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ATG Interviews Pat Sabosik, General Manager, ACI Scholarly Blog Index

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General Manager, ACI Scholarly Blog Index

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

and **Katina Strauch** (Editor, *Against the Grain*) <kstrauch@comcast.net>

ATG: Pat, your current work with the ACI Information Group is just the latest chapter in a distinguished career. You've also had experience working for Choice, Science Direct, Dow Jones & Reuters and Thomson Learning among others. What do you consider your top career highlights? Which of your many accomplishments make you most proud?

PS: Digital content has been a focus and foundation of my career so there are a few highlights. Starting Elsevier's ScienceDirect business was a big accomplishment. As the first General Manager of ScienceDirect, I worked with a team of very talented people and building the platform to deliver digital journal content to researchers' desktops worldwide was a big deal. The ScienceDirect platform was more than just e-journals, it enabled Elsevier to link to other content like 3-D chemical compounds and, through the digital object identifier (DOI), to other scientific information thereby accelerating research.

I joined America Online (AOL) during their Internet growth years and before the Time Warner merger. I worked with AOL partners like Kodak, Sony, and IBM on new Internet initiatives. In my last project for AOL I led the digital imaging team to define ways consumers could have access to digital pictures on their computers. That was about 20 years ago, now we have our pictures in our pockets!

ATG: Your most recent innovative project is the ACI Scholarly Blog Index. What has been the market's response?

PS: The ACI scholarly blog project started with a proof of concept. I interviewed many librarians across the country to see if they would be interested in a curated collection of blogs written by academic scholars. The response was yes and the company put resources into building the product.

Sadly, after nearly four years there was just not enough library interest in actually subscribing to the ACI Scholarly Blog Index, so the scholarly blog end-user product will be discontinued at the end of June 2018. The ACI Information Group continues to aggregate and syndicate blogs for its active ACI Newstex News & Commentary Blog Index newsfeed business. Libraries now have the option to buy blog feeds from those produced by the ACI Information Group for the Newstex feed business.

ATG: Can you tell us more about how libraries can exercise the option of buying blog feeds from those produced by the ACI Information Group for their Newstex feed business? And what exactly will libraries get when they buy these blog feeds?

PS: Libraries have the option to access ACI Information Group's Newstex blogs through one of ACI's resellers, such as Thomson Reuters or ProQuest, both of whom incorporate ACI's Newstex blogs into their services or directly from ACI. You can use the website (www.aci.info) to learn more.

ATG: With the ACI Scholarly Blog Index ceasing publication, will you still be working with the ACI Information Group? Or are you planning to move on to other opportunities? If so, what might they be?

PS: I will continue working with ACI on an as needed basis. I am currently networking within the information industry for a research engagement or market analysis assignment for new digital products and continue to be active within the Society for Scholarly Publishing. I will also be judging the Software and Information Industry's Codie Award nominations this spring and taking a landscape design course.

ATG: You were ahead of the curve in realizing that blogs had scholarly value. What did you see that others missed?

PS: Blogs have been accepted as a new form of scholarly communication and the internet gave academics the tools and medium to communicate directly with their colleagues and students. These scholars are also journal authors and frequently their blogs are a continuum or update to their published research.

Journal articles discuss a single point of research and are laden with field-specific jargon. Blog posts are more accessible to the general reader and include broader coverage of a topic. We saw the scholarly blog as a good starting point for undergraduates writing papers and

doing research. The blogs can lead the student to a journal article with a better understanding of the content than starting with a journal search. Graduate students used the Index to follow leaders in their field. Also, the ACI Scholarly Blog Index was much less expensive for a campus-wide subscription than a bundle of journal subscriptions.

This is now history. A decline in funding, a potential decline in student enrollment, the changing publishing landscape and advances in information technology have proven a difficult environment for academic libraries and how they treat authoritative social media.

ATG: As you survey the world of scholarly communication today, are there other formats or resource types that are currently flying under the radar?

PS: I think that scholarship and research produced in new media is not getting the coverage in libraries that it deserves. The requirement to archive social media in perpetuity may not be reasonable, however, a reasonable period of availability would be a good discussion for the industry to have.

There are already demands for software archiving, data sets and repositories like GitHub, Open AI, and the Open Science Framework. These initiatives will present collection, access, and distribution challenges for both academic libraries and institutional repositories. Non-traditional media seems to fit outside the academic library's brief and is just beginning to be addressed.

ATG: If a young entrepreneur in our industry approached you and asked where they should focus their efforts, what would you tell them? Are there particular areas that you think are ripe for investment?

PS: Quantitative skills will be a valuable asset for young entrepreneurs. Understanding data as the underpinning of the next generation of information products like data visualization and knowledge graphs, artificial intelligence, and the Internet of Things movement will be essential.

Digital currency is another area to watch, particularly if we see a shift in payments by students for research services. That will accelerate new forms of digital currency and payment schemes in the education market.

ATG: Libraries are struggling to find their place in the scholarly communication infrastructure. Where do you see them fitting in? Going forward, what do you see as their primary contribution?

PS: The library's role is to support faculty and students in their research endeavors.

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Libraries find themselves at the end of the cycle of scholarly publishing — archiving the research that scholars publish, so that's a hard spot to be in. Two obvious areas are working with Institutional Repositories and the Office of Research. Libraries have experience in search and working with these two groups to help design either search tools or personal search robots to aid researchers in the discovery process would be a valuable collaborative effort.

