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Adventures in Librarianship -- First Draft

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ing information about works, rights, etc.). Together these guarantee a unique assignment to a piece of content. Naming authority prefixes are assigned by DOI Registration Agencies — the STM community’s CrossRef initiative is one such — each of which is free to offer its own business model to its relevant community. (CrossRef, for example, operates on the basis of a fee structure detailed on its Website, www.crossref.org.)

So what’s the big deal about DOIs anymore? Why should librarians and publishers care about them? First of all, DOIs have the ability to link to large quantities of metadata about a digital object; for example, bibliographic data required to cite the article in another journal, or information needed by librarians or retailers. That metadata can be dynamically updated by the assigner, yet becomes instantly available to users. It may include not just basic data such as the ISBN number but much more information, such as an author biography, for example.

Secondly, a DOI is tremendously powerful because of its multiple resolution or routing capabilities. Unlike a URL hyperlink that connects only one site to another, a DOI can call up a menu of hyperlink options simultaneously. A DOI could, for example, include hyperlinks to multiple servers where the same object is stored, or display a range of user options, such as reading an abstract, viewing an article or purchasing it in part or in its entirety.

Ultimately, DOIs could be used just like a barcode to track digital content through an entire digital distribution chain from the earliest stages of creation and production through distribution and final delivery to end user.

The technology backbone of the DOI network is the Handle System. Created by Internet co-founder Robert Kahn, the Handle resolution process transports DOI requests to the DOI directories where the DOI identifiers are stored and resolved to appropriate data such as URLs. The DOI Foundation has now added this another technical component, the structured metadata approach pioneered by the indexes (interoperability of data in e-commerce systems) initiatives and which now forms the basis for developing an international standards effort for rights management. Currently, the Handle system processes DOIs from five registration agencies: CrossRef (U.S.), Content Directions Inc. (U.S.), Enpia Systems (Korea), CAL (Australia) and Learning Objects Network (U.S.).

The impetus for the DOI began back in 1994. It was sparked by the Association of American Publishers (AAP), which was attempting to address the issue of online copyright management and protection, especially in anticipation of eBooks and future e-commerce opportunities. An AAP committee subsequently created the DOI as a numbering system to identify copyrighted content on the Internet; however, DOIs remained pretty much a theoretical concept until 1998 when an international collaborative venture set up the International DOI Foundation (www.doi.org). CrossRef became the first registration agency at the end of 1999.

The DOI numbering system can become an even more powerful control tool for researchers and budget-conscious librarians alike who use library automation systems such as ExLibris’s SFX context-sensitive reference linking. For example, SFX enables librarians to create customized links to appropriate content within the library’s e-collections regardless of where the information is hosted. In this way a library-specific local resolution tool complements the DOI global resolution tool.

Because SFX links can identify content that is already included in an electronic license, it provides full access to researchers who might otherwise be charged for an individual article, unaware of the library’s periodical subscription. This is a major boost for librarians because it helps them restore control over their budget. The ability to avoid double payment is particularly welcome with the escalating cost of electronic subscriptions, which are consuming an ever-larger share of library budgets.

In conclusion, the establishment of a unique numbering system for identifying creative content fulfills the promise of digital rights management that encryption firms pledged when they adopted the name but fell short of delivering. Digital rights management is too complex to be solved by just a locking mechanism. Encryption itself can’t begin to address such questions as: Who owns what rights? How much should different uses cost? How many uses should be licensed? And other thorny issues.

But encryption and a digital numbering system can, together, truly open up broad access to information while ensuring that creators are paid for their work — a fundamental concept upon which the continued progress of the world depends. That’s why I predict that DOIs are here to stay — and sure to spread.

Adventures in Librarianship —
First Draft

by Ned Kraft (Ralph J. Bunche Library, U.S. Department of State)<kraftno@state.gov>

DRAFT RESPONSE - PLEASE EDIT BEFORE SENDING TO THE DEAN!

To: Dean Hormer, Darkmound University
From: Dr. Samuel Prudent, Fraught Memorial Library
Subject: Space Planning

The Library’s Space Planning Committee met on 1 January to review the University’s proposed demolish? renovation of the library.

The proposed new office configuration for the technical services division, described by the architects as a “flexible and innovative approach to right-sizing the work flow,” Anyone want to guess what that means? is certainly eye catching if you are colorblind and easily bewildered. However, we believe it may violate several municipal codes. Four-by-four might be too small for a cubicle, no matter how rich the wood grain.

