

Cites & Insights

Crawford at Large

Sponsored by YBP Library Services

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Bibs & Blather

Sponsored by YBP Library Services

That's the big news for this issue. Thanks to YBP Library Services, *Cites & Insights* won't be running more "monetization" nonsense. Nor will *C&I* be going away. As discussed in the PERSPECTIVE that follows, this issue is the end of one era—and the beginning of another. I hope to see strong program and conference reporting. I plan to strengthen the ongoing portions of *C&I*.

Many readers probably know YPB already, as your library's book vendor. Their headquarters is Contoocook, New Hampshire, where the company was founded in 1971, and their office in the UK, where they do business as Lindsay & Howes, is located in the town of Godalming, outside of London. From those two sites they provide books and supporting technical services, alongside access to their GOBI database, to many academic libraries in North America and around the world. YBP also sponsors *E-Streams*, an online publication for sci/tech book reviews edited by Bob Malinowsky of the University of Illinois at Chicago. The YBP website is at www.ybp.com.

YBP Library Services approached me with a reasonable offer. The arrangement is straightforward, satisfactory, and poses no danger to my editorial independence or varying plans. (I'm no more likely to write hard-hitting editorials on library book suppliers than I am to start doing in-depth coverage of integrated library systems or mean-spirited commentary on regional library networks. Those just aren't areas that I'm either knowledgeable about or prepared to take on.)

YBP Library Services will have no say in the editorial policy of *Cites & Insights*. I've invited them

to contribute a "word from the sponsor" from time to time, although I don't expect to see many of those. It's a pure sponsorship situation, not the only one from YBP Library Services. Thanks to YBP Library Services, I won't be hunting for a new paid writing gig. For now and the immediate future, *Cites & Insights* will be—from my perspective—the most important writing I do in the library field.

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Special thanks go to those who saw fit to contribute donations over the past year. The level of donations convinced me that free-will offerings would not yield enough revenue to give *Cites & Insights* priority over finding paid replacements for writing I no longer do, but I do appreciate each donation. That channel is now closed: I've removed the links from the *C&I* home page.

Conference Reports and Conference Blogging

Last month's *Cites & Insights* began with an invitation for conference and program reporters. Here are portions of that Perspective, repeated as a reminder and a more immediate invitation:

Beginning January 2005—specifically, beginning with the 2005 ALA Midwinter Meeting—*Cites & Insights* is adding a new feature. I'm inviting people to report on discussions and programs that relate to the broad foci of *Cites & Insights*: The intersections of libraries, policy, technology and media—and the people they serve.

I'll publicize this invitation as widely as possible—on the lists that currently publish new-issue announcements, on LITA-L, on library-related writing lists that I know of, as a *LISNews* story and in my journal there, via email "press releases" to *American Libraries*, *Library Journal*, and a handful of others, and (with

luck) by readers forwarding the notice to other lists whose subscribers might be interested. Publicity will start in mid-December or early January. I'll repeat a shorter invitation periodically here and on a few lists (probably in conjunction with new-issue notices).

I hope to see enough reports from ALA Annual and certain other major conferences to justify separate issues of *Cites & Insights*. When there are fewer reports, they'll appear in special sections of regular *Cites & Insights* issues.

I'm not planning to reduce my own contributions to *C&I* (although more brevity wouldn't hurt). I am hoping to make this a welcome home for new (and old) voices and a source of prompt, rich program reports.

This is somewhat experimental. If the experiment results in a trickle of reports that aren't very interesting, I'll drop it. If it results in so many reports that I don't have time to edit them, I'll look into some other mechanism.

See *C&I* 4:14 for the rest of the discussion—or go to <http://cites.boisestate.edu/reporting.htm>, where I provide guidelines for what's wanted, what's needed, and how it should be provided.

Conference blogging seems to be catching on within the library field. That's a good thing (as long as you're blogging after the program's finished). The Public Library Association will have a coordinated effort during ALA Midwinter in Boston with Steven M. Cohen actively involved. As a long-time LITA member, I'm a bit appalled that LITA hasn't taken the lead in this area, but that's another discussion. I applaud Cohen, PLA, and those involved.

I believe that post-conference reporting serves a different function than conference blogging. At least I hope that's the case—and I'm *not* inviting people to submit cumulated blog entries as program or conference reports. (If I recognize the situation, I'll reject such reports.)

Weblog entries should offer immediacy and first impressions of a program. Conference reports for print journals (including *Cites & Insights*) should offer perspective and more thoughtful writing. Additionally, the print accumulation of several reports from a conference (when that's appropriate), in different voices, should offer something to journal readers that weblogs can't provide.

I could be wrong. Maybe conference blogging is all anyone needs—or maybe it's all anyone's willing to do. If that's true, we'll find out soon enough.

Blogging and Ethics

Since I don't write a weblog (the *LISNews* journal doesn't count), I should not be discussing blogging ethics. But Karen Schneider's a long-time friend and

she has posted a couple of entries on blogging and ethics at *Free range librarian*—and, as you might expect, drawn some heat as a result. I'm noting this here because Karen's most recent postings were in connection with the PLA effort at Midwinter.

Karen feels strongly that librarians need to be cautious when they blog and that they need to be sure they're not misrepresenting facts, confusing opinion with reporting, failing to reveal sources, leaping to conclusions, or generally “blogging first and asking questions later.” She feels that the “cloak of commentary” doesn't make it reasonable to ignore normal ethical boundaries—and that for librarian bloggers, there's the added consequence that (to some extent) their blogs reflect on librarianship. “You know how you hate it when we're represented as frumpy, meek shushers? I'm with you, but I hate it even more when our own kind represents us as clueless, sloppy, and uninterested in the ethical issues related to the world of information and how it is presented.”

Liz Lane Lawley, also a long-time friend, objects that blogs are a medium, not a genre, which makes a single set of ethical guidelines as problematic as a single set of ethical guidelines for book writing. This is also a good point. As Karen points out in a later post, Liz falls into the better of two categories of those who object to ethical guidelines: “those who need them the least.” The problem is those who need them *the most*—and these bloggers will either denounce guidelines or simply ignore them.

Karen paints herself in the awkward middle—people who want to do the right thing but don't always instinctively know what that is. Boy, can I sympathize! For those of us in that great middle section, guidelines can help. You can choose to ignore a guideline, but making that choice requires thinking about the consequences. (Karen also suggests that a universal set of guidelines *might* apply to all sorts of books. I've got to think about that one.)

Steven M. Cohen offered his own comments at *Library stuff*, specifically dealing with the PLA blogging effort. “Since we will be blogging for an organization, there **will be** guidelines for what is published.” Cohen believes that blogs for an organization or association should have guidelines and a mission. The mission for the PLA blog will be “to get the national library associations in the United States excited about blogging...[and]...to get thoughts, ideas, and (yes) commentary out to those who couldn't attend the meeting (but want to play along at home) and to put a different face to the confer-

ence.” The guidelines “will not hold back the creativity and freedom of the blogger.” Cohen believes (and I suspect Karen agrees) that guidelines don’t require “stomp[ing] on the blogging ideology that ‘I should be able to write whatever I want to.’”

I believe bloggers who presume to discuss matters beyond their own diary should maintain some ethical awareness, just as should *anyone* writing non-fiction. Perhaps guidelines would help. Perhaps not. I don’t see any serious distance between Karen and Steven on this issue. Should I have a written set of ethical guidelines for *Cites & Insights*? Perhaps. I’m not sure my ethical compass is as certain as Liz Lawley’s appears to be. I do know that ethics concern me and that I try my best.

Most librarians behave ethically most of the time. I trust your reporting will be as ethical as your blogging should be.

What’s Not Here: Google’s Library Project

You haven’t heard about Google’s grand plan to digitize all the books at Stanford and Michigan, together with many of the books at Oxford, Harvard and NYPL? I trust you enjoyed your long vacation: I can’t imagine how else you avoided this Big Story.

I’m not going to offer a formal commentary on the project. That’s mostly because I’m already seeing more commentary on library blogs and lists than I believe the *announcement* of a project deserves. It’s also partially because all of the participants are RLG members. I wish them all well and I wish the project well. I believe the project will be good for libraries. I know enough people at the participating institutions to be pretty sure that it will be. I will offer three points that might be worth considering:

- Announcement and successful completion are two different things. We don’t yet know what’s really involved here, exactly what will eventually be available and when, or what it will mean.
- Swamping—losing the stuff you’re really looking for in a swamp of irrelevant results—has become more of a problem as Google and other open web indexes grow. It was most obviously a problem in the first week or so of Amazon’s “search in the book,” when you couldn’t find known items (until they tweaked the algorithms). Swamping (if it’s my term, I’m proud to claim it) is likely

to be an enormous problem in the Google book project: Not insoluble, but enormous.

- Google’s project spells doom for neither libraries nor print books. The sky is not falling, now or six years from now. Your library probably has a lot of post-1922 books, none of which can be made freely and wholly available on Google without publisher agreement. Your library should do a lot more than just hand people books one page at a time. Publishers that have posted books online have generally found that print sales increase as a result. The Google project has every chance of increasing library use and sales of print books. If I had to bet, I’d bet on that outcome as a *success* for the Google project.

If I honor my promise to do a ten-year review of *Future Libraries: Dreams, Madness & Reality*, the Google project will influence that review. Stay tuned.

Perspective

The End of the Experiment

What you have here is an experiment, one that will probably continue for at least a year. *Trailing Edge Notes* (T.E.N. or 10) is a newsletter-within-a-newsletter: five not terribly serious pages at the end of *Library Hi Tech News*. Everything in *T.E.N.* represents Walt Crawford’s views and writing.

That’s how “this stuff” began, in issue 120 of *Library Hi Tech News* (the second issue for 1995). With *Library Hi Tech News* 149 (January/February 1998), the still-experimental newsletter-within-a-newsletter became *Crawford’s Corner* and expanded to eight and, later that year, ten pages. The final *Crawford’s Corner* appeared in *Library Hi Tech News* 178 (vol. 17, no. 10), December 2000.

Which brings us to the following—also in December 2000:

Just for amusement, let’s assume that you haven’t read *Crawford’s Corner* or *Trailing Edge Notes*, my “newsletters-within-a-newsletter” that appeared in the 59 issues of *Library Hi Tech News* from March 1995 through December 2000.

If that’s true, you must be wondering what this is all about. The answer, of course, is that it’s about 24 print pages.

Beyond that, definitions get a little fuzzy. The other working title for this was “Crawford at Large: Libraries, Media, Technology & Stuff.” Both titles say something about what’s here.

So began *Cites & Insights: Crawford at Large* (December 2000), the only issue with no volume designation. The website continued to identify this as an experiment. As time went on, I flagged the likely stopping point by saying I planned to do this for “at least four years and one issue.”

With this issue, I’ve reached that point. This completes ten years of doing “this stuff,” an experiment bearing three different names, ever-evolving editorial philosophy, and two very different distribution systems.

I hereby declare the experiment over. The zine called *Cites & Insights: Crawford at Large* comes to an end with this issue.

The Beginning of the Journal

I started calling *Cites & Insights* a “zine” because it isn’t a newsletter, it’s certainly not a blog, and it fits my own historic definition of a zine (based on the old days of science fiction): a nonprofessional or semi-professional periodical based on one person’s (or small group’s) enthusiasms and reflecting that person’s style.

Apparently, the word “zine” now implies a literary or artistic zine, from what I see elsewhere. The circle that’s being drawn appears to leave *C&I* out.

Additionally, since YBP Library Services has agreed to sponsor this publication, it really doesn’t count as a pure “zine” effort: At best, it’s a “semi-prozine” (again using science fiction terminology).

Finally, after ten years I find the word “experiment” odd for this publication. While it’s never quite been a monthly, that’s because each volume has had *more* than 12 issues. The gap between actual issue publication dates has rarely been more than four weeks, never more than six weeks.