Aligning with the Office of Research to help negotiate licenses and access terms for scholar's content pre- or post-publication would fit in a library's brief.

I can see libraries having a role in building institutional repositories for their faculty but I think a good approach is to provide an index of their faculty's work and then link to as much as they can. In a "linked" society, that may be an acceptable approach.

The functions of archiving, access, and discovery are still fundamental to an academic library's mission and these functions will continue in various forms as Open Access and new content and data formats emerge. And, libraries need to be more flexible addressing the perishable nature of social media.

ATG: *Are there any recent innovations in the library world that encourage you to think that libraries will make this contribution successfully?*

PS: Knowledge graphs and linked data are not new but new applications are transforming search and discovery through visualization and that's exciting.

ATG: *You also mention libraries having a role in building institutional repositories. What would you say to those who doubt that*

most academic libraries have the infrastructure, staff, and expertise to play a meaningful role?

PS: A bit of irony isn't it. Academic librarians wanted direct access to all of their institutional scholars' work but now report that it's hard and they don't have the infrastructure. IRs are a long-term investment that I believe have value and help support an institution's brand as well as archive scholars' research. If the library is not the place to manage this, then perhaps the Office of Research is a prospective home. Along these lines, the definition of a successful IR and what might be included may need to be narrowed, or redefined.

ATG: *If you were to look in your crystal ball what kind of future do you see for scholarly communications? What key challenges will we face? And how should we meet them?*

PS: The Open Access to published scholarly research, the Open Science Framework, and Open AI will present opportunities as well as challenges to policy, operations, and funding that will shape the next generation of scholarly publishing. These trends are starting in the Sciences and I expect the "open" model will spread to the Social Sciences and Humanities.

From a graduate perspective, more post-doctoral students are going into industry than staying in the academy and this will have implications for institutions, funders, and libraries. **Dr. Paula Stephan**, Andrew Young School of Policy Studies, **Georgia State University** addressed this topic in a keynote at the 2017 **Society for Scholarly Publishing** meeting.

ATG: *Recently, you attended the Charleston Conference first annual Future Lab. What were your key takeaways?*

PS: Librarians and many publishers are still focusing on the tactics of publishing and

collection instead of the trends that are shaping information strategy. Institutional change will be driven by (1) demographic shifts such as life-long learning programs and older learners; (2) operational or structural shifts like operating with reduced state and federal funding and reduced foreign student enrollment; or (3) policy-driven shifts such as open research, funding initiatives, curriculum changes, hiring practices, and the use of personal robots for discovery and research.

Technology will be an underpinning as the next generation of students who now enter college. But the strategy of how the technology is deployed at both the institution and by the student is where the future lies. An example I gave at Future Lab is why do we still have segmented databases? Let's think of **Google** (where students go as a starting point for discovery) as a large data lake of content and let students or researchers refine their personal robots to find content. They control their destiny, not hampered by institutional policies and restrictive access. That's very old-school thinking.

ATG: *Pat, we know that you are an avid hiker who has tackled demanding mountain trails worldwide. What was your most memorable conquest? Are there other activities that help you recharge and get energized for the next challenge?*

PS: I love talking about hiking! One of the best was a five-day hike on the Inca Trail to Machu Picchu. The highest peak we climbed was over 14,000 feet high and it literally took your breath away. A trip up the Annapurna Sanctuary Trail in Nepal was another highlight. Backpacking in New Hampshire's White Mountains is a great way to unwind.

In 2017 I became a Connecticut Master Gardener! Hiking and digging in the dirt keeps me grounded. 🌱

Book Reviews — Monographic Musings

Column Editor: **Regina Gong** (Open Educational Resources (OER) Project Manager/Head of Technical Services and Systems, Lansing Community College Library) <gongr1@lcc.edu>

Column Editor's Note: *For this issue, we are focusing on two titles: one is on strategies in managing libraries and another on renewing yourself written by our regular book reviewers Corey Seeman and Ashley Bailey. The book **Inherent Strategies in Library Management**, is another excellent addition to the literature of library management. It provides readers with a great overview of library management thinking and places it in the context of business management literature. It is interesting how most books on library management always emphasize the need for libraries to be agile, innovative, and embrace change. Libraries of all types and sizes do that every day even with little or sometimes no funding support so to me this is not new. How else are libraries still here despite grim predictions of our demise? Meanwhile, in **Renew Yourself: A Six-Step Plan for More Meaningful Work**, we see somewhat of a self-help type book that gives us practical advice and insights into how to be happier and more fulfilled in one's work. I find this book interesting because it allows us to be more introspective and examine ways in which we are fulfilling our purpose and goals in our work to make it more meaningful.*

I hope you enjoy reading the reviews in this issue. As always, please let me know if you want to be a book reviewer. Just send me an email at <gongr1@lcc.edu>. I always have a free book waiting for you. Happy reading! — RG

Koizumi, Masanori. *Inherent Strategies in Library Management*. Cambridge, MA: Chandos Publishing, 2017. 9780081012970 (eBook). 9780081012772 (Paperback). \$78.95 (print).

Reviewed by **Corey Seeman** (Director, Kresge Library Services, Ross School of Business, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor) <cseeman@umich.edu>

Reading this book transported me back to library school. One class in particular came to mind while reviewing this book — the one on

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