

Cites & Insights

Crawford at Large

Volume 3, Number 12: October 2003

ISSN 1534-0937

Walt Crawford

Mini-Perspectives

41 at 58

1. 41...

This publication grew out of the newsletter-within-*Library Hi Tech News* that was called “Trailing Edge Notes” for a while, then “Crawford’s Corner.” That newsletter lasted for 59 issues total.

The first logical stopping point for this experiment would be when I’ve done a hundred issues in all—which means 41 issues of *Cites & Insights*. This is issue 41.

It’s a milestone of sorts and a chance to do something different. (“Self-indulgent” is another word.) A mix of personal nonsense, quick takes, updates on previous commentary, and miscellanea.

2. ...at 58

I plan to publish this issue right around my birthday—almost a month after the September 2003 issue, and about a week before I fly off to the North Carolina Library Association biennial conference. I was born in 1945 (making me a pre-baby-boomer by a few months). You can do the math.

It would be interesting to know what percentage of readers are more than half my age. Or maybe it would just be depressing.

3. Big News: People Still Read Print

Ah, those baby boomers. This fall’s Pew Internet study says that the “older tech elite” (ages 42-62, which covers a lot more than the baby boom) “are fond of technologies yet fall back on more traditional ways and means of doing things.” That’s from an AP story on the report, but the plaintive “yet” fits my image of most Pew Internet reports. While 44% of this group gets online news on a typical day, 60% read a newspaper. “By contrast,” 39% of the “younger tech elite” get online news and 42% read a newspaper. Note that newspaper readership *among the technologically elite of the next generation* is still higher than online news usage.

Sigh. John Horrigan of Pew thinks it’s “social conditioning”—you know, we used to use card cata-

logs and “relied on stacks of books in the library.” “For young folks, *pretty much everything* is done electronically.” And the study to demonstrate this is?

Some technologically knowledgeable old fogies would say we read print newspapers and use books *because they work*, and that we use online sources *because they work* for different purposes. But “social conditioning” is how you put it when you’re selling the Wonders of Internet Life.

4. How Many Journals?

How many refereed scholarly journals are there, and how many articles do they include? (I’m not even going to consider a different question: Is it reasonable to assume that articles in non-refereed journals and magazines are of no interest for researchers? I think the answer is obvious—and I don’t think my answer is the one that some advocates might give.) The numbers are relevant when considering two real-world issues: 1. What proportion of the literature is currently available at larger universities? 2. If all current journal literature was replaced by open access “author-fee” literature at \$X per article, would that be an overall savings?

Inside This Issue

First Have Something to Say: Chapter 18.....	6
The Library Stuff	9
The Censorware Chronicles	11
The Good Stuff	15
Mini-Perspectives: 41 at 58, Continued	16

I rarely see either question discussed. I suspect that the answer to the second question is that if X is 500, there might be an overall savings—and if X is 1500, the total cost of scholarly article access would be higher. Given that \$500 and \$1,500 are the price points for today’s most prominent experiments in up-front financing, that’s significant.

The figures I’ve most often seen used are 20,000 journals and two million articles per year. But I’ve also seen figures such as 15,000 for biomedical journals alone, and have always thought it unlikely that 75% of all scholarly journals are in biomedical areas.

Some recent email involving Stevan Harnad, Carol Tenopir, and Yvette Diven of Ulrichs offers “firm” figures—if we assume that all scholarly jour-

nals are included in Ulrichs. Ulrichsweb shows 24,165 “active-status refereed publications” as of August 2003—of which 18,788 are classified “academic/scholarly.” But there are 41,233 active academic/scholarly periodicals (as searched by Carol Tenopir earlier in August) in all (out of a total 175,639 active periodicals). Just over half of all refereed periodicals are available online (mostly through aggregators)—including nearly 11,000 refereed academic/scholarly periodicals.

How much work that is important to scholarship appears in the 54% of academic/scholarly periodicals that don’t label themselves refereed? Just what are all those non-academic/scholarly refereed publications? (My guess is that many literary and other publications don’t consider themselves academic—but 6,692 of them?)

5. Lies and Lawyers

No doubt you heard the basic story here. Al Franken brings out a new book; the cover includes several photos, one of which is of a loudmouthed commentator on a network with a motto that should be “We distort, you deride.” That network managed to trademark a common phrase that really doesn’t apply to it—and when Franken used the common phrase as part of the book’s title, the network sued to prevent publication of the book, thus showing its regard for the First Amendment. The filing belittled Al Franken in language that had nothing to do with the merits of the suit.

The judge laughed the injunction attempt out of court. The network dropped the suit altogether. Al Franken’s book shot to #1 at Amazon and will probably sell at least twice as many copies as it would have if the suit hadn’t happened. In effect, the network did Franken an enormous favor.

Most people assumed the network filed the suit because the loudmouth commentator demanded it—and the loudmouth commentator *said so*, on the record, to a journalist.

Rule 11 of the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure: When a lawyer files frivolous lawsuits—lawsuits that stand no plausible chance of going forward—that lawyer is subject to sanctions. That’s one tiny limit on the American standard that anyone can sue anyone for anything, anytime.

“Ernie the attorney,” whose well-known weblog has a good discussion of this issue, doesn’t want the network’s lawyers sanctioned. He wants the *commentator* sanctioned (which he knows is impossible). He suggests that the commentator should be “barred from ever complaining or insinuating in any way whatsoever that our legal system is burdened by stupid lawsuits.” There’s more, but that would be good

enough. As Ernie concludes, “We can’t afford to let people (especially ones who have access to top-notch legal representation, and who know better) use the publicly-funded legal system to satisfy their vanity.”

6. The Death of Discs

“Hollywood will win the war against illegal downloading but the battlefield will be littered with casualties, including the DVD and CD formats as physical means of distributing video and audio, according to a Forrester Research study released Tuesday.” That’s the lead on a September 2 Reuters article—and the “analyst” in charge of this report is getting quoted *way* too much in various outlets.

The analyst says people will have access to “whatever they want right there at their television set,” and nobody would ever drive to Blockbuster at that point. (Netflix doesn’t exist, you see, and nobody really wants to *own* a movie or a TV series or the liner notes for a CD. And you’ll get access to “whatever you want”—we’ll have video on demand that can deliver any of 15,000+ titles any time. I have yet to see a business model or a telecommunications model that makes that possible, but I’m not an Industry Analyst.)

What does “death” mean? If you buy Forrester’s numbers, 33% of music sales and 19% of home video revenue might shift to downloading and streaming by 2008. That’s an odd form of death—and it’s one that most people in the industry don’t see. DVD replicators expect a doubling of DVD production by 2008, although they do expect CD replication to decline by 15 to 18%. Other analysts point out that people actually *like* to buy and own things in a lot of cases.

Who wins if Forrester’s right? Broadband suppliers—but broadband installation is slowing, as most people won’t pay today’s prices. Probably Big Media, since they can insist on tight restrictions on downloaded and streamed movies and music, so that when your kids want to watch *Finding Nemo III* 200 times, you’ll *pay* for it 200 times. (Of course, if Disney’s 48-hour self-destructo \$6.99 DVDs actually *sell*, then people really are stupid enough to go for this scheme.)

I’m not going to predict what will happen. I can tell you this. We purchased a grand total of four pre-recorded videocassettes in ten or fifteen years. We now own right around 60 DVDs, half of them purchased directly—and we plan to buy at least 18 more in the next year or so (Seasons 5, 6, and 7 of *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*). That parenthetic admission is one reason I expect there to be a *lot* of DVDs produced for sale for years to come. Reasonably-priced packages of TV shows you do want to see again,

with higher quality and DVD extras, represent a substantial market that didn't exist in the past—and that doesn't work as an on-demand market.

7. What Kind of Acronym is LBPRPA?

The conservatives come up with all the good names—USA PATRIOT, CIPA, COPA, and a host of others. Meanwhile, on July 31, 2003, Senator Feingold (D-WI) and eight other senators introduced the Library, Bookseller, and Personal Records Privacy Act, which would amend the PATRIOT Act “to protect the privacy of law-abiding Americans and set reasonable limits on the federal government’s access to library, bookseller, medical, and other sensitive, personal information.” (That’s according to the ALA Washington Office commentary on LBPRPA.)

Section 1 restores the requirement that the FBI offer facts giving reason to believe that a named person is a suspected spy or terrorist before gaining access to library or other private records. As Feingold notes, if you believe the FBI’s claims on how the PATRIOT Act is used, there should be no objection.

8. The Return of Push Technology?

I’m not quite sure what to make of “Push...back? An old technology teaches content new tricks” (by Steve Smith) in the July 2003 *EContent*. Smith makes the case that lots of people are happily mounting desktop clients that receive a steady stream of “content”—e.g., the WeatherBug weather monitor, the *USA Today* NewsTracker toolbar, and others. How many? Well, at least one provider is reluctant to provide numbers (always a tricky sign), but lots.

Some of these services are for business, and that’s a different story: If part of your job is to track competitors, you’ll pay *serious* money for specific pushed content—just as analysts had Bloomberg consoles on their desks. (TV and radio are both pushed content, just less “individuated,” to use the unfortunate neologism in this article.)

On the other hand, I wonder whether Steve Smith reads Steve Smith’s writing. He talks about the cellular platform as the most lucrative prospect for pushed digital data and notes, “phone users are accustomed to paying for extra services in this medium.” See “18. Does Wireless have a Model,” a little further on: Same author, same medium, *same issue*, but pages apart.

9. What Happened to Nanotechnology?

A June 17 *Wired News* story notes that other aspects of nanotech represent a multibillion-dollar discipline, but that “nanobots” aren’t happening and may not be possible. Bill Joy of Sun famously predicted doom if self-replicating nanomachines were ever released; Richard Smalley of Rice went from

believing in such devices to asserting they’re fundamentally impossible. Science fiction readers have been given several reminders that “self replicating” is an enormously dangerous phrase—and newspaper readers have reason enough to believe that “Trust us. It’s all under control” is good reason to run for the hills. I don’t know whether self-replicating molecular-level machines are feasible, but I tend to hope they’re not. (I’m in the age bracket where I could reasonably say: “Teeny-tiny machines that will repair my body’s cells, extending my lifespan and curing arthritis, failing memory and potential cancer? Bring them on!”) But my actual response is, “No thanks.”)

