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Like netLibrary, “ed” will use the “one eBook, one user” approach that makes publishers comfortable. According to Pamela Smith, Chief Marketing Officer, “The users will have an ability to print or copy, however, there will be limitations in order to insure copyrights.” As for the novel “timed access” feature, it is part of both the “ed” and Adobe software, and is similar to the methodology announced by Rosetta/Reciprocal earlier this summer.

“ed” plans to emphasize frontlist content, and its initial offering will include 5,000 titles, all with 2001-2002 imprints. Although participating publishers cannot yet be named, Reference, Technology, Travel, and Cookbooks will be well represented, with plans to expand as quickly as the market warrants.

Perhaps most importantly, B&T plans to provide eBooks not only to its library customers, but to other wholesalers. Like netLibrary, they’ll produce new title records that other vendors can import into their own title databases. This will allow other vendors to assist with content identification and order/payment transactions, with B&T handling rights management and content delivery. In short, they intend to become another eBook aggregator. For eBook titles sold to their own library customers, they’ll discharge all functions. For titles sold through other vendors, they’ll activate and manage them, sharing the margin with the ordering vendor.

For now, there is no title overlap between netLibrary and “ed” so B&T, like other vendors, will sell eBooks from both hosts. But netLibrary has increasingly moved toward frontlist, and publishers, once a title is converted, will want it available through every channel. Over time, these two will differentiate or compete.

In Conclusion:
It’s clear that eBooks for libraries is still in the early stages of development. Expanded delivery options, including more PC-based content, eBooks on PDAs, and on dedicated eBook devices remain to be addressed. But we can already see that traditional book vendors will continue to play an important role in eBook distribution. Whether eBook content is ultimately obtained from netLibrary, eLibrary, the incipient “ed,” a new host, or from publishers themselves, library bookstores continue to “add value to the acquisition process” by serving as a kind of content portal to libraries. But there are other intermediaries who may also see themselves in that role, and we’ll address some of them in the sequel, as we continue to seek “the host with the most.”

ATG Report: 21st Annual Charleston Conference
Issues in Book and Serial Acquisition: The Trends They Are A’Changing

by Michael Young (Head of Acquisitions Services, University Libraries, State University of New York at Albany) <youngm@albany.edu>

The 2001 Charleston Conference further consolidated Charleston’s position as the most intelligent, provocative and useful of library conferences. This year’s theme was “The Trends They Are A’Changing,” which unfolded as an extended examination and discussion of the new and volatile ways of building and acquiring library collections, and of the emerging criteria for selection (or lack thereof), to which user demand for full-text online access has given rise.

One radical response to the dilemma of rising costs, shrinking budgets and staff and increasing user demand for unprecedented breadth of access is the OhioLINK consortium. OhioLINK’s Executive Director, Tom Sanville, gave the Thursday Keynote address, “The Rules of the Game Have Got to Change.” With the goal of obtaining “economically sustainable increased access to information as a consortium,” OhioLINK negotiates state-wide “Big Deals” for electronic resources and consolidates rapid access to print materials for all users throughout the state. Sanville juxtaposed the Old Rules, based upon the individual library as a discrete economic unit limited to print formats and marked by rationing of physical and economic resources, with the New Rules. These rules recognize a group, in this case the entire state of Ohio, as an economic unit of purchase and use, and promote a mentality of evolving and expanding use via electronic information resources, in contrast to the rationed use of print resources under the “Old Rules.” OhioLINK is able, through multi-year collective licenses, to purchase a much greater number of electronic titles than individual libraries could ever purchase in print, and to provide access to all titles purchased to all users in the state. Implicit in Sanville’s keynote was the necessity for adop-
tion of OhioLINK's user-driven selection for the long term by other large groups of libraries if those libraries are to remain vital and satisfy their users' demands. Although OhioLINK has yet to perform any outcome assessments of its usage statistics, Sanville acknowledges the need for such assessments. Outcome assessments were mentioned frequently throughout the conference, with no clear delineation of how to achieve them ever being put forward.

The specter of OhioLINK loomed large in what was probably the high point of this year's conference, a Point/Counterpoint Discussion between David Kohl and Ken Fraizer on Mass Purchase vs. Selection. Kohl, Dean of the University of Cincinnati Libraries, began by contrasting the very limited access to relevant journals that libraries provided in the print-only era with the vastly expanded access provided by OhioLINK's "Big Deals." According to Kohl, these deals cost a little more and garner more for users; they can be negotiated to reduce inflation rates and result in reduced per-title cost. Besides limiting inflation, they can result in savings from canceled print subscriptions. OhioLINK usage statistics indicate that titles newly available through big deals were more heavily used than electronic versions of titles which had been selected in print. Kohl insists that the familiar, traditional model of collecting is too timid, that collections should be built with a broad brush, not slowly, title by title. The goal should be great and rapid expansion of access, which, in the case of OhioLINK, has resulted in a huge increase of use of both print and electronic resources.

