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Group Therapy-How to handle offers of access to online editions of print journals when the access is by registration and password

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Webworthy — More Interesting Internet Sites

Edited by Pamela M. Rose (Web Services and Library Promotion Coordinator, Health Sciences Library, University at Buffalo) <pmrose@acsu.buffalo.edu> http://www.acsu.buffalo.edu/~pmrose

Interesting, educational Websites selected both for content and uniqueness are organized by broad subject area. In some cases, the topic of interest is part of a more general Webpage, in which case specific pointers are added to guide you to the link.

Internet sites are reviewed and annotated, then revisited just prior to publication to ensure they are still active. Please let the column 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.

Chemistry. Faster than a speeding atom, leaps heavy uranium plants in a single bound, it's Metamorpho! Welcome to A Comic Book Periodic Table, brainchild of chemistry professors John Seleque and Jim Holler of the University of Kentucky, Lexington. Elements of the periodic table link to actual comic strips discussing that element, including a description and history of the comic itself for buffs. Intended to be educational, the site also includes links to real periodic tables. http://www.uky.edu/~holler/periodic/periodic.html

Education. “Distance Learning: Promise or Threat?” by Andrew Feenberg. An interesting discussion from an experiential point of view by a Professor of Philosophy at San Diego State U. (And after reading his paper, check out Dr. Feenberg’s main page, and a Paris apartment for rent!) [Red Rock Eater News Service <reff@lists.gseis.ucla.edu> 2.15.99] http://www-rohan.sdsu.edu/faculty/feenberg/TELE53.HTM

Humor. Need to laugh at your latest deadline? Check out Oxymoron Humor Archive: Scientific Articles, a wonderful collection of science jokes. Links to Administration (a new element), The Dark Sucker Theory, and The Science of Shoes will brighten your day. http://paul.merton.ox.ac.uk/science/

Symbols. A nifty online encyclopedia of graphic symbols, searchable by the symbol’s characteristics, such as symmetric, single or double axis, soft (=curved), open or closed, and whether any of the lines in the symbol cross. Each entry gives the background and history of the symbol, who used it and for what purpose. [Red Rock Eater News Service <reff@lists.gseis.ucla.edu> 2.15.99] http://www.symbols.com/

Group Therapy —

How do you handle offers of access to online editions of print journals when the access is by registration and password?

Column Editor, Rosann Bazirjian (Florida State University)

Hey y’all out there! Do you have any gripes? Come to your therapist! Try <rbazirjian@mailer.fsu.edu> or FAX 904-644-5170.

GRIPEx: (Submitted by Anne Frohlich, Serials Librarian, McNeese State University):
How do you handle offers of access to online editions of print journals your institution subscribes to when the access is by registration and password? Do you ignore these offers, publicize them and give the password to inquirers, put the password on a Web page, other? We had received several of these and would like to know how others have handled the situation.

RESPONSE: (Submitted by John Haar, Assistant University Librarian for Collection Development, Vanderbilt Univ.):
We prefer not to handle offers of this kind and are reluctant to subscribe to journals and other databases that mandate password-controlled access. We understand that a publisher needs to protect their investment in their products, but we usually try to convince them to use Internet protocol address recognition as their security device. IP-based access is easy for us to administer and transparent to authorized users.

Password-controlled access is a particularly cumbersome security measure. If we establish an institutional password and username, we have to distribute them to authorized users. Unless the publisher also imposes IP or domain-based access controls, authorized users can share passwords and usernames with unauthorized users, who hardly serve the publisher’s interests. If the publisher insists on individual passwords and usernames, we have to publicize this to patrons, and persons who forget or lose the information will almost certainly contact us and expect us to remember for them. In both cases, we take on the responsibility of validating (and over time, revalidating) user authorizations.

For those electronic subscriptions where there is no alternative to passwords and usernames, we create a institutional password and username, if possible. We post both on a local Webpage restricted by IP address to authorized users and add a link from this site to the journal. Entries for the journal on both our Web e-journal list and our catalog point to this page. This strategy provides the security publishers demand and keeps us out of the business of managing access on an individual basis.

Some publishers will not accept institutional passwords and usernames; they require individuals to register and create their own security identification. They usually employ this process (redundantly, in our view) in tandem with IP registration. In these cases we add a note to our e-journal list that registration is necessary. Often we create an intermediate page explaining the registration procedure.

RESPONSE: (Submitted by Claire M. Ginn, N. American Consortia Mgr., MCB Univ. Press): continued on page 92

<http://www.against-the-grain.com>

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A young, para-professional colleague just mentioned starting library school. When I hear that enthusiastic, helpful, supportive self wants to tell him all the reasons why he should do it, why it's a grand profession. Then, creeping close on all fours, comes the cynical, cautious, doubtful self that wants to bite that young man's ankle, show him the error of his ways.

"You think I should matriculate? Is it worthwhile?"

He should know better, talking to me so early in the morning, before coffee and email. Not too bright. Wonder what his G.R.E.s were? But look at that fresh, hopeful face, that innocent grin ready to organize and classify the world. What should I say?

"Sure, it's a great job ... and every town on the map needs at least one librarian," I say this while my demon reminds me that many staffs are shrinking. Much of what used to be done by librarians is now done by lower paid clerks. And many libraries are selling chunks of their work to private companies with rootless, drifting, temporary help.

Then I add, getting into the swing of it, "You're, you know, part of this great academic mission." Uh-huh. The noble cause. Picking, parsing, providing the world's intellectual riches. That's true of course, but when you've just spent your day so glued to your screen that your eyes feel nummified, you might have to squint to see the noble cause. When you're hired in acquisitions to spend your days claiming overdue sci-tech titles (claims that the publisher will likely ignore), or in cataloging to code serial holdings, or in the stacks to shelve AR through EC, you might define your place in the world with a little less enthusiasm.

Just to torment myself, I blurt out: "It'd be great to have you as a fellow librarian!" Right. One more competitor in an overfull field. Just what I need. A young competitor at that, no mortgage, willing to work for peanuts and a pat on the back.

"I'm starting to twitch. I need my coffee. "You uh, you work hard, work smart, and move right up the ladder!" The devil asks, ladder? Is there still such a thing? Aren't promotions mysterious things, often unrelated to talent, work ethic, and IQ?

"And, and, there's no stopping me now: I'm stuck in the war between the good librarian and the bad...and it's a steady job, you know, calm, contemplative." Oh now you've done it, the bad one says. You've crossed the line. You're spouting outright lies.

Librarianship is a field changing so fast you have to run to keep up. And if you don't run, you're dead.

The hair on the back of my neck is standing up as I say, "Books. We're all book lovers here. That's why we g-g-g-go into this profession." That's right. And if in a few years, libraries no longer care much about books, would you still want to be a librarian? Hmm? Or would you end up counting yourself among the many lost and disappointed souls?

The kid perks up and says, "But it's so expensive," just as my left eyelid begins to twitch.

"Well worth it," I insist. "Worth every penny." Have you done the math? Have you? Do you know how long it will take to pay for a graduate education on the average starting salary? Can you spell "eternity>?"

Maybe sensing my condition, the young man smiles his innocent, sympathetic smile and says, "Thanks. I think I'll take an intro course this summer. Just try it out."

"Good. Good," I say, watching him leave and check-