10. COWLZ and the Dangerfield Effect

Wonder what happened to COWLZ? So do I—and I’m part of it. Well, OK, *Cites & Insights* is now hosted on the COWLZ site at Boise State. Otherwise...it’s been a slow road in terms of anything publicly apparent. I don’t know that this is likely to change any time soon. I know I don’t have a lot of energy to provide to the effort and suspect that’s true of others.

In a way, that’s a shame. The Dangerfield Effect? Getting no respect. To put it another way, not being on the traditional radar screens. I think that’s true of most alternative and informal library publications, no matter what their inherent worth.

I’ve seen pathetic attempts at eJournals that failed after two issues—and are included in abstracting services, so the handful of articles that are published will show up where searching is done. The key is that they were defined as proper Journals, with referees and all. It’s tougher to index and abstract zines and newsletters, although partial indexing (of major articles) might be plausible. Will it happen? Would it make a difference?

Right now, I’m doubtful on either one—and I’m not ready to mount that particular horse and ride off toward that particular windmill once again.

11. The Great RSS Debate

Steven J. Bell wrote a guest *Ex Libris* published September 5: “RSS and news aggregators: What do you really need to know to keep up?” It’s **worth reading** (as are most issues of *Ex Libris*: this is #189 if you’re looking in the archives)—but when you do, you should also track down long and slightly surprising comments on the piece from two well-known “RSS bigots,” Steven Cohen (Library Stuff) and Jenny Levine (The Shifted Librarian). Check the early-September or late-August archives in each case.

Bell cares a lot about keeping up—“those combined activities that alert us to news and information about developments in the library profession

and peripheral fields that allow us to keep our skill sets current.” He has a Keeping Up Web Site (staff.philau.edu/bells/keepup). He doesn’t believe most librarians need to “delve into new technologies” to keep up—and notes that most librarians can’t find even 30 minutes a day to keep up. So he’d rather focus on getting librarians to develop a simple program rather than learning new technologies. He questions whether RSS and news aggregators really save enough time in the long run to justify learning the skills required. He says we don’t need to feel guilty about not learning to use these tools.

But he also encourages librarians to discover what aggregators are about: “If you don’t understand something, how can you make a personal judgment about whether you need it or not?” He just doesn’t think most librarians *need* aggregators to keep up. He notes a common goal with RSS proponents: “We all want to help our professional colleagues find efficient, painless ways to perform the onerous task of keeping up to date and well informed. ... Where we differ is on the means to the end.”

Cohen and Levine each take issue with some of Bell’s comments—but, to my surprise, both of them wind up concluding that RSS isn’t for everyone, and that the only real sin is not to consider new methodologies. We all have different methods for filling our information needs, methods that *work for us*—and in this case, everyone’s agreed to disagree. Amazing and encouraging.

12. Starting the Great Unwritten Novel

Here’s a fun item: “Opening gambits,” appearing June 17 in the UK’s *Independent*. The editors invited readers to submit “the best beginning to an imaginary novel, in 50 words or fewer.” More than 800 readers did so. First prize (100 books nominated for BBC’s “Big Read” project):

It started with a kick-about. Seven of us. Two weeks later, it was 20 or 30. Two months later, the youngest had lost his family and we’d lost our opportunities. It’s madness. When you put the beginning and the end next to each other and forget everything in-between. It’s insanity.

The piece includes a couple dozen other entries, including “The smell of petrol hung heavy on her lips” and this charmer:

She was thrilled to see herself described as “invincible” on the smooth pink surface of the memo, taking a sneaky look and tapping the pile into place. Until she put on her specs and saw the word was “invisible.”

I think I’ve read that book. Sometimes I think I could write it.

13. It’s Pledge Time at the Library

I see a Great Idea Man who’s always been down on real public libraries is at it again—this time with a scheme to make public libraries more like public radio. Never mind that libraries serve at least two-thirds of the public while NPR serves maybe 10%. Libraries *should* be funded by the broadest possible means—if you believe in the common good. I’m not ready to have three-week begging marathons at my library four times a year, and I’d just as soon not have “This circulation underwritten by...” hammered at me each time I check out a book, thank you. I have no objection to fundraising, memorial plaques on stacks, all that—but I sure don’t see quasi-public NPR as a model for public libraries.

14. Rewriting History on Your 128K Mac

“When the 128K Mac made its debut in 1984, one of the knocks against it was that it was a closed system, impossible to modify or upgrade. That was largely an unfair characterization—upgrades and enhancements were also few and far between for the DOS machines available then...” *Say what?* That’s the lead for Rick LePage’s “From the Editor’s Desk” in *Macworld* 20:8, and it’s garbage. The personal computing magazines of the day were thick with ads for upgrades and enhancements for MS-DOS systems (and for Apple IIs, to be sure). It’s one thing to be a Mac zealot: I expect that in *Macworld*. It’s quite another to rewrite history so boldly.

15. Black on Blue

I finally did subscribe to *Wired*, only because it was free for a year (to burn off Delta frequent flyer miles). I see the radical design has been toned down—but not completely. Take “Bill Gates, entertainment god” in the July 2003 issue (...please, as Henny Youngman would say). The article’s typical *Wired*, but the first text page is a marvel. Small sans serif black type against a gradient background ranging from dark blue to medium blue. In anything less than perfect light, the first few words on each line are invisible. I would have assumed that Condé Nast ownership would mean the end of such nonsense. I would have been wrong. To use *Wired*’s own pathetic cliché, it’s beyond tired—it’s expired.

16. Trumping Limits with Trademarks

I’m trying hard to avoid the rest of Intellectual Property: Copyright already consumes more space and attention than I’d like to give it. I try to avoid silly patents (at least they have time limits). I try to avoid trademark issues. But sometimes...

The weasel-news situation (#5) turned on trademark. You can’t copyright a title—but you may be able to *trademark* the title, just as authors have

apparently succeeded in trademarking character names and companies have succeeded in trademarking everyday words and phrases. And, properly defended, trademark can last forever.

I believe trademark practice has gone way too far in one direction. It should not be possible for a burger chain to shut down a family-owned business operating under the family's Scottish name. It should be *unthinkable* for a lawsuit to be filed regarding use of an everyday phrase, whether it's about what ways you can have it or the attributes of fairness. And in many cases, I wonder whether the lawsuits would succeed—or whether the *threat* of lawsuit is a convenient hammer that works 90% of the time.

17. Perversion of Patents

I'm sure there are legitimate software innovations that go beyond what the average skilled analyst could devise. Maybe those innovations deserve special protection so that the innovators are rewarded.

But it seems clear that a number of companies have been granted software and business-method patents that go far beyond reasonable limits, and that some of those companies are doing their best to gain rewards for things they really didn't create.

There are several problems here (patenting algorithms gets awfully tricky) but one that really gets me is a secondary problem (and goes beyond software). To wit, the emergence of companies whose only apparent business is licensing patents. Here's a suggested principle that couldn't possibly happen:

Any company where more than X% (let's say 70% for starters) of annual revenue is derived directly from patent licensing, for patents not created by people currently employed by the company, should be considered a shell, and those patents forfeited to the public domain.

Patents should reward those who develop the inventions. When patents wind up in the hands of companies where the only (or primary) business is to gain license fees, there's a disconnect between creation and reward—thus negating the Constitutional purpose of patent law.

Maybe pure-play patent companies don't really exist—companies or divisions that buy up patents from failed companies, inventors, and companies that have lost interest, and use the threat of patent-infringement lawsuits to get license fees from other companies. But my sense is that they do. And I regard that as a perversion of patents.

18. Does Wireless Have a Model?

That's the title on Steve Smith's "follow the money" column in the July 2003 *EContent*. It's an acerbic, well-informed take on the riches to be had in selling

"content" for wireless phones. You already know that American technophiles believe we'll *all* swoon over multifunction phones, with cameras, color screens, polyphonic ring tones, web browsing with that super-intuitive "press 7 four times for this letter, then 5 three times..." interface, and so on.

His lead: "Wireless is the new World Wide Web. That is not a compliment." In terms of revenue for econtent, he certainly has a point, echoed in his close. "At last count, the World Wide Web global population was at 649 million. With that kind of penetration, are you seeing fee-based revenue yet? Perhaps U.S. mobile content doesn't want to follow in those footsteps."

The wireless networks need users to buy premium services and more airtime so they can pay for those networks. And, you know, you're used to paying for additional phone services, so why not? (Of course, that's one reason wireless is a bigger hit outside the U.S.: This is one of few nations where landline telephone service, including using the phone for dial-up web access, almost always includes reliable unlimited local use for a modest monthly fee.)

Verizon claims about \$50 million in data revenues. Sprint believes that by the end of the year it might be able to get an average of \$2 per user per year. DoCoMo makes about \$15 per user in Japan. Competition is forcing the already-modest overseas revenues downward.

Smith quotes Mitch Lasky, CEO of a mobile game developer with *exactly* the kind of quote that typified the internet bubble:

Lasky...argues that cell handsets sell at the rate of over 133,000 a day, and a platform that enormous lets a smart publisher make money despite the obvious obstacles. "When you're talking about an installed base of a half-a-billion units by 2007, you don't need to get a great deal of penetration even at a dollar to see revenue."

That certainly worked out for the early internet content firms. A dollar here, a dollar there, and pretty soon you have two bucks.

19. Abusive Subpoenas & Trusting the ISP

LawMeme had an interesting essay on September 2, 2003: "Abusive e-mail subpoenas are actionable under federal law." Basically, a person suing a company sent a subpoena to the company's ISP asking for all of the company's email. The ISP complied with the subpoena. When the company found out about it—with no chance to object in advance—they went to the judge, who quashed the subpoena and fined the person to cover the expense of quashing it.