I’m coming back to a modified version of the alternate working title. From now on, I think of *Cites & Insights* as a journal of libraries, policy, technology and media. (Note that “policy” has replaced “stuff.” Stuff’s still there, to be sure.) The banner will reflect that change beginning next issue. I’ll keep “Crawford at Large” as the formal subtitle because I don’t want to change ISSNs. The common title and running footer will continue to be *Cites & Insights*. The masthead will also change to say something like, “*Cites & Insights: Crawford at Large* (ISSN 1534-0937), a journal of libraries, policy, technology and media, is published by Walt Crawford, a senior analyst at RLG. Volume 5, Number 2, Whole Issue 58.”

I’m using “journal” in the lower-case-j sense: among other meanings, a periodical devoted to mat-

ters of current interest. Some issues may be entirely my writing; some may be entirely conference and program reports; some will be mixtures.

How long will this journal continue? It’s already survived longer than many (most?) new periodicals. I’m aiming for a minimum of ten years (that is, six more years), but that’s neither a promise nor a limit. “As long as I’m still enjoying writing and you’re still interested in reading the results” may be too pat an answer; it’s possible that *Cites & Insights* could evolve to the point where I could turn it over to someone else when I’m finally too old, tired, or boring to keep doing it.

More Self-Indulgence

As you’ll see elsewhere in this issue, I’ve gone back through the 115 issues that made up the experiment, pulling a paragraph or so from each one and adding new commentary as appropriate. (The first half appears this issue, the second half next issue.) Where it makes sense, I pulled out notes on trends and new products. Does that ten-year miscellany form the basis for coherent comments at Midwinter’s LITA Top Tech Trends discussion? Your guess may be better than mine.

Meanwhile, on with the show. The zine is dead; long live *Cites & Insights*, a journal of libraries, policy, technology and media. Please submit program and conference reports if you believe they’re appropriate and worth other people’s time.

Library Access to Scholarship

2004 saw much debate and some progress on library access issues and scholarly access in general. This roundup begins with a fairly solid step forward for scholarly access, followed by an apparently-faltering step and a variety of notes and papers.

NIH: Moving Forward

Quoting from Peter Suber’s *NIH open-access plan, frequently asked questions* (www.earlham.edu/~peters/fos/nihfaq.htm) as downloaded October 14, 2004:

On July 14, 2004, the U.S. House Appropriations Committee adopted a set of recommendations for next year’s federal budget. One key recommendation would have the effect of providing open access (OA) to articles based on research grants from the Na-

tional Institutes of Health (NIH). Here are the most important specific provisions from the report:

- Articles based on NIH-funded research must be deposited in PubMed Central (PMC) at the time they are accepted by a peer-reviewed journal for publication.
- PMC will provide open access to the article six months after the article is published.
- The committee directs NIH to submit a plan by December 1, 2004, to implement this recommendation in FY2005.

On September 3, 2004, the NIH released its plan, *Enhanced public access to NIH research information*, for a 60 day period of public comment ending on November 2.

On September 17, 2004, the NIH published the same text in the *Federal Register*, for another 60 day period of public comment ending on November 16.

I quote from Suber's FAQ because it's a detailed commentary on the NIH plan and because (as I noted in a September 2004 LIBRARY ACCESS TO SCHOLARSHIP) the NIH plan had slipped entirely under my faulty radar until late August. I devoted two pages in *Cites & Insights* 4:13 (November 2004) to action and discussion on the plan. It was attacked by some editors as "socialized science," supported by many within the scientific community, and misinterpreted as most OA proposals are misinterpreted.

The original House report called for immediate open access if the NIH paid any part of the costs of an article's publication. NIH's draft dropped that provision. The proposal isn't true OA, given the six-month embargo. It's a centralized, delayed modification of green (OAI) access. According to Suber's FAQ, *no* journal has said it would refuse to accept articles based on NIH-funded research. A preliminary estimate of NIH costs to carry out this initiative comes to \$2.5 million, "about 0.008% of the NIH's [\$28 billion] annual budget." (That's American billions: thousands of millions.)

The NIH plan is a modest step. That didn't stop publishers from raising objections. The PSP prepared a template "grassroots memo" for members to use opposing the NIH plan. Peter Suber's comment (*Open Access News*, October 22, 2004): "[The template] must be intended for external constituents, since it makes claims about the NIH and its OA plan that the NIH will know to be false."

The template begins by calling the NIH plan "the proposed radical new policy" and includes some highly questionable assertions. Six-month-deferred access will cause people to cancel subscriptions, which will force publishers to institute author fees. Loss of overseas subscriptions will jeopardize U.S.-based journals and "ultimately could force U.S. tax-

payers to foot the bill for open access by readers around the world, and will provide a windfall benefit for those corporations and institutions that now willingly purchase and benefit from (but do not themselves produce and publish) original research." Further, the NIH has not "clarified" the cost of "implementing this government-operated repository." Except that PubMed Central has *already* been implemented and NIH has offered an estimate of the costs of the initiative. The template goes on to claim that the issue is not access. It adds a set of "questions the NIH has not addressed," most of which appear to be typical anti-OA red herrings. For example, one bullet raises issues of academic freedom and the authors' right to select journals for publication—neither of which is affected by the NIH proposal. Another bullet comes close to stating as simple fact that access with a six-month embargo *after publication* will put societies out of business and force adoption of author-paid publishing. Somehow, "journals with longer publication cycles" will be *especially* damaged by a clock that starts ticking *after* publication. It's an astonishing document, encouraging PSP members to proliferate a series of bad arguments.

The Association of Research Libraries (ARL) issued its own FAQ (signed by Prue Adler, associate executive director) on October 25, 2004. (www.arl.org/info/openaccess/ARLFAQ.html) This FAQ explicitly says the NIH proposal "is not an open access proposal." The brief FAQ (two print pages) is clear and to the point, and certainly answers most questions raised in the PSP "grassroots" template. Four days later, Adler wrote to NIH on behalf of ARL, expressing the association's strong support for the proposal, focusing on six issues, "how the proposal: reflects the way scientists conduct research and discovery; allows some libraries to provide additional resources to their users; creates an archival resource for biomedical literature funded by NIH; provides significant protections to commercial and not-for-profit publishers; follows congressional and administration policy; and expands and improves public access to biomedical information."

The *SPARC open access newsletter* 79 [SOAN] (November 2, 2004) begins with a "brief update on NIH plan." In that essay, Peter Suber predicted that the conference committee to reconcile FY2005 appropriations "will leave the House recommendation intact" and notes that NIH will be free to adopt the plan in any case—unless the committee approves language opposing the plan.

Elsevier provided its own response to NIH in mid-November, one that seems to mirror the PSP template in suggesting dire threats to the “finely balanced, high quality system [of STM publishing] that works well” if a six-month access policy is established. Instead, Elsevier calls for a 15 to 18 month “guideline” and urges NIH “not to make any requests of authors within the first year after publication.” This is exceedingly odd given that Elsevier claims to support green OA *immediately* upon publication—although, admittedly, in institutional repositories rather than the centralized PubMed Central.

Also in November, the International Association of Scientific, Technical & Medical Publishers released a comment opposing the NIH plan, raising the same set of questionable objections. Meanwhile, Nobel laureates, more than 600 patient advocacy organizations, SPARC, ALA, and many others outside the STM publishing industry sent expressions of support.

On November 20, the appropriations conference committee acted. As cited in *SOAN* 80 (December 2, 2004), this language was included:

The conferees are aware of the draft NIH policy on increasing public access to NIH-funded research. Under this policy, NIH would request investigators to voluntarily submit electronically the final, peer reviewed author's copy of their scientific manuscripts; six months after the publisher's date of publication, NIH would make this copy publicly available through PubMed Central. The policy is intended to help ensure the permanent preservation of NIH-funded research and make it more readily accessible to scientists, physicians, and the public. The conferees note the comment period for the draft policy ended November 16th; NIH is directed to give full and fair consideration to all comments before publishing its final policy. The conferees request NIH to provide the estimated costs of implementing this policy each year in its annual Justification of Estimates to the House and Senate Appropriations Committees. In addition, the conferees direct NIH to continue to work with the publishers of scientific journals to maintain the integrity of the peer review system.

Peter Suber notes that this language says NIH would “request” deposit of works and deposit would be “voluntary.” That’s not the original mandate, but the draft plan promises to monitor deposits and could remove future funding from those who do not deposit articles. “The conferees said nothing to discourage that kind of monitoring or that consequence of non-compliance.” Suber also notes that the concern in working with publishers is “to maintain the integrity of the peer review system,” not profits, surpluses, or the existing publication model. “Despite

intense lobbying by publishers, the conferees did not oppose the plan, delay it, or modify it. They did not even remain silent about it...”

Suber goes on to say that we won’t see results immediately, given the way NIH funding works. Nonetheless, “this is the largest single step toward free online access in the history of the OA movement,” given that NIH is the world’s largest funder of medical research. (That same issue of *SOAN* includes three pages of links to comments and stories on the NIH plan.)

That’s where things stand now. Barring surprises, the world’s biomedical literature should become significantly more accessible beginning late next year. It’s not a revolution, but it is the single largest evolutionary step to date. (It’s worth noting that the Wellcome Trust, a major research-funding agency, plans to mandate OA archiving on a similar six-month-delay basis.)

UK: Standing Still

Here’s one I did cover to some extent: Hearings by the UK’s House of Commons Science and Technology Committee on STM publishing, resulting in a set of recommendations. Notes on the hearings appear in a LIBRARY ACCESS PERSPECTIVE in *Cites & Insights* 4:7 (June 2004), pages 12-20. The committee issued an impressive report from those hearings, *Scientific publications: Free for all?*. I offered brief notes from the 107-page document, some of the 82 recommendations, and a few responses in *Cites & Insights* 4:11 (September 2004), pages 13-16.

The UK report also called for green OA with an independent study on the virtues of gold OA. While perhaps more radical than the modest NIH proposal, the UK report was not revolutionary or designed to overturn Elsevier and its friends—but it might as well have been, for all the reports and the response. The government did not receive the report with open arms. As reported at *NewScientist.com* on November 4, “The UK government has rejected calls from an influential committee...” The government response appeared to dismiss OA models. Members of the committee were unhappy. Chair Ian Gibson said, “The [department of trade and industry] is apparently more interested in kowtowing to the powerful publishing lobby than it is in looking after the best interests of British science.” The UK Publishers Association and Reed Elsevier both welcomed the government response. (Elsevier spokeswoman Catherine May added, “Obviously we do have enormous sympathy for the position of academic

librarians whose budgets are under pressure.” Under pressure by no publisher more than Elsevier, to be sure.) The government response says, “The government is not aware that there are major problems in accessing scientific information, or that there is a large unsatisfied demand for this.” The government also rejected the committee’s call for an independent government-supported study into OA publishing.

Richard Wray put it this way in a November 9 analysis in *The Guardian*:

The government yesterday threw away an opportunity to carry out a thorough review of the way scientific research is disseminated. Instead of engaging constructively with the Commons science and technology committee and assessing the potential impact of moves toward “open access” to research, the government—led by the department of trade and industry—sided with the traditional subscriptions-based journal publishers.

Wray faults the government for failing to “properly read the report” and says the response “seems to have been based on a non sequitur.” He describes the two OA routes briefly and notes that the committee primarily recommended green OA (self-archiving) with a coordinated network of repositories—but the government’s rationale for dismissing self-archiving was based on arguments against gold (“author-pays”) OA publishing.

Malcolm Morgan (a media analyst at Investek [UK]) celebrated the government response in a *Media Week* [UK] piece. His thoughtful comment: “Hurray! The needless undermining of a robust UK industry ultimately serves no one.” He notes that the response “goes out of its way to praise Reed Elsevier—the ‘Evil Empire’ of the open-access debate—for the level of investment being made in digital development for the industry...” He suggests that academic publishers ought to “tread carefully and not trumpet...price increases so publicly in future.” Not that Elsevier and the other big UK publishers shouldn’t continue to gouge libraries, to be sure (that’s just healthy profit-taking): they should just be less open about it.

