November 2013

Desperately Seeking Website-dealing with the frustrations of the online environment

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Recommended Citation

Williams, Amber (2001) "Desperately Seeking Website-dealing with the frustrations of the online environment," Against the Grain: Vol. 13: Iss. 2, Article 36.
DOI: https://doi.org/10.7771/2380-176X.3476

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Even if you have a local art gallery to wander in from time to time, you must feel the need for a change of scenery. Besides, to paraphrase Michael Zinman (highly recommended is his profile, The Book Eater, by Mark Singer, in the February 5, 2001 issue of The New Yorker, pp. 62-71), you have to try a lot of stuff to really appreciate the good things. Publishers’ catalogs, at least a lot of the university press catalogs, bring art shows to their readers. The covers alone can be pleasing to the eye and informative at once, and many continue the show on the inside pages.

The most recent one to come across my desk is from the Harvard University Press, Spring/Summer 2001. On the front cover is The Judgment of Paris, c. 1480. And if you consider photographic portraits to be art, then on pages 13, 24, and 33 you will be pleased with the pictures of Laura Bridgman (the first deaf and blind person to learn language), Stanley Fish (one of the world’s preeminent Milton scholars shown above a drawing of Milton himself, circa 1670), and John Rawls (Justice as Fairness, lectures by perhaps the world’s greatest living philosopher, at least according to one reviewer).

I wish the compiler were a sharper picture, but on page 16 of the Louisiana State University Press, Books for Spring and Summer 2001, there is a picture of Robert Penn Warren, as an older man, that stands in stark contrast to his picture on page 20 where he is shown as a young man, staring into his typewriter, hands poised as if trying to free himself from writers block. The LSU Press has published Selected Letters of Robert Penn Warren, Volume Two, The Southern Review Years, 1935-1942 and Selected Poems of Robert Penn Warren. I have read The Cave and All the Kings Men but no poetry, no letters. The pictures in this catalog make me want to read more. Does that prove that advertising works? But what about the cover of the catalog? It contains five photographs, one of which I am sure is Pistol Pete Maravich, diseveled hair and all, putting the good first-step move on some flat-footed footer from Georgia. Pistol Pete, by the way, played some glorious basketball for LSU before too brief a professional career and an early rejection from the game of life, and he died far too young.

One novel that argues the case for artistic self-expression is John Kennedy Toole’s (known variously to friends and acquaintances as Ken, Tooley, and John) A Confederacy of Dunces. If you don’t know the book, I recommend it. Once you have read it, perhaps you will look at people differently and at New Orleans with a new appreciation. If you don’t know the story behind the book and its relationship with the LSU Press, then that same press has just issued Ignatius Rising, The Life of John Kennedy Toole, by Rene Pol Nevilis and Deborah George Hardy. Or turn to page one of the latest LSU Press catalog and read about the book and see pictures of Ken, Tooley, and John, one is his 1954 high school portrait and the other is when he was much younger and dressed in a Cossack costume for Mardi Gras.

The cover photographs on The University Press of Kentucky Spring and Summer 2001 catalog are courtesy of Horse Mania, a public art project of the Lexington Arts and Cultural Council. The photographer is Mary Rezny and the subjects are horses, artful horses of other colors, colors never seen on real horses. One is the Trojan horse on a wooden wagon with Greeks descending from its belly on a ladder, another is a daisy-coated filly wearing daisy sunglasses. There are worthy titles described throughout the catalog but no art worth mentioning. The front cover, however, is suitable for framing.

And briefly, for cover art’s sake only, I am looking at the Yale Spring 1999 catalog featuring Stuart Davis Landscape with garage lights. And there is the State University of New York Press Spring 2001 catalog letting me return the gaze of the Trauriger Europäer by Rudolf Hausner. The California Spring 2000 cover evokes the cabaret 1920s of Berlin with Romantic Brokes by Una, Lady Troubridge. Also suitable for framing is the Yale Fall 1999 catalog with Billy Traylor’s Figure with Construction on Back. And I have also saved McFarland’s Fall 2000 cover, Banjo and Trumpet Players, by Michael Creese.