As the LawMeme author points out, the subpoena was absurdly overbroad: Most of the com-

pany's email could have had no bearing on the lawsuit. And if the ISP had fought, it would have been eligible to recover its legal expenses.

The specific case includes legal issues I won't discuss here. The discussion points up two interesting aspects, though. First, some ISPs will *not* make any effort to protect the privacy and confidentiality of their customer's records. Second...well, are all those RIAA subpoenas legitimate? (Did MIT and Boston College recover their legal expenses in quashing the RIAA subpoenas?)

20. Will DVD-R Outlive CD-R?

You can never have too many oddball statements from authoritative writers. Alfred Poor is experienced, so I was surprised by an offhand comment in his "Computer Cures" column in the August 2003 *Computer Shopper*. A person asked about copying old diskettes to CD-R. Here's part of the answer:

You might also want to invest in a recordable-DVD drive. DVDs can hold up to 4.7GB, so you'll be able to fit the data from nearly seven times as many floppies onto a single disc compared with CD-R. DVDs also have another advantage: You'll likely be able to read them in five or 10 years.

That last sentence is a non sequitur unless we are to assume that you *won't* be able to read a CD-R in five or 10 years. That future can only happen if we get DVD-ROM drives that handle today's DVD-R/DVD+R discs but *won't* read CD-Rs.

Why would that happen? Manufacturers have no incentive to drop backward compatibility and considerable incentive to retain it. I believe that the introduction of DVD essentially *increases* the useful life of CDs by another 15 years, because forward compatibility seems certain to continue.

It's worse than that. If writable DVDs are like pressed DVDs, the writing surface is only protected by half as much plastic as on CD-Rs. That tends to make recordable DVDs more vulnerable to physical stress. Maybe the DVD-R idea makes sense if the person has a truly humongous collection of diskettes but not for improved longevity over CD.

21. Nothing to Prove...

Epiphany's way too strong a word, but I did have a minor revelation during the Toronto conference. There was a point at which it seemed possible that most or all of my current writing activity might go away—and this has been a light year for speaking invitations. Looking at the whole situation, I came to a realization:

I have no particular need to prove anything. The lack of a professional degree is an old story. I've held the professional offices that interested me. I have no

interest in being an ALA Councillor. I've published more articles and columns than I ever planned to, spoken more often than I would have guessed, and published about a dozen more books than I had any need to. Some of the articles, speeches, and books have made differences in the field.

My family life is just fine, I've seen more of the world than I hoped (and plan to continue), I frequently do important and interesting things at work, and my health is (on the whole) better than it was twenty years ago.

And there are all those books to be read! My public library circulates about 16 items per capita; I'm doing more than my share, but I could read a lot more if I wasn't writing...

...to be continued

First Have Something to Say

18. Hiding Behind PowerPoint

Note: this is another free chapter from First Have Something to Say: Writing for the Library Profession, ALA Editions, 160 p., \$29, ISBN 0-8389-0851-9. Go to the ALA store (www.alastore.ala.org) or order from the usual sources.

When I first outlined this book, I had five chapters on speaking. The second outline had three chapters—and in the writing, one of those disappeared. It's hardly surprising that, as Danelle Hall notes in "A View from the Back Wall" (*American Libraries* 33 (May 2002): 64–65), a three-year search of Library Literature "turned up only a handful of articles on the subject of public speaking." Why?

Many comments I could make about public speaking have already been made about library writing, since the most common forms of library-related speaking you're likely to do—contributed papers and topical speeches—are analogous to articles both in length and form.

Hall's article provides a well-stated set of rules for presentations. I'll note some of those rules later, but also note when I believe you can break the rules.

First, a few notes on discussions, keynotes, and originality vs. repetition—the remnants of that third chapter.

Discussions

Leading a focused discussion may have nothing to do with public speaking—or, in some cases, you might be asked to kick off a discussion with a brief

commentary on the issues. In either case, your primary goals should be fivefold:

- 1. Introduce the topic and, as needed, gently guide the discussion back on topic when it strays.
- 2. Encourage participants to take part without resorting to artificial methods such as explicitly asking someone to speak up because they've stayed silent.
- 3. Discourage one or two participants from dominating the discussion—particularly difficult when you have big-mouth, self-important people in the discussion—without alienating the know-it-alls or destroying the flow of conversation.
- 4. Listen more than you talk. When you begin a discussion, and particularly when you're listed as a key participant, it's all too easy to be the dominant voice, turning an open discussion into a question-and-answer session.
- 5. Avoid personal attacks and incendiary remarks, both your own and those of others.

These aren't always simple goals to achieve. Experienced discussion-session people may note a sixth goal for many such sessions, one that I deliberately omitted:

- 6. Take good notes so that you can prepare a summary of the discussion for distribution among the group, posting on appropriate websites, or inclusion in a newsletter.

I don't believe that a discussion leader should also attempt to take notes. Instead, someone else should agree to serve as note-taker, unless someone's willing to record the session and attempt to produce notes from the recording. That's a chancy process at best.

Keynotes and Plenary Speeches

You can have a long, worthwhile career as a library public speaker without ever doing a keynote. What you usually can't do is give a keynote because you've always wanted to. Keynotes are almost always invited speeches, although I suppose you could organize your own conference if you're sufficiently intent on doing a keynote.

Keynotes and plenary speeches differ from typical speeches in several ways, in addition to the implausibility of proposing that you do a keynote:

- Keynotes and plenaries tend to be longer than other speeches, running 40 to 60 minutes (sometimes longer) instead of the typical 20 to 30 minutes.
- Keynotes are almost always more personal in tone than topical speeches and contributed pa-

pers. You're speaking to people, not simply delivering a speech, and they asked you to speak, not "some person who knows something about topic x."

- Keynotes can cover more ground than typical speeches, although some of us may overdo it. I'm probably one of the worst offenders in the field, with keynotes that sometimes include four or five major themes, but I've heard better keynote speakers cover two or three distinct themes in a single magnificent hour.
- Good keynotes can and should dispense with PowerPoint and other audiovisual aids in most cases. A keynote should be you and the audience, with technology assisting only to make you audible and visible to everyone there.

Originality and Repetition

Should you prepare each new speech from scratch, or should you give the same speech repeatedly? As with so many choices, the best answer is "Yes."

Yes, you can and should repeat the same speech when you have a carefully prepared presentation that people want to hear in many different cities on many different occasions. There is a limit, though, one that I've heard exceeded more than once. Canned speeches eventually go stale, because the world changes and because you tire of delivering the same speech. In both cases, the audience will recognize the problem—but you should spot it first and either take a break from the topic or update the speech.

Yes, you should prepare each new speech from scratch when you're being asked to do a keynote or something specific to a particular conference. I don't really mean that, of course. If you speak more than once or twice a year on similar topics, you're unlikely to write an entirely original speech on each occasion. Realistically, you should ensure that each new keynote and plenary speech is distinctive and has some new material. I try to assure that each new keynote is at least 30 percent new material or material I haven't used in two or three years, although the circumstances of the speech can increase that percentage.

There's nothing wrong with using your published articles in your speeches. Some of the people who invite you may explicitly ask you to do so. It is a little tawdry, I believe, to simply read a previously published article and call it a speech, unless the inviting parties know that's what you plan to do. I attended one conference where a very well-paid keynote speaker began by presenting a ten-minute commentary that the person next to me recognized

(word for word) from its published form. The speaker then said, “Let’s hear your ideas,” and that was it for an hour-long slot. Several thousand dollars plus expenses for absolutely no effort: where can I get gigs like that? If you have the ethics and creativity of most librarians, you wouldn’t do that if you could, and I certainly don’t suggest it.

The Web makes the situation a little more complicated. When you speak at a conference, you may be asked to provide your notes (or your PowerPoint slides or your full-text draft) for the conference website. It may even be a requirement. I’ve agreed when asked, always with the caveat that the written draft of my keynote-style speeches doesn’t necessarily have much in common with what I say.

The tricky part here is that once it’s on the Web, your carefully prepared speech is out there. People going to the next conference you speak at may Google you (or Teoma you, if you prefer) and come upon the web version. When you deliver the same speech they’ve just finished reading, they’re likely to be a little disappointed.

I’m not sure there’s much you can do about that. You can be honest, and that helps—for example, your handout might note that the speech was originally prepared for another conference. Partial overlap is another issue. Some listener disappointment can’t be avoided.

The PowerPoint Problem

The first time I spoke outside the United States was as the first of five keynote speakers (two each day, with the group as a closing panel) for a major Australian library conference. We all received the instructions for speakers, which included two mandatory elements:

- 1. We were expected to provide a written text in advance (formatted to specific guidelines) to appear as part of the conference proceedings that each attendee would receive at registration.
- 2. All presenters were expected to use PowerPoint. Each speaking venue was guaranteed to have both a Windows and a Macintosh computer hooked up to a professional-grade data projector.

I managed to acquire A4 paper (a slightly different size than American letter paper) to satisfy the first requirement. No problem. Then I sent a message to the conference managers regarding the second requirement. “I don’t use PowerPoint, particularly for a keynote.” They responded that the requirement could, of course, be waived for keynotes. I wasn’t the only prima donna. Two other

keynote speakers wanted to speak directly to the audience without the aid of presentation software.

I still don’t use PowerPoint or other visual aids in speeches, keynote or otherwise, unless it’s clearly necessary (for example, if I’m talking about web pages or typefaces, I have visuals of them). That’s probably a mistake for non-keynote speeches, and it’s not a practice I suggest you follow. Most of the time, for most regular speeches, your audience will expect PowerPoint or an equivalent and you’ll want to use it.

I have two problems with PowerPoint and equivalents, one personal and one that I regard as legitimate. The second appears as the title for this chapter.