Ken Fraizer, Director of Libraries at the University of Wisconsin, Madison, offered an opposing view and interpretation, in which he claimed that libraries are "Hostages of the Big Deal." Fraizer argued that, with big deals like OhioLINK's, we join forces with our captors by defending costs that exceed budget growth, by cutting back on low-cost, high-use content, by accepting onerous license terms, by giving up responsibility for collection management and by trading diverse print collections for a uniform digital database. Fraizer challenged the assertion that use increases as the number of accessible titles grows. He cited the New England Research Libraries consortium usage data for the International Digital Electronic Access Library, where there were significant differences in use patterns among the consortium's 25 libraries for the 173 current and 39 archival titles, with no library using all the titles and two thirds of the titles accounting for virtually all of the use. The need for selective licenses is apparent from such data, although publishers have been reluctant to grant such licenses. Fraizer reminded us that many publishers offer superb quality at low prices—archival quality reference books for 25 cents per page, while the cost of the most expensive scientific journals ranges from $8.33 to $4.46 per page. He cautioned that many students do not know how to find articles and are choking on the array of databases we provide, and that graduate students do not know how to use the primary literatures of their disciplines. Fraizer urged librarians to publish usage statistics, to reward quality non-profit publishers and to support new models for scholarly communication.

A revealing discrepancy between Fraizer's spoken words and his Power Point slide cut to the heart one of our profession's central dilemmas: his slide directed librarians to gain a better understanding of what users need, but his voice told us to understand better what users want. The question inevitably arises: are we coludining in the diminution of an already seriously shrunk knowledge base (outside of the quantities of sciences) by striving to provide full-text online resources at the expense of other formats? As a service profession, is it any of our concern that what users want is not always what they need most in their research or course work?

Fugual variations and embellishments upon all of these themes permeated the other sessions of the Conference. Mary Reichel, University Librarian at Appalachian State University and current President of ACRL, gave Friday's keynote address on "The Future of Scholarly Publishing," and argued that we are quickly reaching the time when print on paper will not be adequate to capture the richness of current scholarship. This prediction was qualified somewhat by the session called "The Monograph is Dead," presented by John McDonald of CalTech. McDonald compiled data on publication types authored by and cited by the Social Sciences and Humanities faculty at CalTech to determine whether there was any significant diminution in the frequency of book citation in their publications. In a compelling presentation, McDonald showed that the rate at which this faculty cites books has remained stable over time (1994-2000). One wonders whether the Humanities, within living memory the very centerpiece of a liberal arts education, risk being marginalized and eviscerated by the rush to exclusive use of fulltext online resources. With so much of their essential literature available only in print, can serious researchers in the Humanities survive in a student population unwilling to use sources that are not fulltext online?

These sessions stimulated rumination upon the future of print serials in academic libraries and of the traditional labor intensive procedures of serials acquisitions. Penn State's Robert Alan's concurrent session on "Migration of Serials Data" reminded us how fraught with problems are the migrations and upgrades to ever more sophisticated Integrated Library Systems, particularly for print serials. New systems require compliance with NISO standards, and migration of non-compliant data that predates these standards may result in a loss of "receiving" history and much else. Can we justify the maintenance of elaborate and labor-intensive serial databases for print journals that are used less and less? Rick Anderson and Steve Zink of the University of Nevada Reno said "NO!," in a bracing concurrent session entitled "How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Give Up Serials Check-In." Anderson and Zink found that, with 16,000 journal subscriptions of which only 3,000 titles were print, most of their serials staff time was devoted to maintaining 20% of their collection. Recognizing that users want online journals, Anderson and Zink decided to deploy more of their staff time on maintaining access to formats for which there is the greatest demand, rather than on time-consuming traditional check-in of print journals. They still check-in and claim high cost and high use journals, and they still bind graphics intensive journals, storing the rest in pamphlet boxes in the stacks. As the need increases for the restructuring of work in Acquisitions and Collection Development, it appears that practical sessions like Anderson's and Zink's will become increasingly de rigueur at future Charleston Conferences.

