Libraries, the Future, and the (World) Brain

Over the past two months, the “future of libraries” has garnered the attention of the mainstream press. On April 22 the Guardian published an education supplement, “Libraries Unleashed” (http://education.guardian.co.uk/librariesunleashed), in which editor Stephen Hoare states, “Academic libraries are changing faster than at any time in their history.” To coincide with the supplement, JISC launched a new Website in April, Libraries of the Future (http://www.jisc.ac.uk/librariesofthefuture), to discuss the changing role of the traditional (and digital) library, which formerly stood “at the heart of campus life,” and now operates in an information world dominated by Google, who “apparently offers us everything.” Several weeks later, in the June 12 issue of The New York Review of Books, Robert Darnton, Director of the Harvard University Library, opines about the “role of research libraries in the age of the Internet” in “The Library in the New Age” (http://www.nybooks.com/articles/21514). Darnton identifies two visions, “the library as a citadel” and “the Internet as open space.”

Nevertheless, Google, libraries’ major change agent, continues to steal media headlines and dominate the blogosphere, viz the cover story of the July/August issue of The Atlantic. Nicholas Carr’s “Is Google Making us Stupid?” (http://www.theatlantic.com/doc/200807/google), claims that technology affects changes in our brain, and “thanks to our brain’s plasticity,” our brains are rewiring themselves in response to the Internet. Darnton, however, a self-proclaimed “Google enthusiast,” argues that Google will not survive long enough to replace libraries, those “venerable building[s] with Corinthian columns,” much less our brains. In fact, Google cannot possibly scan “all the books accumulated over the centuries,” asserts Darnton, plus keep up with current book production. Thus, H.G. Wells’ “world brain” is safe in the academic library, apparently too massive to Googlize, and too embedded with ivy to rewire.

Ed Note: Beginning with v.13, no.1, Laura Barfield will become Editor of The Charleston Report. Laura is a 2007 graduate of Florida State University with an M.S. in Information Studies. She is a librarian at Trident Technical College, Charleston, SC, and is interested in the politics of information in the 21st century networked society.

Our thanks to Kristen DeVoe, who has been editing TCR for over a year. Kristen is moving on to a new career outside the field of library and information science.
Short Takes

Microsoft announced that it is ending a project to scan millions of books and scholarly articles and make them available on the Web. The projects, Live Search Books and Live Search Academic, were initially tied to the Internet Archive with Microsoft providing an initial investment. Microsoft’s participation in the project made it possible for 300,000 items to be publicly available on http://www.archive.org and the cancellation of the project on Microsoft’s end leaves the Internet Archive without major financial backing for future scanning projects. In total, Microsoft said it had digitized 750,000 books and indexed 80 million journal articles. The New York Times, May 24, 2008. For more information, logon to http://www.nytimes.com/2008/05/24/technology/24soft.html?ref=todayspaper.

A recent study by Primary Research Group Inc. found that sixty-nine percent of university research libraries plan to increase spending on eBooks over the next two years. This finding and others were based on a survey of 45 research libraries in countries around the world, including the United States, Canada, Australia, Germany, and Japan. To read excerpts of the report or purchase the entire document, logon to http://www.primaryresearch.com/200804281-Libraries--Information-Science-excerpt.html.

The Harvard University Law School faculty voted unanimously to make their scholarly publications Open Access. This decision makes Harvard Law School the first law school in the U.S. to commit to a mandatory Open Access policy. The law school follows in the footsteps of Harvard’s Arts and Sciences faculty who voted favorably for a similar decision regarding Open Access. Harvard Law School News Release, May 7, 2008. For more information, logon to http://www.law.harvard.edu/news/2008/05/07_openaccess.php.

Did you Know?

74 percent of Internet users choose companies/brands based on others’ customer care experiences shared online. A study from the Society for New Communications Research queried over 300 Internet users on their use of social media as it relates to customer service. Society for New Communications Research Press Release, April 22, 2008. For more information, logon to http://snrcr.org/category/press-room/press-release-archives/

By the Numbers


8,000%...A Nielson report found that Wikipedia U.S. Web traffic has increased by 8,000% in the last five years. The Nielson Company News Release, May 14, 2008. For more information, logon to http://www.nielsenmetratiings.com/pr/pr_080514.pdf.