The first is a combination of laziness, disorganization, and flexibility. I’m too lazy to carry a notebook computer to conferences and don’t own such a device. I could bring along a diskette or CD-R with PowerPoint slides, but I wouldn’t be able to change them on the spot. Disorganization and flexibility are two sides of the same coin. More than half the time, I substantially rebuild my speech both on the morning of the speech and during the speech itself. The first is tough when you’re using PowerPoint, and I’ve seen hilarious results when people do revisions half an hour before a speech. The second is nearly impossible. You wind up disrupting the flow of the speech while you attend to the mechanics of finding the right slides.

The second problem with PowerPoint applies to any visual assistance that you use throughout the speech. Too many speakers hide behind PowerPoint, “speaking to the screen” to minimize the nervousness of speaking to an audience. Too many others spell out the entire speech in an endless series of slides, reading the PowerPoint slides and providing little to interest the audience.

I understand the temptation to “speak to the screen” and the soothing knowledge that with the lights down, you don’t know who’s falling asleep or has decided to walk out. But in avoiding nerves you’ve also avoided contact. Sitting in a dark room staring at a set of bullets on the screen, I wonder why I’m not just reading an article or—better yet—watching television.

This disconnect is not a necessary consequence of using PowerPoint. Quite a few speakers use PowerPoint to anchor their speeches but maintain an audience connection, communicating brilliantly. I have seen more good speakers using PowerPoint than speakers evading their audiences, but I’ve also seen good speakers who I thought would have been more effective if the projector was off and the lights were up.

Doing It Right

If you're going to use PowerPoint, do it right, as summarized in Danelle Hall's article. Start with a title slide (your name, title, and affiliation and the title of the speech); keep the slides simple, with big type in high-contrast color combinations; don't overload any slide; and have a backup strategy in case the technology crashes.

You can use transparencies instead of PowerPoint, and you may want them as backup, but you must pay attention to type size (probably 30 point minimum on a regular transparency) and simplicity (lots of space, few lines, few words per line) as well as clarity (a simple serif or sans serif typeface, always upper and lowercase). Twelve-point type (typewriter-size) on a transparency is the kiss of death, although it's just fine for handouts. Better you should turn off the overhead projector and just talk.

If you're part of a multispeaker program, work with the moderator or the other speakers so that all of your PowerPoint presentations are on a single computer—maybe even as sections of a single file. While it can be amusing to watch the intermittent chaos as each speaker in a program tries to find the right notebook computer among the four littering the podium and figure out how to move the projector connection to that notebook, it disrupts the flow of the program and takes time that could be better used for speaking or questions.

Hall also provides useful comments on checking out your speaking location, ones every speaker should heed. Read the article: it's short, very well written, and followed by an equally short and well-written Janet Swan Hill piece on what hosts should do to make guest speakers happy.

Visit the room in advance, checking out the lighting, podium, and other arrangements. You can't always do this more than ten or fifteen minutes before your speech, as conference room arrangements may change several times a day, but you don't want to be surprised by the set-up.

Did I mention timing your speech? Do a complete run-through at least once, including PowerPoint. If you use a preview audience, make sure that you're speaking at a reasonable pace (ask them!) and that you've left a little slack time. If you don't use a preview audience, add at least 20 percent to the time you think you're taking.

Coping with Surprises

Expect surprises and know how to handle them. If you're the fourth 15-minute speaker in a 75-minute slot (with 15 minutes reserved for questions), don't

be surprised when you're left with five minutes of time. You're allowed to curse the self-important blockheads ahead of you who took 20 or 25 minutes each, but only under your breath. Know where you can cut at the last minute—and if the situation's completely hopeless, say so up front.

What will you do when there's no podium to rest your detailed notes on? In one case I still remember with horror, I should have refused to give the speech, but that's rarely an option. If you're there early, you can make your needs known—and point out that these are needs you communicated quite clearly to your host both when you agreed to speak and in a follow-up message shortly before the conference.

How do you present a fully written speech so that it doesn't look or sound like you're reading it? Memorization is good if you're up to it; otherwise, you need a combination of large type with loads of spacing, style, and luck.

What do you do when none of the technology works and your handouts didn't arrive? You deliver a brilliant speech that leads to happy listeners and lively discussion. In my experience as a listener, quite a few speakers surprise themselves when they're forced to do without props—almost always for the better. I've seen very few meltdowns in such cases, except when the speaker is so intent on restoring the technology that the aim of the speech is forgotten.

You're speaking because you have something to say. If you care about what you're saying, you'll survive the surprises—and probably do a better speech as a result.

The Library Stuff

Bollen, Johan, Rick Luce, Soma Sekhara Vemulapalli, and Weining Xu, "Usage analysis for the identification of research trends in digital libraries," *D-Lib Magazine* 9:3 (May 2003).

I'm not sure what to make of this one. I believe in the worth of log analysis and usage analysis. I assume that the three computer science people from Old Dominion University have their statistical tests in order (it's all too deep for me), as they analyze article downloads during 1998 and 2001 at the Los Alamos National Laboratory. But what I glean from the article may not be quite what's intended, particularly given the stated implications that these results "foreshadow the initial steps toward a science of DL evaluation that does not merely take into ac-

count the preferences of users, but acknowledges the relationships and semantics underlying such preferences and how they change over time.” (The same sentence in simpler form concludes the article.) The authors claim to be interested in “automated detection of user communities within a given DL, and between multiple DLs spanning multi-institutional boundaries, and enabling the evaluation of such user communities over time.” Anonymization—which was done and is critical for legitimate library research—would suggest to me that “user communities” can only be implied, not identified.

What did they find? You’ll have to read the 22-page, statistics-heavy paper to get their wording. Here’s what I gleaned, with my analogy in quotes:

- Los Alamos scientists have different patterns of journal usage than STM journal users as whole, and changes in Los Alamos patterns are different from changes in overall STM journal citation patterns. (“Oranges taste different than apples, and trends in orange consumption don’t match those in apple consumption.”)
- Changes in journal usage within Los Alamos, comparing 1998 to 2001, appear to correlate fairly well to changes in Los Alamos research projects. (“Research scientists tend to download articles from journals most relevant to their current research projects.”)

I *think* the article suggests that it’s possible to determine something about an institution’s current research priorities by looking at article downloads—but wouldn’t it be faster to ask the director?

Sorry. That belittles an article that may have profound implications. Maybe it’s just over my head. Heck, I don’t even read *JASIST* any more; that’s *all* over my head. I’ll admit I’d expect to see this article in *JASIST*—but it’s specifically related to digital libraries.

Mash, S. David, “Libraries, books, and academic freedom,” *Academe* May/June 2003. (Downloaded July 28, 2003.)

This fast-moving article carries a deceptive teaser: “Can academic freedom survive the death of the book?” The easy answer is that this is a moot question—the book isn’t dying. But that’s what the article’s about, in a way: Although “the book” shows no signs of dying in the real world, too many college administrators—and even some librarians—have been lead to believe that it is, and are acting based on that belief.

Mash notes Eastern Michigan University, where half the book collection has been moved to remote storage to make room for study areas, computers and a TV studio, and Morrell D. Boone’s astonish-

ing statement when asked how the remote storage affected book circulation. “I don’t care [because] undergraduates do all their research online now.” That’s followed by this wonderful prediction from Susan Moldow, “a publisher of electronic books,” who told *Newsweek* three years ago that the children of today’s undergraduates “are maybe never going to see a book.” Those children are being born now and will be over the next decade; the prediction is both fatuous and absurd.

We go on to read previous predictions for the book’s demise, from Ralph Lee Smith’s 1972 projection that cable TV would deliver the contents of libraries, to Christopher Evans’ 1979 comment that “the 1980s will see the book...begin a steady slide into oblivion,” to John Kountz’ 1992 *Library Hi Tech* nonsense that by 1997 the market for information printed on paper would shrink by 50%. Then Mash notes that even at Eastern Michigan, according to a history professor, Boone’s claim is “absurd and untrue.” (2002 sales of print books reached the highest level in history.)

Why does this confusion over the place of the classic library persist? Because influential and tenacious advocates for a book-free future continue to cast visions, even in the face of decades of failed ‘death-of-the-book’ prophecies.

The article goes on to offer a variety of other projections as to *why* linear books should die, suggests that “sometimes ‘nonlinear thinking’ is just newspeak for mental incoherence,” and points out that traditional narrative serves an important purpose, one that’s important to higher education as well as to fiction. Mash takes issue with the idea that education must be redesigned based on the next generation’s “visual way of thinking”: “While we are at it, let’s design a nutrition program based on this generation’s ‘way of eating,’... Higher education isn’t ‘higher’ if it doesn’t rise above the practice of tracing pre-existing ruts.” Neither is any other education, for that matter: If you’re not learning anything, what’s the point?

Note also last year’s *OCLC White Paper on the Information Habits of College Students* and its findings on contemporary college students who use the internet in their education: 89% also use the campus library’s print resources. Maybe not when Morrell Boone’s watching, but Kids These Days—at least College Kids These Days—still know enough not to rely entirely on online.

Recommended. Mash, a Ph.D. student, feels strongly about the issues discussed here. This is a longer version of an article that appeared in *Against the Grain*.

The Censorware Chronicles CIPA Miscellany

American Libraries provided good news coverage of the CIPA ruling and short-term library reactions in the August 2003 issue—accompanied by brief commentaries by Karen G. Schneider and Ron McCabe.

Schneider has been working on filtering/censorware problems for a very long time. She's one of those (as am I) who regret ALA's hardline stance on age neutrality as it relates to censorware: "The strategy was so carefully age neutral that it was destined to fail." As she says, the failure to separate overall censorware issues from age-appropriateness issues "makes us sound out of touch with society and so dogmatically allied with our policies that we cannot see the filters for the trees." She goes on to object to ALA's early response and planned actions, which turned out to be *so* out of line with member expectations that the Executive Board instructed the staff to abandon some of those plans.