Though we appreciate your suggestion that the library include a sports bar televisioning the University’s basketball triumphs by last count, those triumphs numbered two, we suspect that the rare book room is not the appropriate place to offer such a service. We wonder, in fact, whether that service might duplicate the sports bar already established in the student union building.

The staff enjoyed meeting Mr. Harrison at the reception. We appreciate his skill in the business world and his willingness to fund the renovation. We hope, however, that you will find some delicate way to decline his offer to microfilm all of our monographs without making the lunacy of the idea too obvious. Again, there may be some legal

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<http://www.against-the-grain.com>
SPAM. We're all dealing with it these days. I've been intending to write a column for AITG on this topic for months. Now that I am finally researching the situation, I've found other essays expressing similar thoughts. So at the end of this column I'll cite a few so you can read them too if you care to do so.

Here's something everyone agrees about Spam: We HATE IT and wish it would go away! So, why do these people perpetuate it? We assume there are actual human beings somewhere behind this stuff and I want to know what they are thinking. SURELY they know that 99.9% of us are totally uninterested in whatever it is they are peddling. Some of the messages are unreadable anyway. And some would be totally laughable if they weren't so pathetic or offensive.

Unfortunately, the significantly offensive messages are causing major disturbance, so anti-spam legislation is being introduced by Congress. Several bills are pending. The Senate's Can Spam Act of 2001 (S.630) has the best chance of being passed, according to some observers. There is also the Wireless Telephone Spam Protection Act introduced by the House (H.R. 113). While it's true that spam as commercial speech is essentially protected by the First Amendment, consumers also have rights concerning the invasion of their privacy. Unless of course these spammers ARE Terrorists and they're trying to bring down the Internet with this garbage! Well, the al-Qaeda couldn't do much worse to annoy the American public — Spam is wasting so much time that it is becoming a major problem for the working public. There are a number of spam zapper systems available, but I would like to know what is being done to STOP the spam? These people, like stupid cell phone users (especially those talking while driving), need to realize that their actions DO have a real negative consequence and that they need to be held accountable. Spam is making junk mail and telemarketers seem tame.

I have had the same email address for 13 years. Besides that, I have been an e-list editor for about 10 years, which means that my email address is very public. Therefore I am suffering from the wrath of spam. It started slowly and then exploded about six months ago. Our campus email administrator and his colleagues continue to valiantly battle spam the best they can with the resources they have at their disposal. But it's a losing battle. And it's not just me having the problem — anyone who interacts with the Internet marketplace these days has a high probability of having their email address lifted and then distributed to nefarious spammers, no matter what is done to avoid it.

It is only natural at this point to ask — how can we get around this problem? Is there any practical way to avoid it without compromising our civil liberties? Of course, we librarians are quite aware that U.S. citizens' civil liberties are in serious jeopardy in the name of "homeland security," and to add to this problem, we are constantly targeted as "consumers" by marketplace forces we have little control over.

Forget reading the privacy policies companies issue — they can change and they do, often. I pore over my library's database licenses with a fine-toothed comb, but I do not always take the same care when shopping on the Internet. Not because I don't care, but because even if I am diligent, the next time I visit that site, they may have totally redesigned the page and often when they do, a return visitor has to start all over again and reset preferences. Here's the problem in a nutshell: every company out there is convinced that THEY are your universe. Excuse me, but you're NOT. Each family/person/household, whatever you want to call it, has a multitude of services hitting on them at the same time, whether it be through email spam, telemarketers or paper junk mail.

Think about the old days: What if you had to sign a license agreement every time you bought a piece of clothing at a local department store? Or bought toothpaste at the drug store? Or bought green peppers at the grocery store? Anytime we buy anything on the Internet, we are entering into a contractual agreement and many of these agreements are handwritten by onerous legal documents in the background. It's true that commercial enterprises have had consumer "contracts" for many years — return and exchange policies, for example. But most of these are navigable by the average consumer. And while I don't mind and might even appreciate getting a flyer in the mail from one of these stores on occasion, if we all received ads every day or every week from these places it would get annoying very quickly.

Not so when dealing with the Internet! Acquisitions and collection development librarians better than anyone, can see where this is going. Remember the stacks of publisher flyers we used to get before email? I don't get as many in paper anymore — but now my email folders are full of crazy messages that have nothing to do with my work!

So, how can you develop a fortress against spam? If your workplace or ISP isn't helping you, it should be. Most are developing or utilizing methods to block unwanted mail.

I cannot possibly describe all the "spamiasor" products on the market right now. But I can say, beware of those you get as spam! Allow your ISP (Internet Service Provider) — for personal accounts — or IT (Information Technology) department at your