I know the librarians lament about too many publishers’ catalogs, fodder for round file roundball, sales overkill, and so on. But there is much to be learned inside them and some free decorating materials on the covers and elsewhere. Cover art is alive and well in university presses. Let them know how much those elegant touches are appreciated and let them know that if they decide to print some promotional posters featuring some well-designed dust jackets (another art form), well, send them my way and I will sing their praises as best I can. ❤

Desperately Seeking Website

by Amber Williams (American Society for Bone and Mineral Research) <amber@bmr.org>
www.bmr-online.org/

Editor’s note: When Amber and I started talking about some of her frustrations with the online environment, I asked her if she would like to write a column in which she would try to give us examples of what drives publishers crazy. We all know what drives us crazy, right? Anyway, the column below is an evolving process and proves that publishers, vendors, and librarians are all in this together! Please let us hear your input on these important issues. Maybe we can get a productive dialog going? — Yr. Ed.

In this first column, I will introduce some issues facing publishers providing online services to their institutional customers. The American Society for Bone and Mineral Research is fairly new to publishing and just as new to forming policy surrounding provision of electronic materials. It is our hope that this discussion stimulates feedback that will help publishers in serving the needs of institutional customers and in evaluating approaches to electronic publishing and licensing so that we do not hinder the progress we seek. If you or your institution want to revisit about a particular issue, please let me know!

Online Access
Our library customers tell us consistently that the process of initiating online access can be too slow and laborious. The criticism is valid and we are eager to eliminate the problem. I will outline some of the publisher’s challenges and challenges in promptly executing site licenses.

continued on page 83

<http://www.against-the-grain.com>
for our customers. Perhaps sharing these obstacles with you will shed some light on the issue of delayed access.

Subscription Agencies and Customer Numbers

Dealing with site licenses must be burdensome for many of you; however, obtaining necessary information from a submitted site license agreement can be just as taxing for the staff attempting to complete the registration process. For example, I may have to correspond with both the subscription agency requesting access on behalf of its customer as well as with an institution’s acquisitions department before finally activating the online subscription. If I cannot locate the individual subscriber with the information provided by the agency, I must contact the agent for more information or search through databases to find the customer record. Sometimes, even this is to no avail.

You may choose to circumvent the subscription agency and contact the publisher directly. When this happens, the publication staff may have trouble locating the record of the subscription without an identifying subscriber number or reference number (usually provided by the subscription agent). Without one or the other number, you can encounter problems trying to register for online access.

Using internal reference numbers to represent customers worked fine for the purposes of mailing print journals. However, because we now service separate sites via an IP connection, the information flow between an agency and publisher must be more cohesive. The communication between the librarian and the agent must be clear, and as well, so that it is clear to the publisher who is managing the registration for online access.

continued on page 85

WEBWORTHY

Edited by Pamela M. Rose (Health Sciences Library, Univ. at Buffalo, 3435 Main St., Buffalo, NY 14214-3002; 716-829-2408) <pmrose@acsu.buffalo.edu>

Web sites selected for broad appeal, depth of information, and ease of access. Sites are organized by broad subject area and are visited just prior to publication. Please let the editor know of any sites that are not accessible. Comments and suggestions welcome to Pamela M. Rose, Health Sciences Library, University at Buffalo, 3435 Main St., Buffalo, NY 14214-3002; 716-829-2408 <pmrose@acsu.buffalo.edu>. Unless otherwise noted in square brackets following the description, Internet addresses were published in Science, NetWatch column edited by Jocelyn Kaiser. — PR

Anthropology

Real virtuality is the term used to describe the results from computer-assisted paleoanthropology (CAP) which allow researchers to gaze upon the faces of Neanderthals.