I'm not sure what to say about Ron McCabe's piece, "The CIPA ruling as reality therapy." He flatly asserts that "the vast majority" of Americans support CIPA, argues that the public library is an educational institution (and apparently nothing else), and says that the Supreme Court "has extended the protection of public-library selection practices to the Internet." But what does that mean? Does McCabe sincerely believe that public libraries can or should *select* each Internet site that is to be available on any library computer? I'm a little astonished that McCabe seems to believe that ALA shouldn't use lawyers "with a strong civil-libertarian orientation." I believe ALA's insistence on age neutrality goes too far—but that's quite different than believing ALA should abandon a strong civil liberties orientation. (I would have thought it nearly impossible for an American to use "civil-libertarian" as a negative phrase. For some reason, I thought civil liberties were what made the American experiment worthwhile.) There may be other reasons to change law firms, but that's another controversy.

Library Journal has posted some quick writeups on the August 23 ALA meeting on its website, noting that the group of 30 winnowed 41 topics to five:

- Develop criteria for filters
- Provide practical information about filter implementation
- Produce public relations tools
- Create a legislative tool kit
- Research the impact of filtering on libraries and patrons.

Another quick report noted arguments during the session as to whether it would be appropriate for ALA to evaluate filters—and a suggestion by some leaders that ALA should "define for the industry what libraries need in this software" and offer a "consumer report" on how well filters meet those criteria. In that connection, Jay Currie's "six main points" may be a good starting point (see below).

A week or two after the August meeting, Nancy Kranich prepared an extensive new list of CIPA resources that appears somewhere on the ALA website, supplementing ALA's own list.

Ross Riker

Ross Riker suggests an aggressive attitude toward CIPA: "placing the CIPA burden where it rightfully belongs." He points out that, while there may be a "seemingly endless pool of *potentially* obscene or child pornography sites on the internet," CIPA refers to obscenity and child pornography as defined in the United States Code. "Because these are clearly legal definitions, I submit that only legal authorities can make a determination as to what constitutes an obscene or child pornography website. Neither libraries, nor filtering companies, have any legal authority to make such a determination." So why not ask the legal authorities to point to lists of such sites? It's not that simple, since obscenity depends on community standards and "harmful to children" has its own ungainly definition, but Riker makes an interesting point.

Jay Currie and IF2003

In the CIPA special (*Cites & Insights* 2:9), I discussed Jay Currie and IF2003 and wondered whether the company had blacklists. They do. He pointed me to "the A's," a long list of sites beginning with "A." He notes that the company will happily provide its most recent (unencrypted) list to users and potential users—but won't put the whole thing on the web because, the last time they did that, downloading posed a bandwidth problem.

His letter was refreshing because, unlike N2H2, the company he works with does "not think that our software solves the CIPA compliance question completely simply because...that is a legal question." The software does provide a minimalist approach—but it's not a censorware company as such. It's an R&D company that "long since exited the consumer end of the market"; it provides filtering software to the private sector and various organizations. There seems to be a commitment to, as he puts it, offering a "*least worst*, most transparent, blocking solution." Currie has communicated pricing and the blacklist

to ALA for use with other companies. (Currie's weblog is at www.libraryfilter.blogspot.com)

In an entry on Currie's weblog, he makes a simple suggestion for ALA:

There is nothing at all to prevent the ALA from asking each of the companies [that planned to attend the cancelled meeting] to provide:

- 1) a full copy of their block list
- 2) cost of ownership on a five year basis
- 3) the process for disabling the filter.

These are easy requirements for companies serious about working with libraries to meet [library] requirements and to do the least possible damage.

A commentary by Currie appears in the August 31, 2003 LLRX.com: "Short takes: A commentary on library Internet filtering." It's **worth reading**—although I believe Currie overestimates ALA's sway over public library decision-making. (The same issue of LLRX.com includes a feature by Mary Minow, noted below.) Currie's "six main points" that he believes librarians are concerned with:

- "Transparency—block lists must be accessible to the client
- "Flexibility—the software must easily accept changes to the blocklists, the addition of 'whitelists'
- "Disclosure—Library patrons must be notified their surfing is filtered
- "Off-switch—turning the filter off for an adult user must be very easy
- "No agenda—hidden or otherwise: librarians do not want any hint of agenda built into the software they are being forced to deploy
- "Price—full cost of ownership information—installation, special hardware, price per year."

Mary Minow

"Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA): Legal definitions of child pornography, obscenity and 'harmful to minors'" appears as a feature article at LLRX.com, published August 31, 2003. (www.llrx.com/features/updatecipa.htm). It's what you'd expect from Minow: Clear, blunt, and **well worth reading**—with the caution that it contains strong language. (The strong language is entirely verbatim statutory language.)

By now, you should be aware that CIPA only requires blocking images, never text, and that images fall into three categories: Obscenity, child pornography, and "harmful to minors." The last category need not be blocked for those 17 and over. But what do those three categories *mean*?

There is a federal definition for child pornography, 18 U.S.C. 2256, most recently modified on April 30, 2003—and there's not a chance that I'm going to quote that definition. Minow does. Key points for child pornography:

- Drawings, cartoons, sculptures and paintings are not included in the definition.
- Images of adults made to look like children are not included in the definition.
- "There is no bona fide research or lawful purpose to view child pornography." It's *always* illegal, with or without CIPA.

What about obscenity?

CIPA refers to the federal legal definition of "obscenity" at 18 U.S.C. 1460. I thought I was crazy when I looked up the code, because I didn't find a definition there. Then I read the Congressional Research Service's analysis of CIPA by Henry Cohen...and felt a little better. I'm not crazy, Congress is. Cohen writes: "[CIPA defines] 'obscene' to have the meaning given such term in 18 U.S.C. 1460, but that section does not define obscene."

In other words, there is no federal statutory definition—and the three-part Miller test relies on *state* law and *community* standards. As I've noted here before (and should always credit Kathleen Sullivan for the observation), the first two parts of the Miller test are incoherent: "to put it crudely, they require the audience to be turned on and grossed out at the same time."

The Supreme Court won't consider something obscene if it provokes *normal* "healthy sexual desires"—it must predominantly appeal to "a shameful or morbid interest in nudity, sex or excretions." If "shameful" seems like a somewhat imprecise legal test, welcome to the wonderful world of obscenity cases. (The third prong is the "merit" clause—if the work appeals to your shameful prurient interest and is patently offensive, but also has some literary, artistic, political or scientific value, it's not obscene.) As you might expect, "In practice, prosecuting obscenity cases is very tough"—but Ashcroft plans to do what he can.

So "obscene" isn't defined at the federal level; something might be obscene in Tennessee but not in California; and it's really tough to prove that something's obscene. (Minow quotes Jan LaRue of Concerned Women for America who laments that few federal obscenity prosecutions have taken place. "As long as obscenity enforcement bar remains this high, it will have no impact on the scores of major companies offering 'mainstream' hard core porn." To LaRue, this is a bad thing...but "hard core" porn is not generally illegal and won't be as long as the Supreme Court still cares about the First Amendment.)

What about harmful to minors? There is now a federal definition, as part of CIPA, but it's the Miller test (without reference to state law or community standards), with "to minors" added as appropriate. Which makes it no easier to define or apply than the Miller test.

Download this and keep it handy. Endnote 2 is particularly interesting—and suggests that validating a censorware blacklist could involve real dangers.

N2H2 Stakes its Claim (or Does it?)

N2H2 released an odd ad, "Why N2H2 is the best choice for public libraries seeking CIPA-complaint filtering." The ad states flatly, "You can ensure your CIPA compliance with N2H2's Bess filtering solution for libraries." It goes on to talk about "blocking pornography" (*not* a CIPA requirement, since most pornography is legal) "while allowing medical and educational material of a sexual nature or sexual material that contains no images." What about *legal* sexual material that does contain images? As to ease of disabling: "Filtering can be disabled for a library patron in matter of seconds by entering a username and password..." And, of course, the ad relies heavily on the Kaiser study, claiming that it confirms "N2H2 delivers the highest quality filtering available." The study said no such thing, although it may be true that *of the programs evaluated* N2H2's lowest setting did the least damage, blocking a tenth of legal "controversial" sex sites and letting through 13% of porn sites. Again, CIPA doesn't ban porn.

A press release cited in Jay Currie's weblog notes N2H2's broader statement: "Links to pornography, graphic violence or illegal information are just a few examples of search results that are a far cry from the child's initial interest." CIPA says nothing about graphic violence or illegal information.

David Burt wrote an *ex parte* comment to the FCC as it was preparing its rules. You won't be surprised to hear that the comment repeats the claim that N2H2 has been found—twice—to be the "most effective filter at blocking pornographic websites" (irrelevant as that may be), but you might be surprised to hear how *open and friendly* N2H2 is:

Since N2H2's products are among the most easily disabled by staff, and have been shown to be among the most effective, and N2H2 publishes its blocking criteria, N2H2 would almost certainly benefit from the FCC imposing "effectiveness," "unblocking," and "open criteria" standards.

But N2H2 doesn't want to see such standards—it "strongly opposes regulations by the FCC that require a degree of effectiveness, a degree of ease in disabling or unblocking a filter, or a degree of disclosure in blocking criteria." Say, for example, regula-

tions requiring that libraries have access to the blocking lists for those categories covered by CIPA—and that censorware companies have such categories rather than the broader category "pornography."

Things get more interesting in David Burt's response to written questions regarding the proposed exemption from DMCA (for decrypting censorware blacklists). To quote:

Schools and libraries that feel they must comply with CIPA in order to retain needed funds, but do not want to purchase a "closed list" filtering product can purchase "open list" or "open source" products and still be in compliance with CIPA. Opponents [of the exemption] have identified three such "open list" products that are readily available to schools and libraries.