SOAN 80 discusses the government response with Peter Suber’s usual clarity and balance. “The short way to describe [the response] is that the government rejected every recommendation that required practical action or funding even if it approved some of the report’s goals ‘in principle.’” To Suber, “the true setback is that the primary recommendation for OA archiving was dismissed without any serious effort to respond to the committee’s evidence and arguments.” Meanwhile, JISC and other gov-

ernment agencies may move forward with OA-related initiatives already in place—but the chance for a larger-scale investigation and coordinated repository creation was lost.

Suber also compares the UK and US outcomes and offers reasons the outcomes were so different:

(1) National licenses in the UK spread journal access more uniformly throughout the country. Even though the absolute level of access is insufficient, there is less inequality of access and there may be less institutional interest in finding alternatives to the current subscription process.

(2) In the US, the NIH awards research grants and sets policy about how or under what terms to award research grants. In the UK these functions are separate. Hence it’s easier for the NIH to follow the natural interests of research funders in OA. Insofar as the UK Research Councils have been given an opening to adopt a similar policy, we can be optimistic that they will do so.

(3) The major publishers of subscription-based journals are headquartered in the UK (Elsevier, Taylor & Francis, Blackwell, and if you count Candoover/Cinven, then also Springer and Kluwer) and have more lobbying clout there than in the US. It’s not clear how far this clout would have gone if everyone had appreciated the distinction between OA archiving and OA journals.

I have the committee’s “fourteenth report,” which brings together the government’s response and those of five other bodies, together with a few conclusions and recommendations. It’s 66 pages long; you can find it readily enough on the internet. I’m too lazy to go through the government response (36 pages) in any detail. It is worth noting that the Consortium of University Research Libraries (CURL) and Society of College, National and University Libraries (SCONUL) response “strongly support[s] the general thrust of [the committee’s] recommendations” and expresses specific support for many of the recommendations. A fairly long JISC response points out relevant actions that JISC has identified and intends to address, including steps to establish more institutional repositories and explore digital preservation. JISC is also funding “a study of the advantages and disadvantages of a range of different publishing models.” Full disclosure: Members of CURL are also members of RLG, my employer; thus, since RLG is a membership organization, I could be said to work indirectly for CURL members.

Short Pieces

A press release from Thomson Scientific notes their new white paper on OA journals in the ISI citation databases. The Web of Science includes 237 OA

journals as of November 1, 2004—not a big chunk of the 8,700 journals in the databases, but roughly 20% of all OA journals. Since Thomson’s staff adds only about 10 to 12% of all journals evaluated (of 2,000 evaluated each year—are there really *that* many new refereed journals each year?), that’s a good showing.

Another press release, this time from BioOne, notes that BioOne is adding journals to the LOCKSS Program with the entire BioOne collection available within the next year. The release notes that more than 80 libraries and 50 publishers are already involved in LOCKSS.

SOAN #79 (noted above) includes a good essay, “Journals: please post your access policies.” Suber asserts (correctly) that OA isn’t going to disappear, even though models used for OA may change and some forms may not be sustainable. Given that access issues will continue, he suggests one sensible step: “Journals should post the details of their current access policies on their web sites.” He then goes on to detail why that’s a good idea and how short some journals fall of doing so now. Yes, access policies change—but changing one web page shouldn’t be that difficult. It’s a long, detailed, well-written discussion, worth reading in the original—particularly if you’re a journal publisher.

“Washington DC principles for free access to science.” www.dcprinciples.org.

I’d heard about the DC principles but hadn’t seen the slick sheet until the Charleston Conference. “The Washington DC Principles is a commitment from 50 (and growing) medical/scientific societies and publishers to provide free access and wide dissemination of published research findings.”

The sheet claims that these publishers provide “what has been called the needed ‘middle ground’ in the increasingly heated debate between those who advocate immediate unfettered online access to medical and scientific research findings and advocates of the current journal publishing system.” The central section contains the seven one-sentence principles, in one case augmented by a set of sub-points; to the left are covers from 100 journals published by those behind the principles.

“Middle ground” is an interesting claim for this group, since the members defend the “current journal publishing system” with considerable vigor. Thus principle 6: “We strongly support the principle that publication fees should not be borne solely by researchers and their funding institutions...” Then

there’s principle 7: “As not-for-profit publishers, we believe that a free society allows for the co-existence of many publishing models...”—but that comes right after a principle that directly attacks the alternative model being proposed. I guess the societies mean “many publishing models as long as they’re all the traditional model.” Principle 3, the one with sub-points, lists the DC folks’ idea of “free access”: Some articles are free online immediately; full text is available after some delay; content is free to (some) low-income nations; articles are “free online through reference linking between these journals”; and content is available for indexing by major search engines. The only significant item in that list is the second, which commits the publishers to free online access “within months of publication.” How many months? That’s up to the publishers.

Apart from the hypocrisy inherent in the pairing of principles 6 and 7, the most difficult principle here is #2: “As not-for-profit publishers, we reinvest all of the revenue from our journals in the direct support of science worldwide, including scholarships, scientific meetings, grants, educational outreach, advocacy for research funding, the free dissemination of information for the public, and improvements in scientific publishing.” In other words, “we use our publishing profits to support the organization.” Not to sound like a broken record, but the only sane librarian response has to be: It’s unreasonable to demand that academic libraries foot the bill for those other society activities.

Yes, I know, most society publishers aren’t the villains in this drama; many society publishers keep prices as low as possible and expect only modest profits. That doesn’t change the facts.

Efron, Bradley, “Are print journals obsolete?” *Amstat News*. Downloaded October 15, 2004. (www.amstat.org/publications/amsn/)

Efron, president of the American Statistical Association, ponders the values of print journals and dangers to their continued existence. Although he finds himself using online versions more these days, he believes that key print journals (such as *JASA*, ASA’s primary journal) serve functions that pure ejournals may not do as well.

I’m sympathetic to this argument since Efron mentions browsing (still easier and faster in a set of print volumes) and pure ease of reading. He notes that the “worst factor” of print journals (page limitations) may be a boon to the profession as a whole

by causing key journals to act “as magazines that direct our field’s attention rather than just report it.” He wonders about “grade inflation” in ejournal refereeing, but doesn’t dwell on that or attack ejournals.

He does quote one silly statement from a journal editor regarding the NIH plan (that nobody would purchase subscriptions to a journal if the papers were available for free six months later), but admits “Maybe that’s overblown.” But he does raise legitimate questions about losing print journals—a loss that’s not automatically inherent in any flavor of OA. ASA apparently isn’t a villain: its per-page cost is “less than one-tenth as much as some of the commercial journals.”

In the end, Efron doesn’t expect all print journals to disappear, “but they may have to improve to survive.” An interesting perspective.

Gustafson, Elyse, “IMS journals on arXiv.” Downloaded November 12, 2004. (www.imstat.org/publications/arxiv.html).

Here’s another statistics association (Institute of Mathematical Statistics) that’s made a move ASA’s considering (as noted in Efron’s piece): Posting all IMS articles in their entirety on arXiv. This two-page piece, in the form of an FAQ, briefly describes arXiv, explains why IMS has established the new policy, notes the slight differences between the arXiv versions and published journal pages, and discusses other factors. IMS has had a green OA policy for some time; the new policy makes arXiv placement part of the publication process. One answer says IMS doesn’t believe it will lose many subscriptions by placing all of its journal articles on arXiv. The FAQ encourages authors publishing in *other* journals to “look carefully at publisher’s contracts, and modify them as necessary to retain the right to post your own versions of the paper on your own homepage, or, what is much better for long-term access, in an open access digital repository such as arXiv.”

Articles

I’m not offering commentary or summaries. I’m just noting one article and a set of articles (the latter being freely available—but only through August 2005) that many of you will find worth reading.

Gatten, Jeffrey, N., and Tom Sanville, “An orderly retreat from the Big Deal: Is it possible for consortia?” *D-Lib Magazine* 10:10 (October 2004). (www.dlib.org).

Gatten is Dean of Library and Information Resources at California Institute of the Arts; Sanville is Executive Director of OhioLINK. This discussion notes OhioLINK’s “big deals,” their methodology for retreating from such deals, and the possible impacts of such retreats. Carefully done, worth reading.

Serials Review 2004, special issue on Open Access: Issues, ideas, and impact

David Goodman served as issue editor for this collection of articles, working with Connie Foster to make it happen. The articles come from some of the biggest names on several sides of the OA discussion; this is not a simple set of calls for “OA now.” I downloaded 11 of the twelve articles with plans to comment, but there’s just too much here—and you can read it all yourself. In all, it’s pages 257 through 328 of *Serials Review* volume 30. (*Serials Review* is an Elsevier publication.) I may return to these articles later; I’ve certainly saved them for use elsewhere as appropriate. A balanced editorial effort by Goodman, and a landmark special issue. Go get the articles while you can: This will be the free “sample issue” at *Serials Review*’s website for at least nine months after publication.

Feedback: Your Insights

What is Wrong With You People?

Ross E. Riker responds to this section in the December 2004 TRENDS & QUICK TAKES:

As usual, I am a little behind in my reading. As for the section, “What Is Wrong With You People” in *Cites & Insights* 4:14, December 2004:

While I am dismayed, I am not surprised. Computers are still fairly complicated devices. If most people have trouble setting the clocks on their VCRs, do you really expect them to understand firewalls, antivirus software, etc.? And, then, to keep them up-to-date and in working order?

Of course, that somewhat begs the question, why should they need to?

Was it just anybody that was having these problems?

I did not see any statistics as to what OS, browser, or email client were being used. However, I would be willing to bet they have a substantial commonality—Microsoft.

Granted, no OS or software is immune from security issues. However, Microsoft’s track record is abysmal. And the argument that, because they are the predominant OS and browser, they are the most frequently targeted does not wash either. Apache holds

a larger market share than IIS, but IIS is more insecure. What it boils down to is poor programming. Microsoft is apparently trying to rectify this, but has a long way to go.

Of course, theoretically, you don't have to use Microsoft.

And that is what I do (for the most part). While I still use their OS, I don't use IE or Outlook / Outlook Express. I use Mozilla / Mozilla mail. Consequently, virus and spyware are not much (if any) of an issue.

However, this is a Catch-22 for the average end user. Their machine most likely came with IE / Outlook Express. For them to use an alternative, they would need to download and install it. And, as I think the survey indicates, this does not seem to be very probable.

So, if there is something wrong with us people, I think you should spread around the blame a bit, and ask "What is wrong with you, Microsoft?"

There's a lot of truth in that, although worms and viruses can and do attack Linux and Mac OS as well. Ross sent additional commentary after my response, including this key note: "In my...opinion, security has been an afterthought to convenience throughout most of Microsoft's history." True enough.

Perspective

Looking Back 1: Trends & Products, 1995-2000

This PERSPECTIVE goes through the 59 editions of *Trailing Edge Notes* and *Crawford's Corner*, repeating excerpts from one item with notes added as appropriate. Putting it all together? That, like knowledge, is in the mind of the reader.

1995

PRESS WATCH... "Best Products of the Year," *PC/Computing* 7:12... I have problems with such categories as "Desktop Storage," where the Western Digital Caviar AC31000 1-gigabyte enhanced IDE hard disk beat out a tape drive and CD-ROM drive for "Most Valuable Product." [March 1995]

One gigabyte: That was a big hard disk for 1994—and you'd pay \$600 to \$750 for that capacity.

PRODUCT WATCH: THE MAGIC 15X CD-ROM DRIVE... We are told to "be prepared for CD-ROM drives that will leave hard drives in the dust," and informed that a Mac peripherals outfit will send us a 15X CD-ROM player right now, if we can afford \$995 to \$1,295. "The drive itself is a standard Toshiba double-speed drive—but the bronto-sized

hardware cache is another story." ... Oh, we're also told that IBM's multi-layer CD-ROM technology will yield six to seven gigabytes, allowing a single CD to contain "the entire 12 video hours of *Roots*." [April 1995]

I was skeptical of both claims, suggesting that you should buy magic beans instead of the 15X drive. The drive was an illusion; so, as it turns out, was IBM's multi-layer technology as a production system. DVDs are sort of high-density CDs, but even a double-layer double-sided DVD (18GB) doesn't hold 12 hours of broadcast-quality video. 15x CD-ROMs did come along, but a few years later.

