Bet You Missed It -- Press Clippings -- In the News -- Carefully Selected by Your Crack Team of News Sleuths

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Bet You Missed It

Press Clippings — In the News — Carefully Selected by Your Crack Staff of News Sleuths

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A LITTLE COMPETITION COULD GO A LONG WAY
By Bruce Strauch (The Citadel)

Despite the legal kibosh put to Napster, music swapping goes on unabated. Hollywood is using all its lobbying muscle to get protection technology in PCs, but what the industry really lacks is a will to compete. Hard core music thieves will never alter their ways. But run-of-the-mill Joe Doaks will part with his money if the product is right. In a fragmented music swapping world, one-stop recording is a plus. And the music companies all have the product.


RETURNS JUST GET MORE NIGHTMARISH
by Bruce Strauch (The Citadel)

Unknown Pennie Clark Fannicello is the discounted book buyer for Costco’s massive stores and along with whoever does the job for Walmart and Sam’s Club is a big power in the publishing industry. The Clubs take up 25% of the first printing and are consulted on what should be published. But — and there would be a but — the Clubs don’t take many titles and will ditch a title in a week if it isn’t selling. That takes a whole bunch of books — often by best-selling authors — off the market as the returns take two months to get back to the publisher.

And small bookstores, enjoy the spectacle. Barnes & Noble is going ballistic over the better discounts the clubs receive.

AFFIRMATIVE PORTRAITS
by Pamela M. Rose (University at Buffalo)

It hasn’t been easy, but Nobel Laureate Dudley Herschbach has finally succeeded in getting a portrait of astronomer Cecilia Payne-Gaposchkin (1900-1979) hung in the faculty room in University Hall at Harvard. It only took 30 years and $15,000!


SECRECY, SECURITY AND SCIENCE
by Pamela M. Rose (University at Buffalo)

Campus policies on secret research are being debated at MIT and Duke among others, a consequence of the September 11th attacks and concerns about security. The clash is between homeland security suggestions that some research results be withheld and university views that restrictions are detrimental to research.


ABORIGINAL CONNECTIONS
by Pamela M. Rose (University at Buffalo)

Ethnographic research is about to become a lot easier. The Canadian government is funding the $40 million project to electronically link aboriginal collections in North America and Britain. The University of British Columbia and the Canada Foundation for Innovation hope to create unprecedented access to information for researchers.


PAPER IN THE PAPERLESS SOCIETY
by Joan Loslo (University of Northern Iowa)

Paper remains useful in the “paperless society,” partly because of its usefulness in performing cognitive tasks, in which it has advantages over computers. Special mention is given to Melvil Dewey, who thought of paper as an instrument of control of data. This is another interesting entry relating to libraries by Nicholson Baker.


MAVERICK MOVES
by Pamela M. Rose (University at Buffalo)

J. Craig Venter, maverick founder of Celera Genomics and the source of the DNA used in the race to map the human genome, is turning his genius to solving the earth’s greenhouse effect problem. In his new life Venter is creating three not-for-profit ventures, including *Institute for Biological Energy Alternatives* which will focus on “carbon sequestration,” the ability of plants and bacteria to soak up excess carbon dioxide. “Venter said he hopes to find — or, if necessary, create — an ideal organism or group of organisms that would be able to take in carbon dioxide, break it down, and produce both biological compounds and energy.”


UNIFORMITY OR FLEXIBILITY?
by Pamela M. Rose (University at Buffalo)

Updating guidelines for sharing research issued by the Royal Society in London in 1665 proved a daunting task for scientists and journal editors. Meeting at the National Academy of Sciences in February, the group failed to forge some commandments on the ethics of making data “freely available” among researchers. So although neither the “Uniform Policy on Access to Data and Materials (UPADAM)” nor the “trench-by-trench” approach was adopted, attendees did agree on a few basic principles common to both.


BIOINFOWHATICS
by Pamela M. Rose (University at Buffalo)

What exactly is bioinformatics? This paper offers an incredibly clear explanation of this field, describing the main tools of the bioinformatician and how they are being used to interpret biological data and to further understanding of disease. The summary covers the key points: “Bioinformatics is the application of tools of computation and analysis to the capture and interpretation of biological data; Bioinformatics is essential for management of data in modern biology and medicine; The bioinformatics toolbox includes computer software programs such as BLAST and Ensembl, which depend on the availability of the internet; Analysis of genome sequence data, particularly the analysis of the human genome project, is one of the main achievements of bioinformatics to date; Prospects in the field of bioinformatics include its future contribution to functional understanding of the human genome, leading to enhanced discovery of drug targets and individualised therapy.”

See — “Bioinformatics” by Arshish Batay, at http://bmj.com/cgi/content/full/324/7344/1018.

MEDIA MERGER BELLY-FLOPS
by Bruce Strauch (The Citadel)

Those conglomerates that set out to own all the world’s media have so far achieved zero synergy and some massive losses. AOL Time Warner posted a $34 billion loss for the first quarter of 2002. Vivendi Seagram Universal is $29 billion in debt with a $15 billion first quarter loss. Bertelsmann was going to build an e-commerce pipeline for book and music sales, but can’t seem to show a profit. It’s had $1 billion in Internet start-up losses. Disney movie popularity is waning down, and the overseas theme parks only make a go by hiring savvy locals as partners who take most of the profits. And Viacom-CBS is reeling from the advertising slow-down.

And of course all the merger frenzy has completely distracted them from providing quality books, movies & TV shows.