Burt mentions BioNet, which purchased Net Nanny and provides an unencrypted list, as well as open-source products SquidGuard and Dan's Guardian. Naturally, Burt says that these products "are much less effective than commercial-grade filters with copyright-protected databases." [Of course, an unencrypted database is just as copyrightable as one that's encrypted, but never mind. More to the point, "effective" is one of those words that requires a *lot* more explanation.] Here's the kicker, and I believe that libraries should be ready to quote *the spokesperson for N2H2 and some other censorware companies*:

While these products are less effective than "closed list" products, the FCC has issued rules related to CIPA compliance that do not require any specific degree of effectiveness to comply with CIPA.

Taken all in all, this section of the response constitutes a clear statement from the only public face for N2H2, 8e6, and Bsafe Online that open-list and open-source filters are, *in his opinion*, fully compliant with CIPA. Who better to make that assurance than the PR person for the company that claims to be the best on the market?

National Coalition against Censorship

Joan E. Bertin of the National Coalition Against Censorship weighed in with "Big brother meets Catch-22," a news piece on the CIPA decision. It's a tough brief piece, marred to some extent by one error: "It requires libraries receiving federal funds for internet access to install filters to block *anything* considered 'harmful to minors.'" [Emphasis added.] Not true: CIPA addresses only images, not text. (I used to make the same mistake, but by now I understand the need to be clear about what's included.)

Bob Bocher

Bob Bocher offered "A CIPA toolkit" in the August *Library Journal*. It's well done and worth reading. I

might guide you to the online version (you should be able to find it, and I think there's a link in the print version), if only because it includes a "CIPA Resources" sidebar that's missing from the print version—and that sidebar include *Cites & Insights* 3:9. (Bocher spells out the ampersand, but that's OK.) Bocher also updated the Wisconsin FAQ on CIPA and added a brief compliance version. The latter is at www.dpi.state.wi.us/dltcl/pld/cipafaqlite.html.

American Civil Liberties Union

The ACLU released a memorandum on August 1, including their expectations and the possibility of future litigation. The ACLU thinks it "highly unlikely that libraries will be sued for not censoring enough"—but it seems clear enough that such suits will now come through the backdoor of sexual harassment claims. They're looking for cases of libraries that "refuse to unblock sites or turn off unblocking software (at least for adults) or make unblocking onerous." This is a generally clear, plain-spoken discussion that should be readily obtainable from www.aclu.org. But I'd beware of one piece of advice, shortly after the suggestion that libraries "probably can comply by setting up a system that turns off the software without a face-to-face request to a librarian" (which also strikes me as plausible):

We think libraries could probably have a bank of computers where the librarian turns off the software every morning or maybe even where the computers have been permanently configured with the software turned off. Then, adults who want to use terminals are told prior to their use that these are computers where the software is turned off and they should not use them unless they want unfiltered access.

Much as I believe SCOTUS' version of CIPA is a largely-useless bad law, I think ACLU goes too far here. I don't see how you can translate the court's "can ask that it be turned off without any question" into "it's off, and you shouldn't use this computer if you want it on." But what do I know?

The Why Files

I remember "the Why Files" at the University of Wisconsin-Madison from a very silly law suit by Fox (claiming confusion with *The X Files*); I discussed it in *Cites & Insights* 1:2. The Why Files now include "Fighting filth or filtering the first amendment?," posted July 17, 2003. It's a good discussion—but it does give the wrong age ("under age 16" and later "16 or older," both a year too young). I could do without one photo caption, "In the olden days, libraries bought books. Now they buy Internet access..." Well, a *few* libraries still buy books (but I recognize the need to be amusing). Generally a worthwhile piece, at whyfiles.org/181internet_filter/.

FCC and IMLS

Both the FCC and IMLS released their compliance documents. The FCC's order got much broader coverage, probably because it affects libraries more directly. The good news is that libraries have until July 1, 2004 to have "technical protection measures" actually operating, as long as they can certify that they're working on it now. The bad or neutral news is that the FCC didn't provide any useful details. EFF pointed that out in a press release; News.com chose to emphasize that "libraries get a break." Seth Finkelstein notes that FCC didn't say anything new and referred back to the old (suspended) compliance ruling, which relies heavily on good faith efforts.

The IMLS compliance document shows the differences between erate rules and LSTA rules. "Under the LSTA program, disabling is permitted during use by any person... (disabling permitted for both adults and minors." Otherwise, it's comparable to the FCC order.

NTIA and Marjorie Heins' commentary

Then there's the NTIA report, "Study of technology protection measures in Section 1703." The report was mandated as part of CIPA. It came out in August. It's 49 pages long. And it is thoroughly disappointing.

Marjorie Heins nails it in the title of her commentary at the Free Expression Policy Project: "The government's new report is a sales pitch for internet filters." You'll find the report at www.fepproject.org/commentaries/ntiareport.html; it's only two pages (plus notes) and **well worth reading**. She picks up defects in the report I'd missed—such as NTIA's call for image recognition technology, even though using image recognition to distinguish humans engaging in sex from other images has been "notoriously unsuccessful." Heins notes that the report "naïvely" accepts the claims of filter makers that they already offer many of the features desired by educators. Either the NTIA was unbelievably naïve, or it told Congress just what Congress wanted to hear.

And in Other News

It should come as no surprise that COPA is headed back to the Supreme Court one more time. Theodore Olson may have won on CIPA, but filtering isn't enough: children remain "unprotected from the harmful effects of the enormous amount of pornography on the World Wide Web," according to AP coverage on August 13.

The Good Stuff

Easterbrook, Gregg, "We're all gonna die!" *Wired* 11:7 (July 2003). (Downloaded from www.wired.com June 18, 2003.)

Omigod. Earth's core is about to explode, destroying the planet and everything on it! That is, unless a gigantic asteroid strikes first. Or an advanced physics experiment goes haywire, negating space-time in a runaway chain reaction. Or the sun's distant companion star, Nemesis, sends an untimely barrage of comets our way. Or...

That's the first paragraph of this "skeptical guide to Doomsday," a **recommended** rundown of some of the more popular current doomsday scenarios and why they're relatively unlikely. Easterbrook notes that a number of "sober PhDs" are behind some of the recent predictions of disaster—although this isn't anything new. (Isaac Asimov devoted a book to the variety of possible ways the world could end; it's fair to say Asimov was not losing sleep over the imminent likelihood of such destruction.)

We *are* all gonna die: That's true enough. But it's highly unlikely that, to quote Tom Lehrer, "we will all go together when we go." This piece offers some calming evidence regarding ten of the hottest ways for us to all go together. I rather like the first "scenario" discussed: astrophysicist J. Richard Gott III's "95 percent probability" prediction that humanity will survive somewhere between 205,000 and 8 million more years. As Easterbrook notes, Gott's academic reputation won't suffer if humanity lasts longer than 8.1 million more years: "It will be a little late to revoke his tenure."

Smith, Steve, "P2P in B2B: getting past the "N" word," *EContent* 26:7 (July 2003): 20-4.

Here's an interesting take: Decentralized content delivery networks use a variant of peer-to-peer technology to speed delivery. The article offers a few illustrations of companies using these technologies within intranets and over the internet—but of course they call them content networks or grid distribution, not P2P.

It's an interesting article, even if Smith uses the dread "I word" in the last paragraph: "For proponents of P2P, however, resistance is futile and decentralization of content is *inevitable*." What's *not* considered in the article is that such networks could very well be outlawed as collateral damage in the desire of some Congresscritters to make Big Media even happier. Some current proposals would have the effect of making P2P nearly illegal. But, hey, if it

might eliminate one evil pirate from downloading that one felonious song, so what if it eliminates an effective way for companies to improve currency, speed delivery, and save money?

Canter, Sheryl, "Effective immunity," *PC Magazine* 22:14 (August 19, 2003): 66.

I like this because it contains key advice for keeping your PC safe in a very short form. I assume you're sensible enough to change Windows settings so that all extensions always appear, particularly in mail attachments; that you *never* click on an attachment that's in any way questionable; and that you have Norton AntiVirus or some competitor running all the time with frequently-updated signatures.

As I found out last month, that's not always good enough, even if you're a dialup user. I got msBlasted (just before the NAV update that would catch it reached my PC). Oh, I got rid of it, but for three days the internet was essentially off limits.

In my case, the key tip here is #4: "Most malware is spread via e-mail attachments. A personal firewall that quarantines potentially dangerous attachments can keep your system safe and prevent viruses from spreading." I knew about the first part (and I don't use Outlook)—but who would think to use a firewall on a dialup computer?

I do now. Norton seems to almost give away its Personal Firewall, possibly because ZoneAlarm is free and may be good enough for most people. With the Norton firewall in place, I'm seeing the occasional alert—and I'm also fairly confident that, even if I was infected, things would stop right there.

I'm not saying you should all add firewalls—although, when you can sometimes get NAV *and* Norton Personal Firewall for less than \$30 combined, it's not a bad idea. I am saying that you need to be alert, particularly with worms and viruses that look like they're from your boss—and with things like msBlast that don't require email.

Or, of course, you could just disconnect. That's tempting at times, but it would make uploading *Cites & Insights* difficult.

Littman, Dan, "Cheap ink probed," *PC World* 21:9 (September 2003): 22-6.

Does it make sense to buy third-party ink for your inkjet printer? This article investigates that question from several angles. The editors took three popular printers, one of which uses the same cartridges as my new multipurpose unit. They purchased compatible ink from several sources, compared yield and print quality, and asked Wilhelm Imaging Research to test longevity.

Yes, you can save money—although for two of the three printers, the savings don't really amount to much. For the Canon S900, assuming 5% coverage for all colors on each page, Canon's own cartridges will cost 7.8 cents a page, while third-party cartridges cost 3.2, 5.1, and 6.7 cents respectively. (These costs are for four-color printing; all-black printing is typically much cheaper.) It's even closer for Epson's Stylus C82: 7.1 cents for its own inks and 4.9 or 5.8 cents for competitors—most of which didn't provide comparable quality. Where longevity's concerned, there's no comparison, particularly because the Epson inks are DuraBrite inks expected to last for decades. Wilhelm estimates the life of a photo printed using Epson DuraBrite inks and Epson paper at 92 years(!); "competitors" ranged from half a year to one year.