PERSPECTIVE: SELF-PUBLISHING AND THE WEB... The Web is about self-publishing. Not entirely, and not originally, but that's how it's working out. ... Self-publishing has always been a major feature of BIT-NET and Internet...But then it was plain ASCII, with no real simulation of publishing. The Web is different... [May 1995]

This was before weblogs and wikis, and I was also pointing out that formally published stuff has higher standards than self-published stuff. Ten years later, the web is still heavily about self-publishing—and professional editing still adds value.

PERSPECTIVE: THE END OF THE CRT? Here's a great opening paragraph, on page 42 of the March 1995 *PC/Computing*: "The future is flat, if the latest crop of active-matrix LCD monitors for desktop PCs is any indication..." Yes, these panels could save a little space. Are they reasonable alternatives, particularly when *PC/Computing* wants everyone to have 17" or 21 displays?... [The review included a 13" NEC for \$11,755, a 10.4" Sharp for \$7,995, and a 9.4" display for a "mere" \$2,495.] If you want a flat screen comparable to a 14" or 15" CRT, you need only pay as much as you would for...three fully-loaded Pentium-100 systems, each with its own 17" Trinitron display. Such a bargain! [June 1995]

The *PC/Computing* review was absurd for its time; LCDs began to make economic sense as alternatives seven or eight years later. By then, *PC/Computing* was defunct.

EMPEROR WATCH: THE MEDIA LAB. ... "With flat-panel technologies every license plate, wine label, or price tag will be a 'display.'" "In the face of music-industry wrath DAT is arriving anyway." "I believe that in the next three years there won't be an interlaced display sold in America." [All from Stewart Brand's *The Media Lab*] [June 1995]

This was easy, since the book was published in 1987 and the projections were already absurdly wrong. Interlaced displays—that is, standard-definition TVs—will eventually disappear. Probably not within three years of *now*, certainly not by 1990.

EMPEROR WATCH: SNAKE OIL SALESMEN... Nicholas Negroponte wrote an open letter to Newt Gingrich in *Wired* (May 1995) dumping on the Library of

Congress for containing books—and making this modest suggestion: “Pass a Bill of Writes—a digital deposit act—requiring that each item submitted to the Library of Congress be accompanied by its digital source. Make it illegal to obtain copyright otherwise.” Isn’t that charming? It’s also the last refuge of a failed prophet: if the masses don’t follow your infinite wisdom on their own, force them. [July/August 1995]

What can I say? Even Newt wasn’t about to swallow this particular snake oil.

PERSPECTIVE: VIDEO BY THE NUMBERS. ...Unfortunately for the success of video CD, there are not one but two new media on the way. Sony and Philips have a new “book” ready, for a new single-sided CD that will contain some eight gigabytes in two semi-reflective layers... But Toshiba also has a new format ready: a two-sided CD-size disc holding more than nine gigabytes... [September 1995]

This was an early warning for what became DVD. Fortunately, cooler heads (mostly among PC makers) prevailed, convincing the Toshiba group and the Sony/Philips group to compromise on a single format. So far, such a compromise looks unlikely for high-definition DVD.

PRODUCT WATCH: ENHANCED CD. Virtually every new audio CD will be a “CD Plus” by late 1996. That’s what we’re assured by the proponents of a new CD format, for audio CDs with added multimedia content... I no more believe that every audio CD will have video or interactive clips than I believe that every “book” in 1997 will be published as a multimedia singing-and-dancing spectacular. Different media continue to have their roles; pure audio has always done very well without “enhancements,” and most people enjoy pure audio discs many more times than they do any multimedia spectaculars. [October 1995]

That’s the beginning and nearly the end of a half-page commentary. Most recording companies apparently came to the same conclusions: There never were that many enhanced audio CDs. For that matter, it’s noteworthy that today a music DVD typically sells for *less* than a music CD from the same group, even though the DVD’s probably longer.

PERSPECTIVE: WHATEVER HAPPENED TO OSI? Blast from the past: Remember OSI, Open Systems Interconnection? ... Work toward OSI began in the 1970s; a set of ISO (International Standards Organization) standards implementing OSI was pretty much in place by 1988. OSI defines one set of protocols. TCP/IP, the internet protocols, are not OSI. In a 1990 discussion, one founder of the Internet projected that TCP/IP and OSI would be used in parallel for quite a few years, with OSI eventually becoming dominant as TCP/IP dwindles away. ...Candidates for your “Whatever happened to” file for the year 2000: NREN and NII. [November 1995]

Remember NREN? Remember NII? I sure don’t.

PERSPECTIVE: VIDEO CD: SHOULD YOU CARE? Video CD: Should you be making room for it in your library stacks?... Video CD is not high-density CD. It’s up to 72 minutes of video on a regular compact disc using MPEG-1 compression, played back at an average of 150 kilobytes per second... If you’re a believer, [CD ubiquity] means that “Video CD will replace the audio CD player” and “will ignite an explosion of demand for CD-ROM which will make nonsense of all existing CD-ROM sales forecasts.” [Quoting a *CD-ROM Professional* article by John Barker.] ... Bottom line: Video CD means at least a 150-to-1 compression ratio. That’s “lossy compression” in a big way. [December 1995]

Barker went on to say, “you Yanks have really blown it this time” for not rushing to adopt Video CD. Us Yanks never did pay any attention to this low-grade visual medium, although it’s proved popular for pirated movies in parts of Asia. As far as I know, no sensible U.S. library ever purchased much in the way of video CDs.

1996

PRODUCT WATCH: POWERDRIVE². Sometimes a new product makes lots of sense—which doesn’t mean it will succeed... As described in *PC Magazine* 14:17 (10 October 1995): 56, Panasonic’s LF-1000AB PowerDrive² looks like a CD-ROM drive and works like a quad-speed CD-ROM drive—but it’s also a data storage device, writing 650MB to removable, rewritable cartridges. No, it’s not a CD-ROM writer. Those produce write-once discs. This one uses phase-change dual-technology (PD) cartridges, good for at least half a million cycles. PD cartridges aren’t cheap at \$60 each or six for \$295, as compared to \$10 CD-R (writable CD-ROM) blanks—but they’re rewritable... I hope it does well. [January/February 1996]

Pure failure of insight on my part: I should have realized that CD-RW would soon follow CD-R and that prices of both media would plummet as sales grew, leaving no room for PD.

PRODUCT WATCH... Microsoft Bob? Heard about Microsoft Bob? A curious front-end for Windows, creating a room full of objects and a cartoon character to guide you through operations... When Bob came out, most critics laughed at it, and it hasn’t done all that well in the marketplace. I certainly joined the laughter. And yet... “Welcome Bob,” in the November 1995 *FamilyPC*, reports on a long-term test of Microsoft Bob by 21 families around the country. The verdict? “Families liked Bob so much, they’re inviting it to stay.” The resulting rating is an 85, earning a *FamilyPC* Recommended seal.... If there is a conclusion, I suppose it’s “never sell Microsoft short.” [March 1996]

Better conclusion: Trust your first instincts. Microsoft Bob was a flop. So, after a while, was *FamilyPC*.

PRESS WATCH... Seymour, Jim, “Don’t Get Giggled,” *PC Magazine* 14:17 (10 October 1995): 93-94. Leave

it to Seymour to make sure nobody is satisfied with today's newest and hottest equipment... "Buy a 1-gigabyte drive now—in a new machine, or as an upgrade, or second hand disk in an existing PC—and you'll soon be looking for even more storage space for data. Before you know it, 1 gigabyte just won't be enough." ... CorelDRAW 6 wants 130MB for a full install. Windows95 takes up 65MB at most, Ah, but real PC users are running mapping software, "grabbing documents left and right" from the Internet, and so on... He's saying to start at 2GB and seriously consider 4GB drives. As I write this, my home PC has a lonely 340MB drive... Then again, I've never claimed to be a power user. Certainly not in Jim Seymour's league. If you are—well, you know, some 9GB drives are getting "affordable" these days. Good luck organizing the files! [April 1996]

I was right for the time—even \$3,000 PCs came with 1GB drives—but wrong in the long run. File organization continues to be a (minor) problem.

PRODUCT WATCH: LCD MONITORS: READY TO REPLACE CRTS? Poor old cathode ray tubes. Obsolete decades ago, their demise has been predicted by sensible engineers and futurists for at least 20 years... Once again, in the February 1996 *MacUser*, we read that big LCD screens are now available at prices that "won't send corporate financial officers into sticker shock." What does that mean these days? A mere \$3,999 for a 12-inch screen, \$5,999 for 13 inches... I don't know about you, but \$5,999 is still a bit more than I'd expect to pay for a 14-inch screen—in fact, it's still about ten times what I'd expect to pay for a[n equivalent CRT]... Just at a guess, *my* "corporate financial officer" would have a good laugh if I requisitioned one of these beauties. [May 1996]

The forecast for LCDs to replace CRTs was still at least seven years premature.

PRODUCT WATCH: DVD: THIS TIME IT'S FOR REAL? [Updating Video CD essays] A new CD format is on the horizon, and this time it's probably real—and important to libraries in a year or three. DVD players for home videos will probably reach the market by this September, initially at high prices. The prices should come down fairly rapidly... I don't anticipate DVD replacing VHS rapidly—but I do expect it to be successful, and not only for video... So, yes, libraries should care about DVD. Not right away, to be sure, but most public libraries may want to plan to start acquiring DVDs for circulation by 1998 or 1999... [June 1996]

Those brief excerpts from a 1.5-page discussion represent the first time I mentioned DVD by name. I also suggested that DVDs would probably eventually replace Audio CDs for music, "but regular Audio CDs could go right on for years to come." I may have been *slightly* optimistic on timing, and maybe wrong on Audio CDs. On the other hand, maybe I was too conservative about DVD replacing VHS, which I'd say it's mostly done. I guess it depends on your definition of "rapidly."

PRODUCT WATCH: JAZ: A COMER, BUT WITH QUESTIONS. Iomega's Jaz removable-storage drive has been previewed for months... In some ways, Jaz is quite exciting (and the big brother to Iomega's Zip): a \$500 drive that takes \$99 1GB cartridges running at hard-disk speed... The price per megabyte is higher than some optical disks but considerably lower than other hard drives... The omens are good—but they'd be even better if Iomega licensed Jaz to at least one other drive or media manufacturer. [July/August 1996]

Remember Jaz? It had a decent run (and may still be around as a niche product), but it was eventually squeezed out by a variety of industry standard portable recording media and devices.

PERSPECTIVE: CHEAPER FOR WHOM? Microsoft's new Web-based magazine, *SLATE*, made its first weekly appearance during the last week of June 1996... Later this year, *SLATE* will be available on the Web *only* by subscription, \$19.95 a year or \$34.95 for two years. Which brings me to the point of this essay, springing from Michael Kinsley's welcoming editorial. "That [\$19.95] is far less than the cost of equivalent print magazines, because there's no paper, printing, or postage." ... Is *Slate* really cheaper than an equivalent print magazine? That depends... If you download and print the issues—and they're designed to be printed in full... The first issue runs to 37 pages. At three cents per page [ink and paper], that's \$1.11. For 52 issues, that's \$57.72 plus \$19.95, or \$77.67... None of the weeklies [*Time*, *Newsweek*, *New Yorker*] cost \$77.67 per year... So Kinsley's statement is simply wrong, if you treat this as a print magazine. ... [September 1996]

There's a lot more to that PERSPECTIVE, but the fundamental point was on the money. Subscribers weren't: *SLATE* abandoned its subscription-only attempts after a disastrous drop in readership. It eventually turned into something less than a magazine as well, becoming a recurring set of ongoing features.

