Cites & Insights
Crawford at Large
Libraries • Policy • Technology • Media

Making it Work Perspective
Five Years Later:
Library 2.0 and Balance

We begin with a dream I had in December 2010. I was in some big ALA gathering of library folks, sitting next to a colleague. There was a *lot* of audience discussion on various issues. At one point, the colleague and I were discussing an idea one of us had for a new library-related service: One we thought *might* be beneficial, might fail abjectly, and could probably be tried as a pilot project with a very small effort.

> I think the idea was to set up paperback-exchange shelves in the visitor's centers at national and state parks, particularly those with overnight camping—places where people could drop off books they'd finished and pick up books that might interest them at the moment. No checking in and out, no staff, no security, just a place similar to those in some public libraries and cruise-ship libraries, seeded with contributions from some libraries and bookstores in the region. For all I know, such exchanges may already exist at some parks, or the idea may have already been tried and found wanting. This was a dream, remember.

Others in the audience got wind of the idea and started discussing various aspects...and soon, there was a big discussion that seemed to involve deciding which *set of* ALA divisions and roundtables should be part of a coordinating committee to consider the issues and develop a plan for implementing the Park Book Exchange Project. People were discussing the need for a comprehensive database of parks, guidelines for suitable locations in visitor centers, approaches for contacting park personnel to assure cooperation, roll-out planning so all PBEs could go live at the same time, publicity and advertising budgets, etc., etc...it was clear that the planning effort alone would be a multi-year project.

And I started getting grumpy (yep, even in my own dreams: what can I say?). People noticed, and since the idea had (apparently) come from me in the first place, some said "Give Walt a chance to say what's on his mind." They got me up on stage. This resulted in a certain number of sneering remarks from some in the audience as to why an old fart should have anything to say. Ignoring that, I said something like this:

> Hold on. This was a little idea for a pilot project that two or three people could carry out in a few hours—a day or two at the most—with the cooperation of one or two park rangers. It might turn out to be a stupid idea, one that fails rapidly. It might turn out to be a *typical* new approach: One that works brilliantly some places, has little effect in others and is a futile embarrassment in still others.

Inside This Issue

> A handful of people who want to see it happen can try it out. If they fail, others might or might not learn from that failure. With luck, others will learn enough to see whether this makes sense for their own situation.
>
> But if you load all this planning stuff on the front end, you assure three things:
>
> 1. There won't be any benefits at all for two or three years, *minimum*—and this kind of complex planning process has a tendency to take longer than anyone could imagine.
>
> 2. You won't get the chance to learn from failure because you'll have invested so much in the project that you'll *have* to assume success and keep rolling it out regardless.
>
> 3. If this turns out not to work well or, more likely, not to work well *everywhere*, it will be much more difficult to shut down the failing cases.
>
> Please. *Stop*. Enough with the overplanning and multidivisional task forces. Let a few people try this out cheaply, quickly, easily. Build on those attempts. Don't make it into A Big Thing before you know whether it works at all.

I wasn't anywhere near that articulate—I was dreaming, after all. I growled some simpler version of this—"Will you all for Gaia's sake stop over-planning and just let a few experimentalists *try*?" might have summed it up—and probably ended by stalking off the stage and out of the room.

And your point is?

One truly beneficial result of the whole "Library 2.0" phenomenon is that some (by no means all) library groups and libraries recognize the virtue of small, rapidly-deployed, "failable" projects: ones done without a lot of planning and deployment, ones that can grow if they succeed, die if they fail and in many cases serve as learning experiences.

Not that such small projects are new to Library 2.0, but I believe the rhetoric and experiences of Library 2.0 made the virtues of small projects more evident to some library folk who had forgotten them.

It's also *certainly* the case that, used thoughtfully, the tools and techniques of the web and the internet expand the universe of feasible small projects. A library can start a blog or a Facebook group a lot more easily and affordably than it can start a mailed newsletter—and, done right, the blog or group may be recognizable as a failable experiment: one that might reasonably disappear after a few months.

> MSWord doesn't like "failable," probably correctly, but I'm going to keep using it. I trust the meaning is clear: Something that can be allowed to fail without major repercussions or angst.

But...and it's a big but...the Library 2.0 "movement" also had more than its share of Big Deal Projects and Manifestos, a whole bunch of universalisms ("every library should..." and "every librarian must...") and a fair amount of better-than-thou moments. It also involved more intergenerational misunderstanding and quarrels than should have been the case.

Five years later

I dived into these waters with *Cites & Insights* 6:2, the Midwinter 2006 issue, a 32-page single-essay issue: LIBRARY 2.0 AND "LIBRARY 2.0." It was the second single-essay issue in the history of *Cites & Insights* and the longest issue up to that point.

The issue almost didn't appear, and it's clear that some people would have been happier if I'd discarded it as a bad idea. It certainly didn't result in

direct or indirect rewards; it did result in a lot of flak. Since my speaking invitations pretty much crapped out starting in 2005 (going from 6-10 per year to one per year, and for 2011 that seems to have dropped to zero), I don't blame the essay for that.

Although I'd have to say the issue was either bad for me personally and professionally or, at best, neutral, *it did get read*...and, I think, had an impact. As of late December 2010, total downloads (PDF) and pageviews (HTML) were *just* under 50,000 total—considerably more than all of my books combined and extraordinarily high readership for anything in the library literature.