HP's a slightly different story. The DeskJet 3820 has a per-page cost of 15.5 cents; competitors costs 4.4 and 5.2 cents.

There's more. Some third party black inks for Epson plugged up printhead nozzles "so quickly and consistently that we had to abort some of our tests." Some Canon "competitor" cartridges also plugged printhead nozzles.

If you're printing so much that a penny or two a page is a big deal, maybe you should consider a laser printer for text printing. The comparative costs are much higher for photos, of course, since they can run 30-60% coverage for each color. But then, for the Epson at least, if you plan to keep a photo for even two years, there's no comparison: In the long run, Epson's consumables cost less.

Mini-Perspectives 2

41 at 58, Continued

22. The Wal-Mart of Hardware

I think *Wired* intended that as a compliment in its "The Wired 40" for 2003 (July 2003). It's in the Dell Computer writeup: "Promise: Dell will become the Wal-Mart of Hardware." Dell's only #15—Wal-Mart itself is #13, with the promise that "Wal-Mart will continue to redefine efficiency in retailing." "Efficiency" is one of those interesting terms; substitute "cutthroat labor practices, destroying local businesses, and relying on cheap third-world merchandise" and Dell might not *want* to be the Wal-Mart of hardware. It's a great list: nVidia is #22 in a writeup that mentions Intel—but says not a word about ATI, rapidly beating nVidia as the graphics leader. ATI's not on the list or, apparently, on *Wired's* hip radar.

23. See You in Winston-Salem?

A few of you at least—for the North Carolina Library Association's biennial conference. I'll be there beginning September 23 (most of these numbers are arbitrary, but not all) for the whole thing—delivering the Ogilvie Lecture, doing a *very* informal table talk, and attending as many interesting programs and special events as possible.

This year's a light one for speaking in general—but a great one for state library conferences. Three in one year: What a pleasure!

I'll be in South Carolina as well, in early November for the Charleston Conference. That's mostly learning, although I'll be on one or two panels as well.

24. Data Visualization?

Personally, I Can't See It—Maybe You Can

The last-page column in the July 2003 *EContent* talks about the wonders of data visualization. David M. Scott fairly swoons over the free "anacubis" viewer for Google searches—"relationships and links to and from each search term are immediately visible. Rather than the traditional linear search using straight text, visualization of the information makes exploring fun again." I've tried several visualization tools. I've found them bemusing and disappointing—but I'm not particularly a visual person. On the other hand, I thought that for most of us, the point of searching was to *find*, not to explore...and most people in love with visualization seem to spend more time talking about the joys of exploring. (Of course, I didn't get "little goosebumps of awe" the first time I used a browser either. Different strokes.)

25. Desktops Outsell Notebooks.

Notebooks Outsell Desktops.

Just as I was submitting the November/December "PC Monitor" column for *Online* about the survival of desktops as the most common computer, I read a news item saying that notebooks now outsell desktops. I modified the piece slightly, but also noted that "outsell" means revenue, not actual sales. Given the 50% (and more) premium for notebooks, that still means desktops considerably outsell notebooks in numbers. Now it turns out that the news item oversimplified a key point, as noted in *PC Magazine* (August 19, 2003): The report (for May 2003) was for *retailers*. That leaves out direct sales (Dell, Gateway) and corporate sales—in other words, most of the market. I suspect it distorts the market as well, given the relative lack of top-name desktops in the retail market as compared to notebooks.

26. If There Weren't Suckers, There Wouldn't be Spam

An August 6 *Wired News* piece by Brian McWilliams is a little depressing. He answers a question I've pondered: "Who in their right mind would buy something from a spammer?"

Amazing Internet Products tends to leave order logs exposed on their websites. One of those logs shows that, during one month, *six thousand people* placed orders for the Pinnacle herbal supplement, typically ordering two \$50 bottles each. That's more than half a million dollars in one month. (Pinnacle is supposed to make a certain male member HUGE. A columnist who ordered the pills and took them for 30 days recounted the experience. "Day one: No change. Day two: No change. Day three: No change. Days four through 30: See above.")

So who's out for specialized personal growth, enough to place \$100 orders on a website with no phone number, mailing address, email address—or even a secure link for credit card information? The manager of a \$6 billion mutual fund; a Boulder, CO restaurateur; a Rotarian who's president of a California airplane parts seller; the coach of a Pennsylvania elementary school lacrosse club. Also a chiropractor, veterinarian, and a number of women. One salesman (who hasn't received his pills yet) thought the site must be legitimate—because it had "As seen on TV" on the page. What more proof could any reasonable person want?

This particular operation is run by Braden Bournival, a 19-year-old New Hampshire high school dropout and chess whiz. There's office space in Manchester where Bournival's little sister puts the bottles in envelopes and ships them off. The company pays someone \$5 per bottle and pays another \$10 per order (not per bottle) to the spam-sending affiliates. Now that's profit.

But there is honor among some spammers. The company is sloppy with its order logs and doesn't understand security, and who knows what's in the useless pills? But "Brad has a weird sense of ethics. He would never use a stolen credit card, and he honors requests for refunds."

27. Redefining the Big Screen

Take a ruler. Draw a rectangle 2.3 inches high and 3 inches wide. Cut it out and compare it to your PC display, or your TV set, or your notebook display. Now consider that rectangle as a "big" display for watching video or movies.

If "big" seems like a misnomer to you, welcome to the wonderful world of *Computer Shopper* "if it's new, it's wonderful" hype. The August 2003 "gear"

section features Archos' \$569 AV320 Video Recorder, essentially a clunky iPod-equivalent with a color video screen on one side. Not only does it feature "a big 3.8-inch color TFT screen," it has a "roomy 20GB hard drive" (not like those skimpy 30GB drives on other devices), it can hold "up to 10 of your favorite flicks"—not unlikely, given the 320x240 resolution and probably limited color palette of the unit. It measures a "slight 3.2x4.4x2.1 inches" and weighs a "mere 12.5 ounces."

For comparison, the iPod 30GB measures 4.1x2.4x0.7 inches and weighs a "slight" 6.2 ounces. (Same issue, and the iPod review doesn't call the size "slight." It does call the 30GB drive "hefty." So I guess "slight" is half as much as "mere," and "hefty" is half again as much as "roomy.")

By my standards, 12 ounces is hefty for a pocket device, although it's light for a display. What I don't see in the "gear" writeup is any idea of battery life. Or, for that matter, why anyone would consider 320x240 to be acceptable resolution for video.

If "big" isn't enough, the September 2002 "Gear" section leads off with a PDA that has a "large, bright" screen—160x160 pixels! It's also called "high-resolution," which is interesting given that no PDA on the market offers lower resolution (as far as I know). I suppose 160x160 is "high resolution" for a cell phone, and the Handspring Treo 600 is a phone/PDA combo—but it also weighs 6oz. and measures "just" 4.4x2.3x0.9". You do get a huge "up to" five hours of talk time—and the battery's not removable. The price isn't set, since it will be sold by cell phone providers.

28. The Observed Life Redux

In August 2003 (*Cites & Insights* 3:10) I grumped about the DARPA and Microsoft Research projects to capture everything you see, read, do, or whatever, to make a life database. I thought (and think) it was a terrible idea, and the more I think about it, the more I treasure the power of forgetting.

DejaView's Camwear isn't quite the same thing, although something like it would be a tool in the observed life. The device costs \$300 and up and consists of a tiny little camera that you mount on your glasses, lapel, or hat, and a storage device. The story appears in the August 19, 2003 *PC Magazine*, and the writeup is fairly enthusiastic.

The little camera *constantly* records 320x240 motion video, storing a 30 second loop at all times. When you see something interesting, you press a button; the camera saves the last 30 seconds and starts recording continuously. The writeup calls 320x240 "web friendly," which is true in that such low resolution won't yield huge file sizes. That's one-

seventeenth of the screen on my home PC: Bigger than a postage stamp, but not by much.

I have two minor questions and one major one:

- How much battery life do you get from this always-on, always-recording device?
- If you want to be able to record more than a couple of minutes of your life, how heavy, bulky, and expensive will the device be—and how much faster will batteries die?
- *Why?* That is, why on earth would you really want to be going around all the time aware that you could “back up 30 seconds” any time you want, and save whatever in a tiny little image for posterity?

I’ve read weblogs saying life should have a backup button, so obviously I’m not the target demographic. This little charmer, along with all those camera phones, should make for some interesting privacy litigation when identifiable people (who aren’t celebrities) appear on the web in odd situations when they didn’t know they were being photographed.

29. Remember Hand Scanners?

How About Hand Printers?

I remember handheld scanners. Until this July (when I bought a multifunction printer), I hadn’t owned a scanner since I stopped using a little Logitech handheld (probably in 1992). So here’s the opposite: a handheld *printer*! A brief piece in the August 19, 2003 *PC Magazine* discusses Random Movement Printing Technology from PrintDreams of Krista, Sweden. The printer, “the size of a deck of cards,” grabs content via Bluetooth. You move it back and forth across a piece of paper. Optical navigation sensors figure out where the printhead is and “paint” the image appropriately.

Commercial products should supposedly appear in 2005. I can’t say whether this makes any sense or not. Reading the item, my b**s** detector doesn’t go to red alert: The technology may be another solution in search of problems, but it’s plausible that it could work. After all, the Logitech worked—sort of.

30. When 59% Makes 86%

One unlikely personal “goal” might be to speak (by invitation) in every state and the District of Columbia. I don’t expect to live long enough (or speak often enough) to reach that goal. Around the time I got halfway—when I’d spoken in 24 states and DC—I thought about the logistics that make that goal unlikely.

The heading tells the tale. As of now, I’ve spoken by invitation in 29 states and DC: 59% of the total. But those states include 240.6 million of the United States’ 281.4 million people: 85.5% of the total.