PRODUCT WATCH... THE LS120 SUPER-FLOPPY. Here's another one that should work and might work—or might not. Compaq, 3M, Matsushita, and Optics Research jointly developed this next-generation microdiskette, which stores 130MB on a 3.5" medium. The drives are backward-compatible with 1.44MB diskettes, and much faster than current diskette drives although much slower than hard disks. Compaq can't establish a new device on its own. No company can... Right now, an LS120 drive costs about \$210 separately, \$190 extra in a Compaq system. Diskettes cost about \$20... Right now, I'd say this is one to watch, not one to commit to. The history of higher-density magnetic diskettes is so flaky that a little caution is useful. [October 1996]

Compaq really did seem to think it could make the LS120 succeed. It didn't happen.

PERSPECTIVE: WAIT A MINUTE, MR. COMPUTER! Remember the Network Computer?... One writer said that NCs were the future and that personal com-

puters were dead—for an interesting reason: It's more efficient to share one big computer than to have a bunch of separate little computers. NCs effectively allow a return to timesharing—the right way to do computing!... In one sense, he's right. A typical modern PC being used by a single person is probably wasting at least 90 percent of its machine cycles just sitting there waiting... Why is [this] premise flawed?... Other than local control, the real miracle of PCs is that computers are cheap enough to wait for people. Any time you're waiting for a computer, you're wasting time, and you can't grow more of that. Any time the computer's waiting for you, it's probably wasting a few watts of electricity. PCs are tools. As distributed tools, they sit there wasting cycles until you need them. Which is exactly as it should be. [November 1996].

The 2.2GHz Pentium-4 I'm writing this on is at least 1,000 times as fast as it "needs" to be for writing (after all, I wrote two books using a 2MHz CPU)—but that means I can squander most of its cycles on Windows overhead, forming pretty characters, real-time spell checking, and all that wasteful nonsense that makes me more productive.

PRODUCT WATCH: KEEPING AN EYE ON DVD-ROM.... Just a few months ago, several manufacturers targeted September 1996 for the introduction of consumer DVD drives—by which they meant "drives for sale in the stores." They aren't here yet. [It had to do with movie studio fears about piracy.] One possibility is that DVD-ROM will emerge before consumer DVD—but that won't offer the mass market for cheap mastering of the discs. I still think DVD should be a long-term winner...but the path toward that success may be much longer than I'd have guessed. [December 1996]

DVD-ROM did take the lead, but briefly (and then pretty much disappeared). The path to DVD's success wasn't *much* longer than I'd have guessed, but it was longer.

1997

PRODUCT WATCH...FAXVIEW PERSONAL FAX READER. A full-fledged fax machine that fits in your pocket: isn't that what you've always hankered for? Just plug this half-pound device into a cell phone or land phone to send, receive, and store faxes—it's even got a "sharp and crisp" little screen and a "virtual keyboard." You can't print faxes, you can't really input long text, you'll go crazy looking at a full-page text fax... Ah, but it's neat, and costs a mere \$500. *Windows Sources* gives it a "Stellar" award, their highest honor... Sigh. [January/February 1997]

I don't know that FaxView ever really appeared. Eventually, *Windows Sources* disappeared.

PRODUCT WATCH: UNIVERSAL SERIAL BUS. By now, you should already be inundated with hype about this new connection... Expect USB to handle things that currently use the parallel, serial, and other medium-speed ports: mice, keyboards, printers, scan-

ners, modems. ... The competition for SCSI is IEEE-1394, sometimes known as FireWire. Expect to see PCs this year with both USB and FireWire ports. Don't, however, expect to see an instant shift from serial and parallel to USB and FireWire. ... This is one to watch. It should make complex PC setups easier to administer. But it may take a few months (or years) to carry out the promise. [March 1997]

"Or years" was more like it, and we really needed USB2. Nonetheless, most new desktop PCs still have serial and parallel "legacy" ports eight years later, although that's changing.

PLATFORM WATCH. *MacUser* devotes nine pages of its January 1997 issue to an in-depth examination of BeOS... The article shows the extent to which BeOS is a "modern operating system like *Windows NT*, in many areas where *System 7.5* doesn't measure up... But the cover headline is "Watch Out, Windows"—which makes no sense at all. The story basically says that BeOS could prevent Mac loyalists from jumping to *Windows NT*; there's nothing in the story to suggest that BeOS would attract away *Windows* users. [April 1997]

Remember BeOS? Or NeXT, which "Apple had gone for instead of BeOS"?

PRODUCT WATCH...NEWSCATCHER. "You want news, constantly." Really? Have we become that desperate? If so, here's a bizarre little item: a \$149 pyramid that plugs into a serial port and feeds you "alerts" (40 words or less) on categories that you can select. The news, which comes in as broadcast content, flies across your screen "in a flurry of sound and animation" (according to a February 1997 *PC/Computing* review). You can't copy stuff to use or share; there's no good way to search; you'll pay by the month after the first year. At least it doesn't tie up a phone line or Internet connection all day long, the way PointCast does. But it doesn't work as well either. Then again, why in heaven's name do you want or need "news, constantly"? [May 1997]

Remember push technology? "Doesn't work as well as PointCast": what more to say? I was asked to review this device; I removed it from my PC two days after installation.

PERSPECTIVE: DVD—NOW IT GETS INTERESTING. March 1997: DVD drives are in the stores... Libraries need to watch closely, but wait. You can be ahead of your users on in-house resources, but a little behind them on circulating materials. ... [Buying DVDs instead of VHS] is absurd at the moment, and likely to remain absurd for at least two to four years. [June 1997]

This perspective (which went on to discuss how DVD works and why it could eventually be important) was closer. Libraries that started buying DVDs sometime between June 1999 and June 2001 were probably meeting their users' needs.

PRESS WATCH... Ruley, John D., and Nancy A Lang, "PC vs. NC: The Whole Story." *Windows Magazine* 6:4 (April 1997): 186-204. Surprisingly for this lack-

luster magazine, this article offers useful perspectives on the NC (Network Computer). Too many sidebars assure us that NCs will somehow “liberate” us from the headaches of PCs—headaches like making your own choices. Forget the “\$500 NC.” The only way to keep these systems under \$1,000 is to couple them with lousy, small monitors and just enough RAM to get going. [July/August 1997]

NCs never made economic sense for home users or for most businesses. Larry Ellison wrote off this expensive attempt to undermine Bill Gates long ago. Most users just ignored them.

PERSPECTIVE: TAKE YOUR PUSH AND SHOVE IT. ... Push technology aims to convert the Web into television—predictable audience, ads, and all... [September 1997]

That’s just one sentence from a Perspective I’m particularly pleased with. Dan Ruby of *NewMedia* asserted that “a medium packages editorial content or programming around its advertising” (recognize books, sound recordings, and films here?) and editorialized about the need to “channelize” the Web into a “time-based” medium with ads, using push technology. It didn’t work out that way.

PRODUCT WATCH... 500MHZ WINDOWS COMPUTERS. July 1997’s *PC/Computing* cover screams in its usual huge type and tabloid style: “Windows at 500MHz! It’s Here. It’s Cheap. Honest.” Well, one out of three ain’t bad. Windows NT at 500MHz is indeed here in the form of five tested systems...using Digital’s Alpha 21164 CPU. [The Alpha RISC-based systems] ran CAD 17% to 31% faster than a 266MHz Pentium II [with a custom-built Alpha-native CAD program] and 10% to 35% slower on Excel, 24% to 57% slower on Word. The article claimed a “25 percent price premium” [which came out to 66% in my calculations, for comparably-equipped systems].... The bottom line? Unless you’re wealthy and running a CAD system, you’d be crazy to consider an Alpha system—and let’s not even talk about the likelihood of future upgrades and Alpha’s real long-term role in the marketplace. [October 1997]

In the desktop PC marketplace? Zip. We got 500MHz computers in a year or so through Intel’s upgrades, and then 1GHz, and then 2GHz, and then...meanwhile, RISC stayed in niche markets.

PRESS WATCH... Karon, Paul, “The Web’s Fall Season.” *NewMedia* 7:10 (4 August 1997): 52-58. If you’re still convinced that the Web opens a wonderful world of universal publishing and great new ideas, you may be right—but articles like this offer some sobering balance. ... “Online interactive technology” becomes essentially meaningless in this brave new world; we’re talking Web tv here... Another sidebar has eight “tips from the top execs” on selling online programs to MSN or AOL—including “suck up to celebrity” and “make it personal,” although it’s clear that the latter is phony—the “show” should be “somehow responsive to the indi-

vidual user.”.. I found this article enormously depressing. The author clearly doesn’t intend it this way. [November 1997]

Fortunately, the web’s big enough for pseudo-interactive “web shows” (at least I guess such nonsense is still on AOL somewhere) and great new avenues for individual publishing. *NewMedia* would be terribly disappointed, if the magazine still existed.

PRESS WATCH... “Ringing Up Web Profits.” *PC Magazine* 16:15 (10 September 1997): 10. ... This brief article begins “cash registers are finally ringing on the Web” and goes to say that Web sites are booming: “profits projected to reach \$24.4 billion this year and \$1 trillion by 2001.” [December 1997]

I questioned those numbers, suggesting that \$24.4 billion was total revenue rather than profits and that \$1 trillion was flatly absurd. I’m sure the totality of dotcoms would *love* to have \$1 trillion in profits in 2005, much less 2001. They don’t.

1998

PRODUCT WATCH: BIG-SCREEN COMPUTERS. Gateway 2000 introduced the Destination quite some time ago, combining a fully-equipped multimedia Pentium system (dressed out in component black) with a TV tuner card, wireless keyboard, and 31" (viewable) display. It wasn’t cheap, and it presupposed a convergence of PC and TV that I still question—but, while it didn’t seem like a prime candidate for home use, it seemed like a wonderful device for boardrooms and training facilities... [The item goes on to compare the Destination with the newer Compaq/Thomson PC Theatre.] Both appear to be good systems, but for a boardroom the Destination has a huge edge. [January/February 1998]

RLG had a Destination with *two* displays so that it could be used for more people. It worked well, but the display turned out to be a weak point: For boardroom use, projectors just made more sense. The category never really took off; Windows Media Center Edition may be the next generation version.

PERSPECTIVE: DIVX: A GENUINELY BAD IDEA ... [Final sentence] One can only hope that Divx will be a humiliating failure, one that costs its proponents dearly in cash and good will. [March 1998]

Need I say more?

PERSPECTIVE: A LITTLE APRIL FOOLISHNESS... The “chief technologist” for Xerox PARC shows us what our PC will look like “in the next century”: the PC in a closet; a flexible display that you unfold from your pocket; lots of wires but none to the keyboard, phone, or mouse; pocket Internet computers that let you log on anytime from anywhere; and “everything with a word on it—book spines, papers, business cards—will turn into a screen.” Crawford’s Predictions, at least for five years downline: maybe, no, maybe, maybe, no. ... Frogdesign says “forget home computers; think home appliances.”... Bob Metcalfe,

“inventor of Ethernet,” says: “PCs are passé. Various forms of network computers...will replace the Wintel clunkers we enjoy today.”... John Peddie of the wearable computer further predicts that “all PC graphics will be in 3D” by the year 2000, a claim that’s either nonsense or meaningless. [April 1998]

Predictions taken from the January 1998 *PC World*. My five-year take was on the money, I believe—although precious few of us put PCs in closets.

PRODUCT WATCH... QUANTUM RUSHMORE NTE 3000. “If the Quantum Rushmore NTE 3000 weren’t so expensive, its incredible performance would help put solid-state drive in every PC.” The Rushmore is a 268MB solid-state drive, including its own little hard disk with battery so that the contents can be saved in case of power failure.... It costs \$5,832: that’s \$20 per megabyte. [Benchmarks showed 10% to 100% actual performance improvement compared to a standard hard disk.] ... Amazingly, the picture caption actually says: “Its incredibly fast performance justifies the price.” Sure it does. [May 1998]

I never heard of the Rushmore again. *True* solid-state “drives” have become significant, to be sure, but only when costs got down to \$1 or \$2 per megabyte and near-universal USB adoption made them convenient to use.

