Against the Grain

November 2013

Letters to the Editor

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Recommended Citation
DOI: https://doi.org/10.7771/2380-176X.3169

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From your (frazzled) Editor:

Spring break has come and gone and the azaleas and dogwood are blooming in Charleston. This means it's time to open the windows and let in the sun, put up the woolens (such as we have them here), and generally get things done. At the library, we are faced with potential budget cuts which means numbers, lists, reports, spreadsheets.

This issue of ATG, like all of them, has some really practical, relevant information. Audrey Fenner talks about selecting at an academic library, Sandhya Srivastava and Paolina Taglienti talk about using MS-Access for acquisitions ordering, and Dana Courtney revisits the paper-cloth issue from a vendor perspective. We also have a look by Kate McDill at her summer internship at Amazon.com. Interviews are with Vitek Tracz, Chairman of the Current Science Group and Barbara Haber, librarian and new author. Rick Lugg and Ruth Fischer defend us tech services people in the back room, and Sue Wiegand talks about the differences and similarities in products, vocabulary, and terminology. Whoa!

Happy reading! See you in June!

Yr. Ed.

Letters to the Editor

Send letters to <strauchk@earthlink.net>, phone or fax 843-723-3936 or snail mail: Against the Grain, MSC 98, The Citadel, Charleston, SC 29409. You can also send a letter to the editor from the ATG Homepage at <http://www.against-the-grain.com>.

Dear Editor:

Regarding some inaccuracies in my Report on the 2001 Charleston Conference (ATG, February 2002), I offer my heartfelt apologies to NERL for identifying it as the “New England Research Libraries” instead of its correct name, “North East Research Libraries”. I offer similar apologies to David Kohl. It is always unfortunate when misunderstandings or incorrect perceptions are widely disseminated. But I think this particular instance has a potentially useful and instructive result: it draws attention to the complexity, even the obscurity, of the terms encompassed by the “big deals” OhioLink negotiates, and to the difficulties of assessing the benefits of these deals. I had checked my notes from this session against those of my Assistant Director; both of us are keenly interested in the subject and familiar with its complexities. That we could both misapprehend the speakers in identical ways suggests an even greater potential for confusion among less sophisticated audiences, and a need for a more strenuous effort on the part of advocates of either position to prevent misunderstanding by thorough and evenhanded presentation of the major points of contention.

Sincerely,

Michael Young
(Head of Acquisitions Services, University at Albany Libraries)
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Rumors

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MA 02472 and hopefully she will be at the Charleston Conference this year — October 31—November 2.

Dialog and Gale, two business units of the Thomson Corporation (TSE:TOC), have just announced a wide-ranging strategic alliance to build new online products and services for the academic and public library markets worldwide. The first set of products and services, being developed for public libraries, are expected to be available by mid 2002 when further details will be made available. The new alliance seeks to leverage Dialog’s depth and breadth of online-based content, brand power and technology platforms in combination with Gale’s expertise and sales support infrastructure for its worldwide markets. Executives from both companies described the alliance as comprehensive and long-term. Both companies said that the new services will not displace existing products or services offered by either company. Gale — www.gale.com — a business unit of the Thomson Learning division of The Thomson Corporation, creates and maintains more than 600 databases that are published in electronic form, as well as in print and microform. The Gale Group includes Macmillan Reference USA, Charles Scribner’s Sons, Primary Source Microfilm, UXL, Greenhaven Press, Lucent Books, Kidhaven Press, Blackbirch Press and Thordriksf Press. Founded in 1972 by Dr. Roger K. Summit, a pioneer in developing the technology behind electronic information retrieval, Dialog is a leader in providing online-based information services.