The emerging role of the OPAC in meeting the burgeoning demand for fulltext online was glimpsed in the concurrent session "Unlocking the Potential of Your Electronic Collection through Linking," presented by Oliver Pesch of EBSCO, Chris Pierrat of Serials Solutions and Jenny Walker of Ex Libris. Lack of consistency in interfaces and fragility of some links continue to be obstacles to seamless cross linking between citation databases, fulltext articles and citations. Some libraries have begun to use context-sensitive linking (SFX) with promising results that suggest a rejuvenation of the OPAC as the hub of cross-linking. Such a rejuvenation could counteract the tendency of some users to shun the OPAC in favor of Library Web Sites as primary points of access to electronic journals, and provide users with the added value of alternate titles and subject headings, both of which are lacking in the frustratingly literal databases that link to e-journals on Library Web Sites.

Time and space limitations preclude doing justice to the many other excellent sessions at Charleston this year. Brief mention can be made of two lyrical interludes: Nicholas Bambaces' explications of the making of both his books on Bibliomania and David Levy's poetic meditation on the role of documents in our lives. A rump session on Copyright with Bruce Strauch of the Citadel examined the consequences of the Tasini decision for libraries, in particular the withdrawal of free-lance articles from aggregator databases. The uncertainties and unresolved problems surrounding the archiving of digital information, and the modest progress that has been made in this area, were the subjects of a session entitled,
Adventures in Librarianship — Not Very Smart
by Ned Kraft (Serials Librarian, Ralph J. Bunche Library, U.S. Department of State) <kraftno@state.gov>

For most of my life I’ve wished I were smarter. When other boys were crafting models of B-29s and battleships, I was trying to stare down the neighbor’s cat. When my friends were obsessed with learning the constellations and spotting meteories, I was enumerating the many ways one could kill a vampire (I came up with seven, but because I’m not very smart, I didn’t write them down, so they are forever lost). When homework time came around and the neighborhood grew quiet, I wandered through the back yards kicking the heads off dandelions. Study didn’t suit me.

In college, when the topic of conversation turned to Immanuel Kant, I couldn’t. I learned to nod my head knowingly, rub my chin, and squint as if trying to untwist the complexities of pure reason, all the while wondering whether the cafeteria might be serving fish sticks for lunch.

But all adults grow to know their strengths and weaknesses. We learn to build on our strengths (mine are small talk, and an almost encyclopedic knowledge of local brew-pubs) and turn our weaknesses, wherever possible, into assets. For me, ignorance has become my premier negotiating device. Let’s say Vendor X calls and wonders if we’d like to order the new edition of the International Directory of Hokum.

“Hmm, the IDH,” I respond, “can’t say as I’ve ever heard of it.”

“Well,” Vendor X insists, “we see that your library bought the 1999 edition and we just thought…”

“Couldn’t’ve been us,” I tell him. “There’s not much call for Hokum here.”

Vendor X is desperate at this point. He recites the shipping address, billing address, account number, and the contact name on file and asks if they are correct. I wait a few moments, then respond with “Hello?”

“Yes, I’m still here. Is that information correct?”

“I thought maybe you were talkin’ to someone else.”

“So that information is NOT correct?”

“Which information is that?”

Vendor X and I go around this way for a few more minutes until I hear his voice begin to tremble and I know that both of us will be just as happy if the line inexplicably went dead. Though playing the ignorance card is not the quickest way out of a sales call, I do find that investing the time now will reduce the number of future calls significantly.

Yes, I wish I were smarter. As I age I wait patiently for the wisdom they say will come. I imagine that certainly the shear accumulation of experience, the insight gained from time’s perspective will put me in the know. Someday I’ll be able to name Beethoven symphonies, rather than recite the lyrics from television theme songs. Someday I’ll know the best years for California cabernet, not just the best bus line to downtown. But in the meantime, one must use one’s lack of talent to the best of one’s ability.

“Mr. Kraft, Emma Johnson here from Vendor Y.”

“Why?”

“Oh, yes, Vendor Y. Listen, I’m going to be in town next Thursday and I was hoping to come by to meet with you.”

“Well, just to discuss business, make sure all is well.”

“I’m fine. And you?”

“I’m fine, too, Mr. Kraft. Just hoping your calendar was free and…”

“Oh yes. My calendar was free. I picked it up at ALA from Vendor Y.”

“That would be us, Mr. Kraft.”

“You and me?”

I still hold out hope that my mind will ripen with time. Perhaps someday New Yorker cartoons will make sense to me. Maybe I’ll reach that mental pinnacle where one can intuit the source of system error messages and not just attribute them to goblins and such. One day, with any luck, I’ll understand the difference between “capital” and “capital.” Until then I must use what I lack as well as I can.

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