PRODUCT WATCH: FLAT CRTS. Panasonic now offers two 16" displays with flat screens... Becky Waring’s “first look” in the 10 February 1998 *NewMedia* calls them “nothing short of jaw-dropping.” Waring also says these are “the first true flat-CRT monitors.” Wrong. The first true flat-CRT monitors I know of came from Zenith, quite a few years ago. They didn’t do very well; they were small, expensive, and offered before color CRTs were in the mainstream for PCs... [June 1998]

Remember when true flat displays seemed slightly concave, because we were so used to displays with convex curves? Times do change; in this case, we’ve learned to eliminate a learned visual distortion.

PRODUCT WATCH: MINIDISC: NOT DEAD YET. Sony’s MiniDisc was one of the “cassette replacements” that emerged in the 1990s and just didn’t make it. Along with Philips’ Digital Compact Cassette (DCC) and the multi-company Digital Audio Tape (DAT), MiniDisc was a prime example of the difficulty of introducing new consumer media... MiniDisc may yet be the little engine that could... For now, it’s mostly a niche medium and a hobbyist medium. That might change... [July/August 1998]

Yes and no. Sony MD has indeed survived as a fairly popular medium for good-quality portable recording (it’s not CD-quality, but it’s not too bad) and the ATRAC compression technology used in MD is also used in Sony’s portable players. MD won’t ever become a mass medium, but it has a solid niche.

DVD WATCH: BETTER LATE THAN NEVER. Waiting for DVD may or may not be over, depending on your

definition. At this point—in late June 1998—it appears as though DVD is roughly where it should have been in late August 1997. If that’s true, it means that this holiday season could be the time that DVD starts to make a serious impact... [September 1998]

That begins a 1.5-page report. I think that’s about right: DVD became significant in 1998’s holiday season and kept moving up from there.

PRODUCT WATCH: LCD PROJECTORS: DO YOU NEED XGA? It was a big breakthrough when LCD projectors went from SVGA (800x600) to XGA (1024x768)—or was it? An “Inside PC Labs” note in the July 1998 *PC Magazine* notes a consistent finding when they were testing projectors for an August 1998 roundup: Lower-resolution projectors are brighter. .. In most cases, you really can’t deal with more information on a projected screen than would fit in 800x600. Since SVGA projectors are a lot cheaper than XGA projectors, and since they also offer more brightness, they may be more sensible purchases. [October 1998]

The point was, I think, correct—and SVGA projectors are still on the market, usually cheaper and brighter than XGA equivalents.

PRODUCT WATCH: WINDOWS CE—WITHOUT THE KEYBOARD. ... *PC/Computing*’s August 1998 issue looks at two Windows CE devices that look a lot like the Palm III... They’re roughly the same size, come with 320x240 gray-scale touch screens with on-request backlighting, have cradles to synchronize data with your desktop PC, and rely on handwriting recognition since there’s no keyboard. The designs appear to be a trifle sleeker than the Palm III, but they’re slower and need more memory to handle comparable tasks... I suppose the best reason to buy a Windows CE-based PDA is that it’s sort of running something that’s a little like Windows and comes from our friends in Redmond. That could also be an enormous reason to stick with the Palm. [November 1998]

Eventually, Microsoft got the PDA operating system pretty much right—but only with color screens and considerably more computing power. Still, the PDA market has stalled: It’s not clear that any OS is a long-term winner.

PRODUCT WATCH... “MUSIC” ON THE GO. A breathless “I Want It! I Want It!” page in the September 1998 *PC/Computing* includes seven high-tech toys... One in particular stood out for sheer bravado: a discussion of a second-generation Audible player, a small device you can use to download audio from the Net and carry it with you. The new player will have 8MB memory “for four hours of audio...and may support music.” Whew! Let’s look at the numbers here. That’s 2MB memory per hour, or 33KB per *minute*—or, in modem terms, 550 bytes per second (or 4.4kbps)... We’re talking seriously lossy compression for low-quality audio, ridiculously lossy compression for real music... [December 1998]

While today's Flash RAM and microdisc MP3 players may rely on the assumption that you can't hear the difference between sub-FM and CD quality (or don't care), they still use *at least* 64KB per second or 1MB for every two minutes.

1999

PERSPECTIVE: LOOKING AHEAD... Of four "digital books" [ebook appliances] announced in 1998, at least one won't even make it to market in 1999. None of them will be a significant success (selling more than 50,000 units in open markets). Total sales of intellectual property to all four digital book platforms combined will be less than one percent of physical book sales for 1999... [January/February 1999]

I made other predictions, some right, some wrong, some I can't track at this late date. This one was on the money. Ebooks still have a ways to go to reach the 1% mark.

PRODUCT WATCH... THE DECOPIER? A slightly weird technology... Sushil Bhatia has devised a machine that removes toner and ink from pages—applying a nontoxic chemical, sweeping away the flakes, and spitting out the clean sheet of paper. It's claimed to be environmentally friendly. It would be interesting to know more about this "nontoxic" chemical (a "pasty liquid"), its costs, and what happens to all that ink and toner. The assertion is that it can save paper costs, which means that the chemical would have to cost less than a half cent per sheet to be economical. As a security tool to erase sensitive documents, it's up against \$45 shredders—and the first Decopier will cost \$45,000. [March 1999]

If this product *ever* made it to market, I hope someone lets me know. I'd be surprised.

PERSPECTIVE: MP3: DO YOU CARE? Heard about MP3 yet? If you haven't, you will... [And, after 1.5 pages of technical, sound quality, and ethical discussion:] The optimistic Walt says that MP3 can have the same effect on music that desktop publishing has had on books: lowering the entry barriers to new publishers, so that thousands of small producers can offset the trend toward fewer and larger major producers. That's happening to some extent, and seems likely to continue. The skeptical Crawford wonders about people's acceptance of degraded sound quality: if 11:1 is OK today, will people tolerate 40:1 in two years? [April 1999]

I also said there were no current implications for libraries, still a true statement. Apparently, lots of people *will* tolerate 20:1 compression (64K MP3 or WMA, used in most portable players), and I'm guessing most people don't understand that their fatigue after listening to 20:1 MP3 for a while may be related to compression artifacts.

PRESS WATCH... THE \$33,000 PAYBACK. One of the more amusing aspects of *PC/Computing* (Ziff-Davis'

answer to *National Enquirer*) is the "payback times" the editors calculate for various software and hardware upgrades... Sometimes, the figures are truly remarkable, as in the February 1999 note on shifting from 28.8kbps modems to either 56kbps or ISDN. "A speedier Web connection means you get work done faster—it boosts your Web browsing from 42 to 63 percent—and that contributes to your bottom line." How much? "An ISDN modem...pays for itself in three days and nets you over \$33,000 [per year]."... To gain \$33,000 per year, your salary "only" needs to be \$85,000—if you spend 100% of your time browsing the Web. My cut: *anyone* who can save \$33,000 per year by using a faster Web connection is spending too damn much time on the Web... [May 1999]

I'll stand behind that statement.

DVD WATCH. Are we there yet? That depends on which "there" you mean. Are DVD players flying off the shelves? Nope. Is DVD a significant medium yet? Yes, I believe it is... [Discount DVDs had arrived, as cheap as \$8; video rental stores were renting DVDs; DVD players were available for as little as \$250.]... If your Friends of the Library want to start putting together a DVD collection...well, maybe it's not too early to consider it. Otherwise you can wait a while—but I believe that, by late 1999, DVD will be a well-established set of media. [June 1999]

I still thought DVD-ROM would be a Big Deal. Otherwise, this was on the money.

PRODUCT WATCH... DATAGLYPHS. Here's an idea: encode computer-readable data into graphical patterns, print it on paper, then scan it back in to a computer and interpret the data. Seem like a lot of trouble? Perhaps, but that's the DataGlyph—a new concept from Xerox PARC. An article in the 20 April 1999 *PC Magazine* discusses DataGlyphs as well as "HTTP staples," staples that emit radio frequencies... [DataGlyph-equivalents aren't] all that new an idea, however. This very publication included data-as-print in some issues in the late 1980s, in the form of Cauzin data strips. For a while, so did one or two of the major computer publications; it seemed like a great way to publish...free utilities... Here it is 13 years later, and DataGlyphs are a not new technology. Maybe this time they'll work—at least for specific markets. But a marvelous new development from the geniuses at PARC? [July 1999]

Something like DataGlyphs do find use in several markets, such as printable postage. Maybe PARC provided a better encoding/decoding system than Cauzin? As for HTTP staples, those sound suspiciously like RFID chips.

PRESS WATCH... P!!! PARANOIA. I promise I'll never use Intel's silly "P!!!" again, but it was too good to pass up this once. If you've paid any attention to the PC press lately...you'll know about the Great Pentium-III CPU ID Number Controversy. Each Pentium-III CPU has a unique serial number, a 96-bit number hardwired into the chip... On one hand, the serial number makes sense [for theft reasons]... On the other hand, the serial number potentially identi-

fies you when you may not want to be identified—except, of course, that it doesn't. It identifies the computer you're using, not you... As usual, the critics go overboard... "critics say" of Intel's default "off" position that "Sites may bar users who don't turn on the number." Hmm. How many sites will bar all Pentium-II, Macintosh, Celeron, Pentium Pro, and Pentium computer users, just so they can try to identify Pentium-III users uniquely? How many years will it be before Pentium-III computers represent the majority of installed home computers? Maybe, just maybe, this is excess paranoia. [August 1999]

Maybe I was too cavalier about "identifies the computer you use," but maybe not. Pentium-III systems never did become the majority of installed home computers. And, of course, with broadband, your IP address identifies "you" anyway. Yes, Intel was using three exclamation points for the PIII in ads.

DVD WATCH: DIVX: THE DISC IS DEAD. ... [As of 14 June 1999], "DVD Watch" was about the current state of Divx as a continuing distraction for the DVD field and for library adoption of DVD... The Divx folks announced on 16 June 1999 that they were shutting down operations. Circuit City...would rebate \$100 to those who had spent an extra \$50 to \$100 on Divx-enabled DVD players. They would also offer rebates to anyone who had upgraded a Divx disc to "silver" status (making it permanently playable on that particular Divx player). That makes sense: "permanently" in this case now means 30 June 2001, at which point all Divx discs become useless. Period. ... If your library is beginning a DVD collection and someone (a person or a store) offers you a bunch of DVD movies dirt-cheap or even free, make sure they're not Divx. If they are, just say no. [September/October 1999]

Divx confused and slowed the adoption of DVD, and didn't work at all for libraries. With Divx out of the way, things *really* took off.

PERSPECTIVE: WHEN COMPETITORS AREN'T. Will bookstores replace public libraries? Oops: that was last year's question. This year's version is: Will the Internet replace libraries? Four years ago, at least for some Midwestern public libraries, the question was: Will information brokers replace public libraries? I'm sure that a quarter-century ago, some pundits were puzzling over the question, Will Sesame Street make children's librarians obsolete? The answer in every case is simple enough. No, whatever you name is not likely to replace well-run libraries... Most "will x replace libraries" questions may be based on false assumptions. They presume that competition is always a zero-sum game; that's frequently not the choice. [November 1999]

Thus begins a two-page perspective on win-win situations, the "competition" between *Salon* and *Slate* and other forms of "coopetition" such as auto rows and Philips' decision (with Sony's urging) not to charge royalties for Compact Cassette (audiocassette) licenses so that the market would be larger.