The reconstructed image of the Devil’s Tower Neanderthal child, which gazes at you from the Web page, looks incredibly real! University of Zurich neurobiologist Christoph Zollikofer and colleagues describe their work which includes comparisons of Neanderthals to modern humans and biomedical applications such as virtual surgery which surgeons used to reconstruct the face of a man mauled by a bear and to construct prosthetic parts for congenital malformations.

http://www.sfi.unizh.ch/~zolli/Neanderthals.htm

Astronomy

It’s not just for SETI anymore! SETI-at-home set the standard for distributed analysis, but this NASA project takes that idea a step further by training non-scientists to scrutinize Mars photos snapped by Viking orbiters and identify crater data. Users take a brief, online training session before beginning. Since its September 17, 2000 launch, Mars Clickworkers have identified more than 200,000 craters and 60,000 gradings with skill almost equal to planetary geologists. Continued success will see expansion to higher resolution images from the Mars Global Surveyor, and in the works is fine-tuning previously marked craters and advanced crater classification.

http://clickworkers.arc.nasa.gov/top

Biochemistry

Students in Dr. Michael King’s medical biochemistry course at the Tuere Haute Center for Medical Education aren’t the only lucky ones. The rest of the world can brush up on basic medical biochemistry too at this comprehensive site. Topics range from Basic Chemistry of Biomolecules to Fatty Acid Oxidation, from Vitamins and Co-enzymes to Tumor Suppressors and Cancer. The format is concise with much of the information clearly laid out in tables. Some of Dr. King’s lectures are available in PowerPoint, as well as course and lecture information and related links. A left frame also scrolls through the many awards bestowed.

http://web.indstate.edu/thcme/mkwing/home.html

Museums

The Australian Museum Society or TAMS, one of the oldest and largest membership organizations in Australia, supports the Australian Museum, whose online exhibits, research & collections, education, and commercial activities offer an incredible experience for browsers and researchers alike. Check out Australia’s Lost Kingdom for a geologic trip through time; the Albert Chapman Mineral Collection which displays wonderful images of minerals such as rhodochrosite; the Fish site under Ichthyology which includes underwater movies; or find out how you can be immortalized by having a species named after you with a hefty donation to support taxonomy. All information is extremely well documented with references for further reading and links.


Reference

FOLDOC, the Free On-Line Dictionary of Computing, defines over 13,000 computer and Internet terms. Look up the definition of “hungus” (“Large, unwieldy, usually unmanageable”), or just browse through the listings with the Random link. Listings are fully hyperlinked, such as the entry for TCP (Transmission Control Protocol), which offers 17 links to other terms in addition to 7 links to nearby terms. Enjoy the nuggets of history, jargon and culture (such as the demise of ASCII) along the way.

http://www.foldoc.org

<http://www.against-the-grain.com> 83
Wandering the Web
from page 84

Maria Brazil — View and listen to dances, festivals, music, people, and arts & crafts. — http://www.mariabrazil.org/page2.html

Smithsonian Folkways Recordings — Search through the 35,000 track database of music. — http://web2.si.edu/folkways/

UCLA Folklore and Mythology Archives — Look through the Performance Archive, the Folk Song & Music Archives and much more. — http://www.humanet.ucla.edu/humnet/folklore/content1/


Folk Medicine

Folk Medicine in Hispanics in the Southwestern United States — Learn the history and applications of folk medicine, identify illnesses, and incorporate it into treatment. — http://www.sbp.bem.tmc.edu/HispanicHealth/Courses/mod7/mod7.html

UCLA Folk Medicine Archive — Read about the UCLA Folklore Resource and search their database for specific plants and their uses. — http://www2.humnet.ucla.edu/humnet/folkmed/


Gypsy Folk Medicine — A large list of cures for things such as warts, freckles, insomnia, nervousness, and headaches along with a few cleansing remedies. — http://www.cam.org/jennyb/gypsy.html