New Jersey is the only *very* populous state I haven’t spoken in, with 8.4 million people. After that, you drop down to Oklahoma (2.9 million), Mississippi (2.8 million), Kansas (2.7 million), Arkansas (2.7 million), and Utah (2.2 million). That makes sense: Populous states hold bigger conferences and are more likely to invite out-of-state speakers. Looking at it another way, I’ve already spoken in all but one of the states with more than 3.5 million people (24 of 25)—but in only two of the eight with fewer than a million.

31. Too Many Memories

In a *Wired* opinion piece, David Vaskevitch of Microsoft drools over a future in which we each have terabytes of digital snapshots, all organized automatically with a wonderful new operating system, and refutes an earlier comment that we could suffer from memory overload. “Au contraire; overload is a problem created by physicality.” In Vaskevitch’s new world, “photos will categorize themselves ‘automagically’ and provide us with a second memory system—a backup for our brains—that eventually will be, in its own way, as powerful as the first.” He says such computers will “elicit emotion” and asks “is there really such a thing as too many memories?”

But then, he also says “*everybody* takes snapshots.” No we don’t. Tens of millions of us in the U.S. don’t bother (my wife takes well-composed photos; why should I take snapshots?)—just as tens of millions of us apparently don’t need cell phones.

As to his question: Yes, I believe “too many memories” can be a problem. Selective forgetting is a powerful tool, not only to sharpen what we remember but also to let us reread, re-view, revisit. I pity those with eidetic memories; I love going back to a book, a movie, an island, and seeing afresh something that I’ve seen before (and mostly forgotten).

32. Dude, You’re Getting Screwed

That’s the subhead for an interesting essay by Ian Goldberg at www.cypherpunks.ca/dell.html. The headline: “Dell’s Software License Policy.” It illustrates a case of licensing gone berserk, and although the story’s from Canada I’d guess it applies just as well here. To wit:

Ian and Kat Hanna ordered a new Dell Inspiron 5100 notebook. Ian pushed the on button and, after the usual startup stuff, got a Dell screen asking that he read all software license agreements that came with programs—and then “press any key” to indicate that he’s read the licenses and agrees to their terms.

But there are no license agreements in the box—and the shrinkwrapped CDs are limited by an invoice statement that says the customer’s bound by

the agreement as soon as the seal is broken. So he can't see the licenses without agreeing to them first, and as soon as he does anything with the computer, he's agreed to them. He called Dell support; naturally, they want him to press various keys to see the licenses—ignoring the fact that he'd be agreeing to the licenses at that point. "I ask her if she really means that I have to agree to the licenses before it's at all possible that I've read them. She says 'yes.'" After talking to a supervisor, he gets to Customer Care, which suggests going online to read the licenses, but by the way Dell can't tell him what companies have software on the notebook.

The outcome? The manager of customer service says Goldberg should just lie—agree to documents he hasn't read. All the manager can do is take the notebook back. Dell can't send copies of the agreements. "I'm just bewildered that Dell corporate policy is that users need to lie to use their new laptops, and to agree to legal agreements that it's completely impossible to have read."

33. Software Customer Bill of Rights

Following up on Dell's problem, some weblog pointed me to Cem Kaner's blog and a lengthy August 27, 2003 posting (blackbox.cs.fit.edu/blog/kaner/archives/000124.html) with the title above. Kaner proposes a ten-step program to restore integrity, trust, consumer confidence, and sales. The posting discusses each point; here are the principles:

Let the customer see the contract before the sale. Disclose known defects. The product (or information service) must live up to the manufacturer's and seller's claims. User has right to see and approve all transfers of information from her computer. A software vendor may not block customer from accessing his own data without court approval. A software vendor may not prematurely terminate a license without court approval. Mass-market customers may criticize products, publish benchmark study results, and make fair use of a product. The user may reverse engineer the software. Mass-market software should be transferable. When software is embedded in a product, the law governing the product should govern the software.

These all seem reasonable. The essay may help you understand why that's true—and also why adoption of such a bill of rights would be a huge change in the current situation.

34. Can You Have Freedom *of* without Freedom *from*?

Dahlia Lithwick posted an interesting "jurisprudence" essay at *Salon* on August 23: "Thou shalt not pray: Does the Constitution hate god?" The back-

ground is, of course, the Alabama Supreme Court judge who stealthily installed a 5,000-pound monument to the Ten Commandments in the rotunda of the Alabama State Judicial Building.

Many, particularly from the religious right, grumble that the separation of church and state has gone way too far. Lithwick does argue that the current test used by the Supreme Court in judging church-and-state cases is "stupid law," and has been refined to *erode* the wall between church and state. The usual test these days is whether the state appears to be endorsing a particular religion—or endorsing religion in general over atheism. (That's Lithwick's term. I regard atheism as a religion, so I'd say "religion in general over lack of religion." I suspect agnosticism is the closest you can get to lack of religion, other than the "I go to church every Easter, but I never let those sermons interfere with screwing my fellow man" attitude of some people.)

The essay is specific to religion. I firmly believe that, unless people are free to be irreligious without consequences, there is no freedom of religion. But I also believe that holds true for a number of other fundamental freedoms.

35. Updating the Major Themes: Filtering

How has my thinking changed on "major themes" since the Silver Edition (2:11)? When it comes to filters, I've started using "censorware" in the knowledge that it makes my bias clear. Existing software "filters" don't act to offer only the good stuff. They censor—not only stuff that really doesn't belong on library computers but much larger quantities of stuff that's fully legal and (in many cases) important, not only because of overbroad blocking but because of accidental overblocking. And, showing my own lack of consistency, if I was a library director I'd probably still use software on computers in the children's room that went beyond CIPA requirements.

36. Copyright Imbalance

Yes, I'm still somewhere in the middle. I believe in property rights, including "intellectual property." I believe that downloading of copyrighted materials is unethical as well as illegal (but the crime is infringement, not theft). I also believe in fair use, the First Sale doctrine, and the need for libraries to be able to circulate materials without difficulty. I believe Big Media has gone way overboard on overprotection—and I'm delighted to see that some people in Congress are becoming aware of the imbalance.

37. Ebooks and Etext

Ebook appliances are still dead in the general marketplace, and HP's announcements don't change that. The problems with print on demand haven't

been solved, but the promise continues to grow. Digital rights management is another large (and intractable) problem with commercial ebook downloading. I find it odd and sad that extended books still haven't shown much life; maybe this stuff is even harder than I think.

38. Scholarly Access

In the Silver Edition, I said this was “probably” my next major theme. So it is. My thoughts about ideal and likely “solutions” in this sphere are still evolving. I'll continue to follow some aspects of the open access/STM crisis/open archiving/etc. complex, since it concerns academic library futures as much as any of the other themes. Will my own opinions continue to evolve? I certainly hope so: I may be old, but I'm too young for intellectual rigor mortis.

39. Who's Out There?

Until this year, I had no way of knowing how many people were downloading each issue. The home page counter offered some vague indication, but I knew it was off for at least two reasons:

- Many people were referred directly to individual issues by people kind enough to mention *Cites & Insights* in their weblogs, making the count too low.
- Although I naïvely assumed that nobody would download a given PDF more than once, it was fair to assume that they might hit the home page more than once for each issue, making the count too high.

My best guess in June 2001 was that 1,000 to 1,400 copies of each issue were being downloaded. My guess in mid-August 2002 was in the same range.

Now I have a much better idea of unique downloads. Contemporary issues are downloaded 5,000 to 7,000 times each—but that includes a surprising number of repeat downloads. Unique downloads for this year's issues range from 1,453 to 2,033, with the exception of the CIPA Special (3,231 unique downloads as of September 1). My educated guesses as to overall readership appear to be roughly right, and maybe it's growing slowly.

The current website for *Cites & Insights* has had visitors from 119 nations. Second place for most visits varies between the UK and Canada, with Australia trailing Japan.

40. Mea Culpa

This set of mini-perspectives is probably a terrible idea. It hides some trends and quick takes. It takes up too much space. It's *much* too personal. Maybe the last isn't a fault: *Cites & Insights* is, after all, a zine, not a faceless newsletter. I believe numerology plays the same part in human affairs as astrology (If

you believe in it, it influences you for that reason; if you don't, it doesn't), but numbers are fun.

Some of you should breathe a sigh of relief. As I've looked at recent manifestos, I've wondered what it would be like to write one. I knew I wanted something to mark the 41st issue. The filename for this perspective is “unmanifesto”—a reminder that this isn't one. Nor is one in the works.

41. ...But Lots to Do

It may be true that I have nothing left to prove. It may be true that I could slide slowly into retirement over the next seven or eight years, reading more, writing and speaking less (or not at all), and enjoy the whole process. It's true that, if fate decreed that some current obligations went away, I would not go into a frenzy trying to replace them.

On the other hand...

I do still have things to say. New areas continue to interest me and my opinions continue to evolve. The most widely downloaded *Cites & Insights* (the CIPA Special) was in an area I didn't think about much three or four years ago.

I hope to continue doing columns in print magazines and journals. I hope to continue speaking now and then. I plan to write another two or three books, if all goes well—maybe more.

As for *Cites & Insights*? This was the first stopping point. The next would be Issue 50, June or July 2004. After that, the obvious point would be January 2005: Ten years after “this all” began. Circumstances can change rapidly but somehow even that seems arbitrary. If, that is, people still find this worth reading and I still find it fun to write.

The Details

Cites & Insights: Crawford at Large, Volume 3, Number 12, Whole Issue 41, ISSN 1534-0937, is written and produced at least monthly by Walt Crawford, a senior analyst at RLG. Opinions herein do not reflect those of RLG. Comments should be sent to wcc@notes.rlg.org. *Cites & Insights: Crawford at Large* is copyright © 2003 by Walt Crawford: Some rights reserved.

Except for quoted material and portions of *First Have Something to Say*, this work is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial License. To view a copy of this license, visit <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/1.0> or send a letter to Creative Commons, 559 Nathan Abbott Way, Stanford, California 94305, USA.

URL: cites.boisestate.edu/civ3i12.pdf