PERSPECTIVE: NEW NARRATIVE FORMS ON THE WEB. Michael J. Miller is *PC Magazine's* editor-in-chief, and his one-page lead essays are frequently thoughtful and enlightening. In the July 1999 issue he discusses "The Web as a new art form" based on his experience at a Brown University forum. On one hand, Miller saw the promise: "New technologies now offer the possibility of changing methods of telling stories and writing fiction and poetry." On the other, the single pull quote notes the reality: "Hypertext-based fiction and poetry may reinvent creative writing, but they won't replace novels or poems." ... True hypertext fiction or narrative is tough... [Finally] Will there be a Great Hypertext Novel? Will there be a hundred of them, each using the Internet in diverse, creative ways? I hope so—not to replace traditional narrative, but to tell new stories in interesting new ways. I also hope I'll be open-minded enough to recognize such triumphs as they occur—and that libraries will find effective ways to incorporate these new forms. [December 1999]

I still hope so, and maybe I just haven't heard about the triumphs. My only real experience with narrative hypertext (a special issue of *Journal of Electronic Publishing*) was, to my simple mind, incomprehensible. I must be missing the good stuff.

2000

PERSPECTIVE: TWO THOUSAND AND FIFTY. How's it going on the other side of the dread Y2K? Here I sit in October 1999, typing on a Microsoft Natural Keyboard connected to a Gateway Celeron-400 PC, looking at an 18" display and listening to Randy Newman on my Altec Lansing Dolby Surround speakers. And there you are, staring bleakly at your manual typewriter while a gramophone plays in the background, since all this new-fangled stuff disappeared on January 1. Right? ... Let me hazard a guess. The disruption faced by most Americans, Britons, Australians, and Europeans on 1 January 2000 was milder than that caused by a severe winter storm. Total economic damage in the U.S. was a fraction of that caused by Hurricane Floyd, and probably not a large fraction... [2000:1]

I was pleased with that particular prophecy of non-doom which ended: "Has The Artist changed his name back to Prince yet, and can anyone still stand that song?" He eventually did, and some people probably still love it. Oh, "and Fifty"? That was the 50th edition of "this stuff."

PRESS WATCH: WHERE'S THE CD-ROM? Sometimes the story that *isn't* being told is more interesting than the intended message. Take, for example, a little graph and paragraph in the October 1999 *PC/Computing*. The intended message was pretty clear: "Compact discs are quickly replacing floppies as the ubiquitous removable-storage medium. These days, you can play a CD-ROM on just about any PC you come across; according to ZD InfoBeads, 22.8 million of the 39.1 million PCs purchased in 1998 include a CD-ROM or DVD-ROM drive." ... I could

take issue with “quickly,” since CD-ROMs have been around for 15 years now. But I would read the graph and that last clause very differently, as in this alternative quote (which I just made up): “Astonishingly, even though most important software ships on CD-ROMs, more than 40% of the PCs sold last year couldn’t read CD-ROMs.” [2000:2]

When did 59% become “just about any”? Maybe when 51% became an overwhelming mandate. (Oops, sorry, I’m staying away from politics.)

PERSPECTIVE: WHY2K? BECAUSE WE LIKE YOU! Maybe Mickey Mouse is as good a symbol as any for the whole millennium nonsense. I’m writing this on January 1, 2000—which is what Windows 98 said it was as I booted normally, using the power that didn’t go off, after having breakfast using our normally working water system, and checking some Web sites through the telephone system that’s working just fine. [I went on to laud the 22-hour international TV broadcast, celebrating cultural differences as the year changed around the world; noting good newspaper coverage and the ongoing frightmongering from the Y2K consultants, and the nonsense about the millennium *really* beginning January 1, 2001, including the “just plain stupid” notion that 2000 was the “last year of the Nineteen Hundreds.” Note: There may not have been a Year 0—but there was no Year 1 either.][2000:3]

That 22-hour ABC/PBS/BBC *et al* special was magnificent television: Live from Easter Island, the Parthenon, Bethlehem, the South Pole...

PRESS WATCH... FREEDOM OF SPEECH: “A BIG NUISANCE.” That’s the astonishing end of the first sentence of Robin Raskin’s “Double Click” in the February 2000 *FamilyPC*. Here’s the full sentence and the one that follows: “Upholding the principles of the First Amendment has always been, at the very minimum, a big nuisance. Whether it’s the Ku Klux Klan marching down Main Street, smut-filled song lyrics, or offensive art, the First Amendment can sometimes get in the way of our personal tastes, agenda, and even our safety.” This is the editor-in-chief of a substantial publication writing, and a find myself horrified... In my mind’s eye, I see Ms Raskin in Philadelphia in 1776: “We hold these truths to be a big nuisance at best, so let’s all just go home. After all, asserting our inalienable rights could get somebody hurt!” Then again, a couple of months earlier she asserted that monopolies are good for consumers. (The context was Microsoft, but in rebutting some angry letters she guesses that “we’ll be looking closely at the Sherman Antitrust Laws in the upcoming months and assessing their usefulness in a world where banking is global and a monopoly no longer means a gallon of oil, a refinery, and a railroad.”) [2000:4]

Yes, I know, I’m naïve. Why should I expect that a journalist would care about freedom of speech or the *reasons* to protect offensive speech?

PERSPECTIVE: THE MAN CAN’T BUST OUR MUSIC. Other old fogies may remember that slogan, used in a Columbia Records marketing campaign. It was

mordantly amusing, since by most standards Columbia was “the man.” It was a little like police department recruiting posters with cops flashing peace signs: a little too much irony for many people... How times have changed! With the Web, everything’s out in the open—or at least it is when old-fashioned print journalists do a little digging. *The Industry Standard* for February 14, 2000 has a brief note about a Web site called Phonebashing.com. The site shows videos of guys dressed up as cell phones stealing other people’s phones and destroying them. The site also has an anti-cell-phone song, “I Wanna 1-2-1,” by the Solid Gold All-Stars. So far so good. Solid Gold All-Stars records for Virgin Music, but Phonebashing.com says that the site has nothing to do with Virgin. After all, Virgin is a big company—or, rather, a subsidiary of EMI Music, one of the five biggest music companies. *The Industry Standard* did the enormously difficult research to dig into this. They checked Phonebashing.com on the Net registry. Guess who owns the site? EMI Music. Or, to quote the Who, “Here comes the new boss, same as the old boss.” [2000:5]

I admit it. Pop/rock/folk lyrics have ruined my mind. I would note that, in 2004, bloggers would be more likely to break this story than print journalists.

PERSPECTIVE... WHEN PUSH COMES TO SHOVE: ANOTHER SURE WINNER BITES THE DUST. Remember PointCast? In March 1997, *Wired Magazine* announced push technology with one of that magazine’s usual nuanced, cautious comments: “Remember the browser war between Netscape and Microsoft? Well, forget it. The Web browser itself is about to croak. And good riddance. In its place...PUSH!” That was the cover line for an article that proclaimed that push technology—news and information “pushed” to your desktop—was a surefire winner. For that matter, push would “penetrate environments that have been media free—work, school, church, the solitude of a country walk.”... I thought push was an awful idea when I heard about it, even worse when I tried it briefly... In its heyday, PointCast turned down a \$400 million buyout offer. Last year, it was sold to EntryPoint for \$7 million. On April 1, 2000, PointCast disappeared entirely. [2000:6]

Remember IE4 and the Active Desktop? I’m sure you don’t miss them. Email and RSS are both *like* push in some ways—but you have to pull the pushed items when you want them.

PRESS WATCH... Mowrey, M. “Thank you, please come again,” *The Industry Standard* 3:11, 196-7. It’s hard to discuss ongoing change in technology, libraries, and media without talking about money and the marketplace. Some pieces are particularly revealing, when you’re considering claims of the e-business revolution and wondering just why some e-stocks can go down even faster than they went up. This article reviews a McKinsey & Co. study of the books of some e-commerce companies... “Repeat customer maintenance costs” for the e-commerce sites studied may have averaged \$1,931 (an astonishing number), but the range was from \$0.27 to \$16,000... On av-

erage, sites spent \$250 on marketing and advertising to attract each new customers... But two-thirds of the customers never buy anything else. Given that the average purchase from a new customer is \$24.50, this is a losing proposition... Despite my partial entry into capitalism, I can't understand the overall numbers... Marketing costs appear to be a mere 172% of revenues and operating costs a trivial 108% of revenues. In other words, once you get past the first couple of years, you can coast on the marvel of spending only \$280 for each \$100 you earn. [2000:7]

But they made it up on volume, which is why all those dot.com companies survived and prospered.

PRODUCT WATCH... DUMB IDEAS REVISITED. Not to make a value judgment here, but I think *eMedia's* title for an article on SpectraDisc is right on the money: "Divx without the dial-ins?" Or consider Ted Pine from InfoTech Research: "It seems that the one-rental concept is the Count Dracula of the home video industry. No sooner does the consumer stick a stake in its heart than it comes back demanding new blood." Okay, so Pine needs to study up on his vampire lore: we seem to have missed the heart with Divx. SpectraDisc, a new Rhode Island company, has this spiffy new idea for DVDs... "environmentally safe chemistry" that causes the information layer to start decaying as soon as you open the packaging. Once opened, the disc will work only for a programmed amount of time—say 24 hours, 48 hours, a week. The hotshot behind this notion thinks it's a sure winner. Stores would sell these DVDs for \$2.99. We all hunger for them because they eliminate that awful trip back to the rental store. Once you watch the movie, "the disc can be tossed into the plastics recycling bin." I wasn't aware that the kind of plastic-metal combination used in DVDs was readily recyclable, but that's a detail... [2000:8]

SpectraDisc never actually made it to market under that name, as far as I can remember—but it's the idea behind Flexplay, only the price is now much higher and there are no claims that you can recycle these discs with regular plastics. It's still spectacularly dumb.

PERSPECTIVE: THE INEVITABILITY OF EBOOK READERS. Give Gemstar International credit: They have big ideas and make big claims... Gemstar purchased NuvoMedia and Softbook Press, [which] produced the only dedicated ebook readers that have made it to the market.... Sales of both readers were so low that Gemstar didn't need to report sales as a material issue in closing the takeovers... Gemstar has a "long-term strategic agreement" with Thomson Multimedia in which Thomson commits to "a multiyear product shipment plan aimed at placing *tens of millions* of ebook devices into consumers' homes and establishing ebook readers as the *preferred choice for reading novels and periodicals*."... [After a history of Thomson/RCA's success with new media ventures—45s as the preferred long-play standard, CD-4, SelectaVision MagTape, SelectaVision HoloTape, CED, DVI, Network Computers—but also color TV—I

concluded:] If Thomson and Gemstar succeed in making ebook readers "the preferred choice for reading novels and periodicals"—which I would interpret as meaning that more novels and periodicals are read on ebook devices than in print form—I will happily eat a copy of this column. But then, I could be dead by that time. Here's a short-term offer: If Thomson and Gemstar sell millions of ebook readers into American homes in 2000, as indicated by verifiable sales figures (not shipment figures), I'll eat a copy of this column during ALA Annual 2001. And I will say, publicly and in print, that I goofed. [2000:9]

No column was consumed during ALA Annual 2001. No verifiable sales figures ever did appear; at one point, Gemstar admitted that *total* sales of its readers during their lifespan was under 50,000—but never just how much under 50,000.

PRODUCT WATCH: INTERNET APPLIANCES: ANOTHER VIEW. Two full-page ads in the June 5, 2000 *Industry Standard* say a lot about the benefits of Internet appliances—but not necessarily for consumers. Both ads are from IAN, the Internet Appliance Network, "Helping brands own the Web." The first one begins, "What if you could see what she sees? What if you could read what she reads?" and goes on to mention selling her "ads that she would stare at for hours and hours." The second ad pushes the device itself, and points out that one of the amazing aspects of an Internet appliance is that "even though he's the one holding it in his hands, you get to feel it too" because it's a "customer relationship tool" for IAN's brand partners. Doesn't it make you feel warm and fuzzy? After all, if brands don't own the Web, who will? [2000:10]

I don't know whether Virgin's brief attempt at selling Internet appliances used IAN's products. I do know the attempt was a disaster—and, if buyers understood the kind of invasive situation suggested here, it would have been a bigger disaster.

That's it (for Part I, before *Cites & Insights*). Draw your own conclusions.