Holy Wells Web — Learn what a holy well is and read information about Wiltshire's ancient holy wells. Also, find out about other wells listed on the Web. — http://www.bath.ac.uk/~listkm/holywell.html

Folk Magic in Britain 1200-2000 — A site regarding unusual objects found such as charms, witch bottles, and written curses. Also, the researchers are trying to learn about witchcraft between the years 1200-2000. — http://www.folkmagic.co.uk/


Ghost-Lore

The Gazetteer — Click on the separate regions of Britain to read ghost stories and learn about ghosts in each area. — http://freespace.virgin.net/martin.lighthouse/county.html

This Spectred Isle — Read about the supernatural and about ghosts of England, Scotland, and Wales. — http://freespace.virgin.net/martin.lighthouse/ghost.html

Hollywood Hauntings — Read about ghosts that have haunted stars and ghosts that were stars during their lifetime. — http://gothic.vei.net/hollywood/


Southern Ghost Stories — A large number of stories about Southern ghosts and haunted places. — http://www.haunts.com/  📜

Desperately Seeking Website
from page 83

IP Addresses

If your desired result is extensive access for an institutional network, the IP addresses must be accurate. Delays occur when it is incorrectly formatted or an incomplete list of IP addresses is provided unknowingly by the customer. The confusion can usually be worked out with some additional attention; still, this means delay for a service for which you have already paid or to which you are entitled (if online access is bundled with the print subscription).

To avoid this delay, the IP address submitted should confrom to the IP formats used by the publisher. For instance, the JBMJ Website has a sample list of IP addresses in its Help section. The rules provided with the list of examples spell out how IP addresses must be arranged in order to have meaning within our database. Also, the more consolidated the information you include on the site license, the easier it will become to facilitate the process. All of us, libraries, subscription agents and publishers, must recognize a change in practice as necessary to reap the full benefits of digital information.

Websites

A Website is only as good as the information it delivers. We’d appreciate your comments regarding ways in which we as publishers should maintain and update our Websites to make them most useful to you.

See the questions below for your invited response.

1. What sends you to a journal's Website?
2. Where do you look to find subscription information?
3. Do you use FAQ's when available?
4. What is the first thing that comes to your mind that is missing from many Websites, that you would like to see?
5. Can you send me a Website you really love and one you really don't like?

Your feedback

The goal of access for all with agreed upon limits is possible. We want to make the online market available for those who need access. Feel free to send your comments directly to me at <amber@jbmj.org>. I look forward to receiving and responding to your feedback in the next issues! 🗝

ADVERTISERS' INDEX

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>55</th>
<th>ABC Clad</th>
<th>9</th>
<th>Bowker</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>ACM</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>Brill</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>44, 45</td>
<td>ACS</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>BUSCA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Albiris</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>Casalini Libri</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>ALFRED JAEGER</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>THE CHARLESTON ADVOCATE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37</td>
<td>AM. INSTITUTE OF PHYSICS</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>THE CHARLESTON REPORT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>67</td>
<td>AM. MATHEMATICAL SOCIETY</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>CHOICE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>49</td>
<td>AM. SOCIETY OF PLANT BIOLOGISTS</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>EASTERN BOOK COMPANY</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>47</td>
<td>ASME INTERNATIONAL</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>EBSCO INFORMATION SERV.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>ATG</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>ELSEVIER</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>AUX AMATEURS DE LIVRES</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>EMERY PHATT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>BASCH SUBSCRIPTIONS, INC.</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>ERASMUS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>BELL &amp; HOWELL</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>GREENWOOD PHS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65</td>
<td>BERNHARD</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>INDENTA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>BLACKWELL'S BOOK SERVICES</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>INSTITUTE OF PHYSICS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>BOOK HOUSE</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>ISI</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Against the Grain / April 2001 <http://www.against-the-grain.com> 85