$3.4 million...the average amount spent for content accessed online in the 2008-09 academic year by major research university libraries, with the mean amount $456,238 for all college libraries, in a survey of 75 college libraries in the United States and Canada. Survey of Academic Libraries, 2008-09 Edition. For more information and a full table of contents, logon to www.PrimaryResearch.com.

UC-Berkeley and Others Sponsor Open Access with Real Dollars

The May edition of SPARC enews profiles several university efforts to offset Open Access publishing fees. Most dramatic is UC-Berkeley’s pilot program, co-sponsored by the University Librarian and the Vice Chancellor for Research, to cover publication charges for Open-Access journals. Faculty, post-doc and graduate students can apply for up to $3,000 to cover the cost of publishing an article in an Open-Access publication. The fund also gives up to $1,500 for the cost of hybrid publications’ paid access fees, where information is freely available but the journal limits the right to redistribute. The pilot program will last 18 months or until the initial $125,000 fund runs out. Other universities are already offering similar programs. The University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill has an annual commitment of $10,000 and funds maximum awards of $1,000 per article. At the University of Wisconsin-Madison, $50,000 in seed money from the library's gift fund is available to help authors pay for Open-Access journal fees. Overseas, the University of Nottingham and the University of Amsterdam provide funds for Open-Access publication.

More details concerning the UC-Berkeley project and the full story can be found at http://www.arl.org/sparc/publications/articles/memberprofile-berkeley.shtml.
In an effort to better understand the current and possibly the future state of print subscriptions in libraries, this issue’s TCR Survey asked over 175 librarians about their library's preferred format for journal subscriptions, why they might opt to subscribe to the print version of a journal rather than electronic, if they plan to move to electronic-only subscriptions in the future, and if they could comment on the future of subscribing to journals in a print-only format.

As the majority of the respondents work in academic libraries, the responses best reflect the status of print-only journal subscriptions in that type of institution.

- Electronic-only was overwhelmingly the preferred subscription format for both new journal subscriptions and renewals.
- One half of the survey respondents indicated that their library has, or intends to develop, a plan to move to an electronic-only format for future journal subscriptions and renewals.
- Second among preferred format options for journal subscriptions and renewals is a print + electronic option.
- Few (10) respondents indicated that print-only is their library's preferred format for new subscriptions or renewals.
- Cost was the most frequently cited factor that would prompt librarians to subscribe to a journal in print only.

- Issues in the following areas were also cited as reasons that a library would prefer the print-only subscription over electronic.
  - licensing issues
  - user demand for journals in print format
  - archival concerns
  - subject area of the journal in question.

- Many respondents did not see much of a future for print-only subscriptions at their libraries. Some envisaged a move to electronic-only while others see a decline, but not disappearance, of print-only subscriptions. Sample responses regarding how this trend affects libraries include:
  - “I have no problem with online publications, as long as there is a stable URL to retrieve the content from. However, my institution would not be able to handle emailed documents that were intended for use by the entire campus community. There’s just no technological solution for us, there.”
  - “We have not received a request for this kind of publication. No doubt, it would raise work flow issues.”
  - “This is a pernicious trend that increases our overhead and in no way benefits our readers.”
  - “We will retain print subscriptions when there are no perpetual access rights, when e-only is not an option, when e-only is not full text, and when there is no electronic version.”

- Despite the overwhelming popularity of electronic-only as the future format for most journal subscriptions, some respondents indicated that they plan to continue to subscribe to print-only until some issues such as archival and licensing concerns are resolved or as long as they feel it is the preferred format for their users.

Don’t Miss This
Joseph J. Esposito has published an article titled “Open Access 2.0: Access to Scholarly Publications Moves to a New Phase” in the Spring 2008 issue of Journal of Electronic Publishing. In the article, Esposito, a frequent poster to the Liblicense-L listserv, looks at how the market determines publishing strategies and business models. Esposito writes, “The less a reader knows about a field, the more he needs the mediation of a publisher, and the less useful open access may be.” To read the entire article, logon to http://quod.lib.umich.edu/cgi/t/text/textidx?c=jep:view=text;rgn=main;idno=3336451.0011.203.