Copyright Currents

The most important development this time around is a non-development: No new copyright legislation was passed in 2004. That's particularly significant given efforts to push HR 2391 through Congress during the lame-duck session, with a number of other extreme copyright measures lumped into HR 2391 as an omnibus measure. (The omnibus measure incorporated HR 4077, the "bad PDEA.")

The pieces of the chronology I've seen say that as of mid-November, the push was still on, with interest groups as far ranging as Public Knowledge and the American Conservative Union fighting against it.

On November 20, the Senate did pass the copyright-related S 3021, but (as related in Donna Wentworth's *Copyfight*, "the omnibus [was] now a minibus." HR 4077 was dropped. So was the PIRATE Act. The Family Movie Act—the one that clarifies the legality of skipping portions of movies or TV—was still there. The bill also included legislation to clarify the ability of libraries to preserve and copy orphan works during the last 20 years of their copyright term. S 3021 also retained provisions to outlaw the use of camcorders in a movie theater—and, oddly, added 50 pages about standards in professional boxing.

As of December 9 the bill was dead: Congress ended the lame-duck session without final action on copyright legislation. The bad news is that the orphan-works act failed along with the rest; all in all, however, the bill's defeat was probably a good thing.

Public Knowledge seems to take direct credit for the defeat of all the "bad [copyright] legislation" proposed in the past two years. How explicit is that claim? "In the past two years, we've sent ten bad laws to their grave." That list includes S 2560 (INDUCE/IICE), HR 3261 (the database bill), HR 4077 (originally P2P), S 2237 (the PIRATE Act), HR 2517 (the "bad PDEA"), HR 2752 (ACCOPS), S 1932 (the original bill to criminalize camcorders in movie theaters), HR 4586 (the Family Movie Act, which Public Knowledge calls "bad legislation" on the grounds that it doesn't allow skipping ads), and S 3021/HR 2391, the omnibus and "minibus" bills. Public Knowledge does good work as a coalition. I wonder whether it could be as effective without the high-profile statements of member organizations such as the American Library Association and Consumers Union?

Will the next Congress see new attempts by Big Media to restrict fair use and hamper new technology? You can count on it. Will Congress act on measures to restore some balance to copyright, such as the "good PDEA"? I have no idea—but at least efforts to unbalance copyright further are being slowed and stopped.

The rest of this installment is odds and ends, organized loosely into sections. There's nothing about the broadcast flag—not because nothing's happening. The ALA (et al) suit will be heard by the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit on February 22, 2005. I have some background material, ALA's 56-page brief, the FCC's 43-page brief, and a 29-page reply brief from ALA. I hope to do a commentary on the briefs either before

the case is heard or after (along with the outcome). Time and energy will tell!

DRM

Even librarians who don't understand why they should be concerned about the Broadcast Flag should understand why DRM (Digital Rights Management, but what it does is to *restrict* rights) poses problems for libraries. While DRM doesn't inherently impede fair use and first sale rights, that's what usually happens. And since DRM almost always involves encryption of some sort, attempts to bypass DRM run afoul of DMCA even if those attempts are to enable fair use rights. Fair use is no defense for DMCA violations.

In practice, DRM is yet another way for copyright holders to unbalance copyright when Congress, regulatory agencies, and treaties aren't quite restrictive enough. Herewith some items over the past few months that relate to DRM.

TiVo, ReplayTV agree to limits

That's the headline on a September 9 story in the San Jose *Mercury News*, with the subhead "pay-per-view would be subject to limitations." Future versions of DVRs will allow movie studios and broadcasters to regulate how *long* pay-per-view movies can be stored on the devices—and how *often* they can be watched. TiVo says that's a tradeoff to get services such as video-on-demand. Macrovision, the technology supplier, says it won't damage regular use of TiVo and ReplayTV, but will "allay the piracy and business concerns" that keep studios from releasing movies to pay-per-view the same day as they appear on DVD. Fred von Lohmann of EFF calls it anti-consumer and hopes "the marketplace will respond by punishing TiVo and Replay and others that do this." How bad could this be? One suggestion would limit recording to 90 minutes at a time; another would let you store a movie for a week—but wipe it out 24 hours after you start viewing it.

Donna Wentworth and Wendy Seltzer at *Copyfight* discussed this situation. Seltzer notes that entertainment producers, telling us content won't be available without DRM, are retelling an old story (ever since piano rolls) that's consistently been false. Wentworth notes how busy Big Media is doing everything *except* what's always made money for them in the past: Changing their business model to adapt to (and take advantage of) new technologies. Both advocate one way to cope with this: Just say no to DRM-hobbled DVRs and other products.

An October 18 posting on Susan Crawford's blog cites HBO's FAQ, which says—essentially—that fair use doesn't apply to cable. "The laws on copying distinguish between broadcast and non-broadcast programming. Broadcasters are required to permit consumers to make a single copy of broadcast programming for time shifting purposes. However, the law allows non-broadcast programming networks to decide what copying privileges they wish to extend to customers." Crawford says Section 1201(k)(2) of DMCA provides support for HBO's position, and wonders how HBO subscribers will feel about this. "Are they so used to making copies that they'll leave HBO in droves? Will they generally abandon cable for online sources of content? Probably not." Quoting further from HBO, "As television transitions from analog to digital technology, it will become important for distributors of high value programming to take similar steps [to restrict fair-use copying]." Her closing comment: "Hang on to your old open devices. And don't look to cable and satellite providers to provide you with lots of choices. Bit by bit, the analog hole is going to close."

A December 13 *commons-blog* posting notes that a Time Warner executive has come up with a charming new term for the nonsense involved here: "transitional fair use." What's that? Limited-term viewing—e.g., only being able to view a recorded episode of a series until the next episode airs. It's whatever use the producers think is fair. What if you go on a three-week vacation? Tough luck.

Labels, Microsoft in talks on CD copying

Another headline, this time from a September 17 CNet News story by John Borland. There's nothing new here: Microsoft has played with operating system-level copy protection ideas for some time. Up to now, the company's always had the sense to realize that its customers would be outraged by such a restrictive move, but that could end. Here, the platform would be Longhorn, the next-generation Windows, which won't appear until at least late 2006. "Secure computing" is the tagline—it's one of those cute names that sells DRM and copy-restriction on the basis of improved OS security. Or maybe it's secure against fair use?

The "rights" in digital rights management

Karen Coyle wrote this article, appearing in *D-Lib Magazine* 10:9 (September 2009) (www.dlib.org). In six pages (plus endnotes), she discusses the "3 C's of Rights" (copyright, contract, and control) and offers comments on rights and digital libraries.

The copyright section is cursory but points out that calling the internet a "copyright free zone" is nonsense. The contract discussion is more extended and worth reading, as is the discussion of control.

This **recommended** article is not an anti-DRM rant. It's a thoughtful discussion that ends with these comments about rights and digital libraries:

The right answer to the rights question for digital libraries is not between rights technology A and rights technology B. We will need to understand a broad rights landscape, one as heterogeneous as the resources we manage and the users we serve. The due diligence we will need to assert will not only be to respect the intellectual property rights in the resources we manage but also to defend the rights of our users to exercise their constitutional and legal rights to make use of these resources.

RIAA

Rosen, Hilary, "How I learned to love Larry," *Wired* 12:11 (2004).

Rosen, former CEO of RIAA, recounts how, after spending her first post-RIAA summer in Italy, she found herself at USC anticipating a public debate with Lawrence Lessig.

Lessig and I were longtime rivals in the ongoing debate over copyright and technology. To present a balanced program on the issue, USC was paying us a tidy sum to spend two days disagreeing with each other in front of a lot of people. Despite my intention to leave my old competitive juices at the bottom of the Mediterranean, they were flowing again.

On the first night, the university's Bovard Auditorium was packed. Lessig started with a tortured and sarcastic history of copyright protection. He railed against such public laws as the [DMCA], which created a US leadership role in protecting digital works against technologies designed to circumvent copyright protection. (That's not how Lessig described the DMCA; that's my view, of course. I had been instrumental in persuading Congress to pass the law in 1998.) When it was my turn, I pointed out the value of laws that kept pace with technology, rather than those that were usurped by it. Lessig also complained about [CTEA], which adds several years to the terms of protected works. I countered; Farmers can leave their property to their children; why shouldn't songwriters be able to leave their songs to their children?

Ah yes: The simple assertion that "intellectual property" is the same as any other form of property—and never mind the plain wording in the Constitution. I guess it hasn't "kept pace with technology." She goes on to note that she eventually opened her ears enough (my wording, not hers!) to hear that Lessig "wasn't defending theft; in fact, he was against it. That's why he had helped found the nonprofit Crea-

tive Commons.” Rosen paraphrases Lessig’s case for CC—and does so reasonably. She says she’d dismissed CC as “a sleight-of-hand maneuver, a way to mouth platitudes about the benefits of copyright hile in fact joining ranks with the Everything for Free Foundation.” Pay close attention here: Rosen is smearing EFF and admitting that she’d been entirely close-minded about CC.

She goes on to say she’s still “cynical about [CC’s] origin, but I’ve come to love Creative Commons.” She even admits that RIAA’s massive lawsuit effort has had a “chilling effect on other, legitimate uses” of P2P. But here’s a key paragraph:

But let’s not go too far into dreamland. Yes, the current system of copyright can be antiquated and user unfriendly, and its enforcement can be discriminatory, but it has created a lot of wealth for individual artists, not just corporations. More important, it has created a vast body of art for the public. Let’s not dismiss it wholesale.

Who’s trying to dismiss copyright wholesale? Not EFF. Not Lessig. Not me. Attempting to protect fair use, attempting to retain the Constitution’s “limited times” protection, attempting to assure that copyright serves “to promote the progress of science and the useful arts” as well as “creating a lot of wealth”—those are attempts to restore some balance, not to overturn copyright. Rosen may get a little of that, but I don’t think she gets most of it.

Miscellany

Last summer (*C&I* 4:8), I noted *Kahle v Ashcroft*, the second attempt to overturn CTEA (on different grounds). The suit was dismissed in federal court last fall. The dismissal will be appealed. Meanwhile, as a *commons-blog* posting notes, librarians should turn to Congress for relief—the Public Domain Enhancement Act and possibly other rebalancing acts.

Here’s one that’s so bizarre I almost don’t believe it. I did a long writeup on the Kaleidescape Movie Server last May (*C&I* 4:7), a \$27,000-and-up gadget for storing DVD movies on hard disk. Kaleidescape obtained a license to use Content Scramble System and believed it was working with the DVD Copy Control Association—but now DVD CCA has sued Kaleidescape! According to CCA, *any* copying of DVDs, even to a protected hard disk that can only be used by the DVD’s owner, is illegal. Kaleidescape’s CEO described himself as “flabbergasted” and said the company would fight the suit and probably countersue. Ed Felten comments, suggesting that the subtext is “that DVD-CCA is trying to maintain control over all technology related to

DVDs.” I have no love for Kaleidescape—I think it’s a prime case of technological overkill and overpriced by roughly \$26,500—but I hope they succeed in evading DVD-CCA’s power grab.

Speaking of power grabs, the American Chemical Society filed a complaint against Google Inc. Why? ACS claims that “Google Scholar” infringes on ACS’s SciFinder Scholar trademark and constitutes unfair competition. I guess ACS doesn’t always use “SciFinder” as part of the name. That a professional society would attempt to trademark “scholar” and prevent its use by others is mind-boggling.

Finally, for this installment, here’s another **article worth reading**: “Bloggers beware: Debunking eight copyright myths of the online world,” by Kathy Biehl, published at *llrx* on November 28, 2004. (www.llrx.com/features/bloggersbeware.htm). Starting with the most obvious myth—“It’s okay to use anything that doesn’t have a copyright notice”—she proceeds to explain the truth behind some other myths that (some) bloggers seem to rely on in over-ambitious quoting. It’s a short, well-written article. Go print it, read it, and save it if you’re a blogger.

Masthead

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