Against the Grain

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Booklover – Summer Reading

Donna Jacobs

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mal Pictures (Anatomy.TV). We are aware of other companies such as **OVID** that also offer AR and virtual simulation content.

QUT Library owns a growing collection of VR headsets to support VR content, such as Oculus (Rift and Quest), PlayStation, and 80 pairs of basic plastic headsets for mobile phones. We use the Oculus, PlayStation and Steam platforms and associated content to mainly support VR requirements.

What do you see as the specific opportunities for library services companies in support of virtual reality? Indexing/metadata standards, platforms, aggregation, curation, others?

SH: When an academic seeks advice from their librarian for VR content, it can be a frustrating experience for both parties. The librarian, for example, will need to explore a variety of platforms to seek the content, and even when content is located, the supporting hardware (VR headset) needs to be available. For example, I was recently approached by one of my nursing academics for VR anatomy

content. She was particularly interested in a specific resource, but it turned out to only be available for the Microsoft HoloLens headset, of which we don't have within our library collection. We offered her other VR content, anatomy content that was available on the platforms supported by the headsets we have in our collection, but unfortunately the content did not meet her needs. It would be ideal for library service companies to understand what the specific content need is and to create content that can be used across all, if not many, headsets. To make the content easily found and available at an affordable price would be the cherry on top!

Where will QUT be in five years, in ten years as concerns learning and virtual reality?

SH: The interest and use of VR in various curriculums within QUT has rapidly increased over the past couple of years, and I know it will continue to grow as content options increase and expensive headsets become more affordable.

Our new Pro Vice-Chancellor (Digital Learning), **Prof Kevin Ashford-Rowe**, joined QUT earlier this year and has a tremendous interest in Virtual and Augmented Reality. **Prof Ashford-Rowe** has already enabled many

opportunities for academics and professional staff to progress in this innovative area and supports ongoing advancement. With the support of our leaders and the ongoing increasing interest in this space, I believe VR will be an important part of our learning and teaching at QUT for years to come.

What closing advice do you have for educational technology services companies interested in the opportunity virtual reality presents?

SH: VR is currently viewed as something new and exciting to use. I hope that in the future VR will be an ordinary tool to select and use within learning and teaching, just as eBooks, journals and videos are today. There will also be a wide range of content available for all levels of education, and it will be accessible to all and via any headset (which will be affordable to all!). My advice is to continue to seek feedback from academics and professional staff from around the world regarding content requirements. What do they need? What is available now that they want to use but can't (platform, cost, accessibility issues etc.)? Making the required content available on a platform that can be easily found and used would be ideal. 🌿

Booklover — Summer Reading

Column Editor: **Donna Jacobs** (Retired, Medical University of South Carolina, Charleston, SC 29425) <donna.jacobs55@gmail.com>

Summer is over. It has been a HOT one. The world is spinning a little off its axis. Reading choices have been a little intense.

Colson Whitehead was featured on a July episode of **CBS Sunday Morning**. The discussion of his new novel *The Nickel Boys* stuck with me. I had the opportunity to be in Vermont this summer, where the air was just a bit cooler than the humid steamy environment of the South Carolina Lowcountry. While wandering through **Bear Pond Books** in Montpelier, Vermont, I noticed that **Whitehead's** book was the staff pick. I bought a signed first edition. It is a powerful read based on a real story about a reform school. Will cause you to pause. Seek it out.

Social conflict and turmoil must be the theme as I had already decided to read a poem written by **Wole Soyinka** entitled "Civilian and Soldier." **Soyinka**, "who in a wide cultural perspective and with poetic overtones fashions the drama of existence," won the **1986 Nobel Prize in Literature** becoming the first African to win the prestigious award. He used the opportunity afforded by the Nobel ceremony to deliver an acceptance speech dedicated to the atrocities of apartheid in South Africa and to **Nelson Mandela** who devoted his life to not only exposing the ills of apartheid but also to diligently seeking a better opportunity for his people. One biographical sketch suggests that **Soyinka's** acceptance speech moved the world to reason with his words and the ultimate release of **Mandela**.

Akinwande Oluwole "Wole" Soyinka was born in 1934 in Abeokuta, Nigeria, the second child of **Samuel Ayodele** and **Grace Eniola Soyinka**. His father was the headmaster of **St. Peters School** and this position afforded the large family the luxuries of electricity and radio. He attended primary school in his hometown where his facility with literary composition was initially recognized and awarded. He continued with secondary education at Government College in Ibadan, at the time one of the elite Nigerian secondary schools. **Soyinka** moved to Lagos once his studies were complete and worked as a clerk while writing radio plays and short stories. From 1952-1954, he attended **University College** in Ibadan and then relocated to the **University of Leeds** to continue studying English literature under the mentorship of **Wilson Knight**. **Soyinka** immersed himself in academic pursuits, social justice causes and political affairs

in his country, theater, and writing — all of which he pursued with a passion that won him fellowships, academic positions, awards, literary acclaim and imprisonment. His works of drama and poetry are written in English and reflect the influence of his Yoruba culture.

I leave you with "Civilian and Soldier":

"My apparition rose from the fall of lead,
Declared, 'I am a civilian.' It only served
To aggravate your fright. For how could I
Have risen, a being of this world, in that hour
Of impartial death! And I thought also: nor is
Your quarrel of this world.

You stood still
For both eternities, and oh I heard the lesson
Of your training sessions, cautioning -
Scorch earth behind you, do not leave
A dubious neutral to the rear. Reiteration
Of my civilian quandary, burrowing earth
From the lead festival of your more eager friends
Worked the worse on your confusion, and when
You brought the gun to bear on me, and death
Twitched me gently in the eye, your plight
And all of you came clear to me.

I hope some day
Intent upon my trade of living, to be checked
In stride by your apparition in a trench,
Signaling, I am a soldier. No hesitation then
But I shall shoot you clean and fair
With meat and bread, a gourd of wine
A bunch of breasts from either arm, and that
Lone question — do you friend, even now, know
What it is all about?" 🌿