Visit the Against the Grain News Channel
http://www.against-the-grain.com/d/

This is a great new Website! ATG News Channel is free to all print subscribers who have been sent a username and password and much of it is Open Access as well. If you are a print subscriber and have not received a username and password, contact David Lyle <david@katina.info> or Katina Strauch <kstrauch@comcast.net>. Here's a list of what you will find:

- Brand new feature – Blogs for Rick Anderson, Eleanor Cook, and Katina Strauch, including a Rumors blog as well.
- E-Stories – This is an eBook that members of the community are writing together.
- Forums – This is where you can start a discussion or conversation on a specific topic of your own choosing.
- Job Bank – Post a job ad free of charge.
- Tables of Contents – Of all issues of Against the Grain (1989-2008) with many fulltext links.
- Predictions – Make a prediction of your own!

And much more. Please visit www.against-the-grain.com and see for yourself!

November 5 (Preconferences and Vendor Showcase) — November 6-8 (Main Conference), 2008

Begun in 1980, the Charleston Conference has grown from 20 participants in 1980 to over 1,100 in 2007. The Charleston Conference is “the best library conference in the world.”

Just some of the speakers for 2008 include:

Rick Anderson (University of Utah), Geoffrey Bilder (CrossRef), Nancy Eaton (Penn State University), Tony Ferguson (University of Hong Kong), Derek Law (University of Strathclyde), Deana Marcum (Library of Congress), Michael Moss (University of Glasgow), Joyce Ogburn (University of Utah), Andrew Pace (OCLC), Brian Schottlaender (UCSD), Pat Schroeder (Association of American Publishers), and John Unsworth (University of Illinois).

To suggest a panel or preconference topic visit www.katina.info/conference or contact Katina Strauch <kstrauch@comcast.net>. See you in November!

Top IT Issues in Higher Education

From the 2008 EDUCAUSE Current Issues Survey Website http://www.educause.edu/2008IssuesResources/15516

1. Security
2. Administrative/ERP/information systems
3. Funding IT
4. Infrastructure
5. Identity/access management
6. Disaster recovery/business continuity
7. Governance, organization, and leadership
8. Change management
9. E-learning/distributed teaching and learning
10. Staffing/HR management/training

Logon to http://www.educause.edu/ir/library/powerpoint/CISUM08.ppt to view the full presentation.

Collaboration Among Scientists

ResearchGATE is the first networking site designed to meet the needs of scientists. Founded by Ijad Madisch, M.D., Harvard University, Soeren Hofmayer, Medical School of Hannover (Germany), and Horst Fickenscher, Dipl.-Inf., University of Passau (Germany), ResearchGATE is “built for scientists by scientists driven by the concept of Science 2.0.” Boasting a support network of international and interdisciplinary experts and visionaries, ResearchGATE’s Partnership Program includes international research institutions and organizations. The aim of ResearchGATE is to change the paradigm of scientific publication — the dissemination of scientific results in subscription-based, printed scientific journals — and provide a new platform to enhance the means of collaboration among scientists. For further information, logon to https://www.researchgate.net/application>Login.html.

Check it Out

Publishers Communication Group (PCG) has released the results of a telephone survey entitled “E-Books in 2008. Are Librarians and Publishers on the Same Page?” Among the key findings are the following:

• 43% of the librarians contacted anticipate an increase of their budget for eBooks for 2008 compared to last year; 1% expect this part of their budget to decrease. In most cases, these funds will be allocated from the book budget.

• 85% of the librarians contacted purchase eBooks as part of a collection and 45% currently acquire individual titles.

• For 78% of the respondents, the priority is placed on purchasing frontlists before backlists from publishers.

For more information and to read the entire report, logon to http://www.pcgplus.com/Newsletter/Issue10/E-Book_Survey_Results.pdf.

Mark your Calendars

The 101st American Association of Law Libraries Annual Meeting & Conference will take place July 12 - 15, 2008 in Portland, OR at the Oregon Convention Center. The theme for this year’s meeting is “Energize * Explore * Evolve!” For more information, logon to http://www.aallnet.org/events/.

74th IFLA General Conference and Council will be August 10-14, 2008 in Quebec, Canada. The theme for this year’s meeting is “Libraries without borders: Navigating towards global understanding.” For more information, logon to http://www.ifla.org/IV/ifla74/index.htm.

The 11th Fiesole Collection Development Retreat will be held at the University of Strathclyde, Glasgow, Scotland, from July 23-25, 2009. The theme of the Retreat is “Reshaping Library Content: Building e-Collections and Accessing Global Resources.” Registration Information will be available beginning this summer. Watch for details.

Coming in Future Issues

• eBook Packages
• News from the Publisher’s Perspective
• Library Database Evaluation Criteria