BAD HAIR DAY
by Bruce Strauch (The Citadel)

Patent-infringement lawsuits have gone up 62% over the decade, but it’s rare for an infringer to call an inventor and tell him about it. It seems a German inventor named Harry Gaus invented a safety shut-off for hair dryers that worked when it touched water which will prevent those bathtub electrocutions. Gaus got a U.S. patent and then tried to sell his device to hair dryer giant Conair. Gaus was told ‘no.’ But then he was invited around for more schmoozing. And over drinks, a Conair VP confided they were already selling a dryer that “may infringe” Gaus’ patent. And now after a two-week trial, a jury handed Gaus $28.5 million.


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

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GRIPE: Submitted by Kent Mulliner (Collection Development Coordinator, Ohio University Libraries)

I’m not sure if this is the best forum for this question, but it is a starting point. As we are struggling to add links from various A & I services to full-text articles (NLM’s Link-Out would be an example, as would be such services as SFX, and we have a nascent similar capability within OhioLINK), I wonder how other libraries (esp. academic libraries) are handling this? Is it a Serials responsibility? A Tech Services responsibility? A Reference responsibility? Other?

As modest background, providing these links usually means preparing and updating a table of accessible resources (frequently e-journals) including dates and rules for access. This table can be submitted as a full table or by filling out forms on the linking site.

As this is an activity that hasn’t really existed in the past since it deals with electronic A&I and full-text, I’m very interested in how libraries are handling it.

RESPONSE: Submitted by Harriette Hemmadi (Associate Dean of Libraries and Director of Technical Services, Indiana University, Bloomington.)

Not unlike the situation at other institutions, the evolving and multi-layered processes related to introducing and maintaining electronic resources for Indiana University Libraries patrons have evolved in a less than methodical fashion and have been shaped by a number of hands and minds.

Such has been the case whether the issue was ordering the item, signing off on the license agreement, adding the title to the Libraries’ online catalog, Web pages, or both, trouble-shooting access problems, or activating additional links to, from, and among the Libraries’ growing e-collection.

Initial linking to the resource is accomplished primarily by the Electronic Resources Acquisitions Unit (ERA), with input from collection managers and Library Information Technology (LIT), as needed. In most cases, title-level links are added to our website, even though exceptions to this practice have occurred. In the case of large aggregators, such as EBSCO and LexisNexis, links have not been added to the website for each of the individual titles due to the impact on workload. In such cases, we continue to examine and experiment with the use of vendor-supplied records.

To find the most complete listing of electronic resources, users rely on a library Web page outside of the website. This page, http://www.indiana.edu/~libej/, was developed by one of our reference librarians and is jointly maintained by Reference, ERA, and LIT staff. ERA is responsible for keeping -libej updated by submitting, through a Web form, the individual e-journal titles that are processed for the website. A Reference librarian updates the list by mass processing titles from large aggregators, fixing problems, and managing the site. LIT provides system support for the SUN server that runs the MYSQL, which serves as the database engine for the site.

In addition to links, -libej documents holdings and informational files about each database. While this site continues to perform a critical function for library users, alternatives to maintaining the site are being explored. ERA staff have been working with Serials Solutions to generate a complete listing of e-resources. Results are currently less complete and less appealing than -libej, but we continue to work with Serials Solutions and our Web Development Team to determine how best to provide this data to our users.

There is no centralized group at IU presently carrying out the functions of adding, activating, and maintaining A&I links. The person responsible for making the final decision on whether and how to activate A&I links within a given product may be whomever the vendor has first or most recently contacted, i.e., collection manager, reference librarian, or ERA staff member. As evidence of this flexibility, ERA staff has experience with vendors in arranging for the activation of A&I links, such as those within Web of Science and Current Contents. Likewise, collection managers have worked directly with vendors such as EBSCO, ABC-CLIO, PCI, and CSA.

Follow-up on the malfunctioning of the A&I internal links is often initiated by public services staff or collection managers who are most familiar with the problems involved and the day-to-day use of the resource. ERA and LIT staff are also asked to help trouble-shoot problems since the exact source of the problems is often unclear. A trouble-shooting policy was developed this fall that reflects the sense of shared responsibility and involvement. http://lib.indiana.edu/library/index.html (Select: Libraries Database Problems Process)

To study broader issues, a Linking Task Force was recently appointed. This group is comprised of representatives from several of the Libraries’ operational units, including collection management, public services, technical services, and information technology. The group is charged to review and evaluate current linking mechanisms, e.g., SFX, iTablet, and CrossRef, and recommend a timeline and plan for if and how these mechanisms should be implemented within the IU Libraries’ environment.

From our current perspective, this cross-operational approach seems to be the most effective at IU. We recognize the value of learning together and sharing both the burdens and benefits that come from exploring issues and finding solutions. While some functions may be the primary responsibility of certain areas, we have come to the realization that it is the continued intermingling continued on page 46.

HARVARD BIZ REV GOES TABLOID
by Bruce Strauch (The Citadel)

Suzie Wetlaufer, editor of the peerless Harvard Business Review, admitted first to a “close relationship” with a junior staffer who for a time was a live-in baby-sitter. Then she admitted to romancing or being romanced by uber-CEO Jack Welch in the course of an interview series. This provoked a minor mutiny by the staff and ultimately her resignation/demotion to a position of “editor-at-large.” Jack’s wife will be divorcing him and dividing his gargantuam estate.

Naturally the tabloids were all over it. Harvard’s response? Walter Kiechel, ed-dir. of Harvard Biz Pub Corp has suggested the possibility of a case study in the Biz Review.


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