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

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La Vida Springer by Bruce Strauch (The Citadel)

As American cultural imperialism is eagerly embraced around the world, a Spanish language hero from Peru’s Laura Bozzo. A specialist in unmasking adultery and provoking on-camera fist fights, she’s syndicated in nine countries and has a million viewers in the U.S. This fifty-something bottle blonde has got it all: face-lift, tummy-tuck, breast implants and a 27-year old boy toy.

Slavishly worshipful of corrupt President Alberto Fujimore, she used her power to smear his opposition going into the 2000 election. Unfortunately, the other side won. And the new Prez didn’t appreciate the special show on his illegitimate child. Now she’s off the air in Peru and tapering her show under cop surveillance while her former political pals have fled or are in prison for running death squads. But her ratings are still up.


TO PIRATE OR NOT TO PIRATE, THAT IS THE QUESTION by Bruce Strauch (The Citadel)

Peter Givler, executive director of the American Association of University Presses writes a nice article on the value of copyright in which he offers a choice historical tidbit on times of yore. In Shakespeare’s day the performance of a play threw it into the public domain. So the dramatist would keep the script locked up. Thus a traffic grew up of actors selling their memory work and scribbling in the audience jotting down notes. Now Shakespearean scholars go mad trying to figure out which is the authorized Hamlet.


TEMPEST IN THE TEXTBOOKS by Bruce Strauch (The Citadel)

With all the fifty states slashing spending, the nation’s textbook industry is filled with gloom and doom. Texas, California and Florida account for more than thirty percent of the nation’s $4 billion public school book sales.

See — “Budget woes worry textbook publishers” by Associated Press in The Post & Courier, April 26, 2003, p. 4A.

DATA ON THE BRAIN by Pamela M. Rose (University at Buffalo)

The huge quantities of data captured by neuroscience researchers have, up until now, been available only to the labs originating the studies. However, recognizing the potential, some neuroscientists have begun to store, organize and share their brain-image data in easily accessible archives. One journal caused a stir 3 years ago by requiring authors of accepted papers to deposit their raw data in the public fMRI Data Center at Dartmouth; however, some authors refuse to publish under those conditions. Peter Fox, for example, is not about to share his raw data, instead creating a repository called BrainMap which summarizes papers using a code to describe each experiment and the brain activations which may inspire authors to collaborate and then share raw data. Another approach at the University of Pennsylvania is creating specialized databases for clinical teams; BRAID (Brain Image Database) recently uncovered an association between injury to a particular brain area and the development of attention deficit disorder. And in July the Probabilistic Atlas of the Human Brain, a more realistic and flexible map than the previous “average” brain model, will be opened to the public, and possibly will eventually tie into other repositories.


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PENNY-PINCHING AND THE ART OF MAGAZINE MAINTENANCE
by Bruce Strauch (The Citadel)

Cathleen Black, President of Hearst Corp’s magazine division had no hesitation in pulling the plug on the money-bleeding Talk. In flush times, Condé Nast would lend millions to its editors to buy expensive real estate and squander hundreds of thousands on an individual cover photo. Penny-pinching at Hearst has made it the industry’s “financial powerhouse.” Black fires staffers for talking in defeatist clichés and wraps her editors in no-compete contracts that prevent predator raiding. Marie Claire, Redbook and Town & Country reported their best years ever. Even the floundering Esquire is showing a heartbeat.


MUSIC MOGULS CHOKING ON OWN BILE
by Bruce Strauch (The Citadel)

The music industry may be about to join the boneyard of companies that refused to adapt to technology. Apple Computer unveiled its online music store, and a federal judge refused to shut down music-swappers Grokster and Morpheus. The industry is devoting 90% of its energy to suing college kids while refusing to consider a new music model that gives the customers what they want. It just won’t accept that the days of the $14 CD are over.


AND...
by Bruce Strauch (The Citadel)

The managing partner of the media and entertainment practice at McKinsey & Company further blasts the music titans. Suing your customers is a “dubious approach” to winning their hearts and wallets. And the music industry has sold an outlaw mystique for so long, its “Do not steal” campaign seems like a big horse laugh.

And why are they in such a lather? Each new format — from photophone to Walkman to VCR to DVD — has ended up enriching the content creators.


THE HELL OF WORK CUBICLES
by Bruce Strauch (The Citadel)

Anyone who actually works could tell you that open office plans wreck productivity. But at last there’s an egghead study out of Dartmouth’s Tuck School of Business that officially verifies it. The workplace car filters out biz talk but is wide open to butting, badgering, badmouthing and backstabbing. Our brains scan for key words like “sex.” And nothing useful gets done.


SELF IMPORTANT LEAST IMPORTANT
by Pamela M. Rose (University at Buffalo)

Does self-citation puff up citation counts? While it may be on the rise, with chemists and astrophysicists showing the highest rate of self-referral, a Norwegian study reveals that papers with the highest self-citation rates are typically least-cited.


International Dateline — German Copyright Developments Worry Publishers
by Anthony Watkinson (Consultant, 14, Park Street, Bladon, Woodstock, Oxon, United Kingdom, OX20 1RW; Phone: +44 1993 811561; Fax: +44 1993 811067)<br><a>anthony.watkinson@btopenworld.com</a>

Column Editor's Note: In this column, once again out of Europe rather than Africa or even Australasia or Asia, I want to look at one legal development, one publishing proposition and the re-assignment of one formidable force in the library world. I think that all these news items are of interest to ATG readers, wherever they may be, but my perceptions must be influenced by my own position as a publisher. It is where I am coming from. I shall also try very hard to separate perception (comment) from fact, insofar as one can establish what the facts are. — AW

German Copyright Developments Worry Publishers

Those of us on this side of the pond do not always find the Chronicle of Higher Education very sensitive to developments in Europe and it is interesting that no university libraries in the U.K. had ongoing holdings of the journal last time I looked. However on April 14th there was a fairly sensible article by one Burton Bollag (at http://chronicle.com/free/2003/04/2003041407m.htm) entitled New German Copyright Law Pleases Scholars and Angers Academic Publishers. There is probably some doubt about the claims explicit in the title as far as the reaction of scholars in general is concerned, but Mr. Bollag is certainly right that publishers are upset. The German legal scene does upset publishers. They were upset over developments in German contract law not long ago (when it seemed that authors would have a right to renegotiate contracts). They were also upset by the activities of the State sponsored document delivery service SUBITO (http://www.subito-doc.com) that is still very much under scrutiny by U.S. publishers — and if you look at their site you can see why.

I have seen a translation of paragraph 52a of the new copyright act, which, under the heading of Communication to the Public for Tulition and Research, provides for free communication of: (Published parts of works, of works of small size, as well as individual contributions from newspapers and journals, solely for a distinct circle of persons for their own scientific research; to the extent that communication to the public is necessary for the purpose and justified for the non-commercial ends concerned.

To the lay eye there do seem to be restrictions to the exercise of this right. For those in European publishing circles, keen on preserving the balance that may or may not be inherent continued on page 100

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