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You Gotta Go to School for That? - The XY Files

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Op Ed
(from page 46)

ning of a new trend. Vendors will undoubtedly release other key reference sources from the past in similar electronic formats. If these are going to be successful for both the vendor and the librarian, the products will need to take into account the historic investment that libraries have already made in those resources. So how about it, Bell and Howell? My library – and thousands of others – have already made an investment of over 1/3 million dollars in the New York Times. You have the opportunity to set an example for the industry. What kind of deal are you willing to make us?

Endnotes
1. For a complete product description, see http://proquest.com:8090/promo/histNews/.
3. All prices are taken from the Bell and Howell "Newspapers in Microfilm" Web page at http://wwwlib.umi.com/ntm/entry.
4. See the Lexis/Nexis "Source List" for a full description of their coverage of the New York Times.
Prices come from the HarpWeek Web page at http://www.harpweek.com/4AboutHarpWeek/HowToPurchase/HowToPurchase.htm.

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You Gotta Go to School for That — The XY Files

As written by Jared Alexander Seay, The Librarian formerly known as “Jerry”

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Having now had the opportunity to experience the joy of raising a human male child for the last 20 months, I feel I can truly appreciate the “war stories” and anecdotal evidences that until now I have passed off as basically “yaa, right.” Specifically, I refer, of course, to the vast gulf of difference that lies between those born with a full compliment of two X chromosomes — and thus blessed to be female — and those born male and thus saddled with the burden of going through life with only one X chromosome (sigh). Oh, the injustice of it all.

For starters, though I had heard of the great behavior differences in little girls and little boys, the fact that I had neither in my life gave me little reason to consider such trivial matters. Golly, what a difference a birth can make!

Now I am completely immersed, informed, and amazed. Take your standard playing with toys session. Little girls will carefully pull dolls, stuffed animals, and assorted plastic things from the toy box and precisely line them up on the table or the floor. I have seen this in action. They are just so neat and meticulous.

When confronted with the same opportunity, my little Tristan is keenly aware that he has the ability to grab handfuls of assorted stuffed animals, cars, and plastic stuff and launch them individually and in groups into the air in rapid fire succession. Toy boxes to him are places from which to obtain flingable items — ammunition boxes if you will.

The little boy trend toward “action” is in continued on page 50

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ATG Interviews Daryl Rayner

Director of Marketing, xrefer

by Tom Gilson (Head, Reference Services, College of Charleston) <gilson@cofc.edu>

ATG: Tell us a little about your self and your experience in the publishing/information world.

DR: My entire working life has been spent working for or alongside publishers. My first job was at Macmillan Publishers where I worked in the advertising department of Nature, the international journal of science. After that I went to work as the marketing manager at the Current Science Group. I worked for Vitel Tracx who is a serial entrepreneur. In 1995 we launched BioMedNet and later ChemWeb. It was the start of my addiction to the digital world! BioMedNet and ChemWeb were acquired by Elsevier Science in 1997. In 1998 I went back to work at Macmillan Publishers, this time as an associate director of Electronic Publishing and with Richard Charkin at the helm. I arrived just as the full text of Nature was being put online. In the summer of 1999 I met Adam Hodgkin who outlined his vision for xrefer, the central premise being that collections of reference works were more useful when put online and infinitely more powerful if linked in an intelligent yet automated way. I immediately wanted to be part of it.

ATG: What exactly is xrefer? How long have you been in operation? How big is your staff?

DR: Let me think a minute. Right now we have 13 permanent employees and we began operation about a year and a half ago, in January of 2000. As a company, xrefer is involved with supplying reference content to other sites, services and institutions. At the heart of everything we do is our xreferencing technology. This adds value to reference works by creating links across publications. xrefer.com is our destination site; here you can search across an extensive database of titles from publishers such as Bloomsbury, Oxford, Macmillan, Penguin and Houghton Mifflin. You can also see our xreferencing technology in action that xrefer has been actively syndicating reference content to other sites and platforms.

ATG: What do you mean other sites and platforms?

DR: By other sites and platforms I mean other Websites, and platforms such as digital TV and mobile.

ATG: That sounds exciting. We also understand you will be introducing a new product.

DR: Yes, this autumn we are launching xreferplus which is a subscription product for libraries. It will consist of eighty titles from existing and new publishing partners. At least semif of xreferplus will consist of new titles and most of these will have never appeared online before. It will also support an advanced search function, thematic search and browse. We are currently inviting librarians to sign up for trials.

ATG: If a librarian is interested in a trial how do they sign up?

DR: By the time you readers see this interview they should be able to sign up directly from www.xrefer.com. Right now, librarians have to sign up for a trial as part of a librarian questionnaire. So you can see we are trying to make it easier. The actual trials will start in late August or early September. But as you know, anyone can search xrefer.com now, and that is also a good way to get a feel for our technology and content. Of course, xreferplus will have new content, new functionality and a different look.

ATG: The current free database is useful for finding definitions, quotations, etc. In the subscription product will you expand continued on page 52

Endnotes
1. You can read Miller's article as it appeared in Discover Magazine at (http://biomed.brown.edu/faculty/M/Miller/Discov/10.html)

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