lauded in the past as a quality with potential, made possible in an e-text environment. It's nice to see examples of such improvements appearing not just in somebody's imagination, but in the wild.

So, "Horses for courses!" It's alright to have different devices for different applications. It's just like different pens, or lenses, or brushes, for different settings. And hooray for settings, enabling us to go ahead and set the typeface we'd like to render a particular work in. And three cheers for the drive to improve, to refine a product, to bring it closer to the ideal that inspired its first expression, to be focused upon making the next take the best take, the keeper. 🐼