Since then, I've written about Library 2.0 on several occasions, albeit never with that level of focus or readership. An immediate followup in *Cites & Insights* 6:3 (February 2006) was mostly about the article itself and short-term feedback. I revisited Library 2.0 in September 2007, March 2008 and August 2009 essays—and *Balanced Libraries,* my first (and most successful) self-published book (which first appeared in March 2007), is at least partly based on the Library 2.0 discussions. A number of other *C&I* essays and *Walt at Random* posts also had Library 2.0 components during the past five years. A combined Google Custom Search Engine (CSE) search yields more than the 100 result apparent limit for free CSE; a direct blog search within Walt at Random yields 69 posts, many of them functional rather than topical. (The first one kicked off a long comment stream arguing over whether "eventually, these book people will be dead" was over the top and confrontational, regardless of context. I'd like to say that people don't use such extreme statements any more. I would be wrong.)

Not a Historical Overview

I'd love to do an overview that summarizes the Library 2.0 story since that first essay appeared, but I can't imagine attempting something that ambitious. I don't have ready access to most of the articles that have appeared on the topic; I haven't read most of the books; I certainly don't have the patience to go through all the posts related to Library 2.0. Nor, for that matter, am I naïve enough to believe an overview from Walt Crawford would be accepted as objective or balanced—or even to make such a claim.

What this is, is another set of recent notes (where "recent" goes back as far as 2008 in some cases), commingling items that are related to the term "Library 2.0" or the set of tools and perspectives or that I found fit within that framework. That discussion slops over into issues about balance in libraries and for librarians, some of which aren't clearly Library 2.0-related. Finally, we'll look briefly at a new term and quasi-movement that may exhibit some of Library 2.0's characteristics—or may not.

How big is it?

It's difficult to say just how big a true overview of the last five years—or, to include the whole Library 2.0 landscape, the last six years—would be. Google result sizes are, in my experience, essentially meaningless in most cases where the stated number is more than 999: The results can't be verified and the numbers are sometimes ludicrous. (This isn't an attack on Google but on web search engine "big result" numbers in general—in fact, Bing seems to be worse in this regard, as I've noted results for two independent words *growing* when the two words are surrounded by quotes, which should not be possible.)

There's another larger problem in trying to estimate the quantity of literature: the term "Library 2.0" frequently appears in entirely different contexts, such as discussions of the second generation of a software library or second editions of things called libraries (e.g., *Writer's library 2.0*). So, for example, the two items with "Library 2.0" in *Worldcat.org* from 1987 are both related to software libraries. Thus, any numbers that can't be backed by actual inspection of the records are questionable at best. But it's still interesting to look at some results, questionable though they may be. These results are all from December 27, 2010.

Worldcat.org

The phrase "Library 2.0" yields about 647 results—including 218 articles, 207 internet resources, 94 computer files (and another 13 computer files), 76 books, 11 videos (including five VHS) and five CDs. Since Worldcat.org includes ArticlesFirst, OAIster and ProceedingsFirst, it's strong on both articles and those internet resources whose creators deposited them in institutional repositories.

A breakdown by date is interesting, but necessarily includes some results for alternative uses of the phrase or possibly accidental hits, as 35 items

date before 2005, including items dating back to 1858 (*Novas poesias* by Faustino Xavier de Novais). On the other hand, the single 2004 item (one article with two very different records from two different sources) might be considered an earlier use of Library 2.0: Andrew Richard Albanese's "Campus Library 2.0" piece in the April 2004 *Library Journal*. After that, and including only items (articles, books, whatever) that *do* appear directly related to Library 2.0, here's what I find:

➢ One article in **2005**. (That's not surprising: Most early discussion took place in blogs or at conferences, neither of which would turn up in Worldcat.org.)

➢ **2006**: Three books, three videos, 15 computer files and internet resources (mostly via OAIster) and 18 articles, plus a few duplicates. Call it 39 distinct resources.

➢ **2007**: The flood: Sixteen books and ebooks (including conference proceedings), 52 articles, four videos and CDs (an audio CD of conference sessions)—and 77 internet resources, mostly available via OAIster. Call it 149 distinct resources, which may be too low or too high.

➢ **2008**: Nine books and ebooks (mostly conference proceedings), 51 articles (including quite a few reviews of early Library 2.0 books), three videos/CDs—and 68 internet resources. Call it 131 distinct resources.

➢ **2009**: Seven books and ebooks (mostly conference proceedings), 49 articles and 34 internet resources, for a total of 90 distinct resources.

➢ **2010**: Five books (mostly conference proceedings), 29 articles and eight internet resources, for a total of 42 distinct resources.

Google and its pieces

The phrase itself yields "about 499,000 results," a meaningless number even apart from scope issues. Since dates for websites tend to be useless and Google doesn't provide date limits other than "most recent" intervals, there's no point in attempting a graph similar to the one above.

If I add my name to this search—that is, ["Library 2.0" "Walt Crawford"]—I still come up with about 8,860. Is it plausible that my name has been used in 8,860 items about Library 2.0? I'm not sure—and there's really no way of *being* sure. It does speak well of Google's algorithms that the *first*

result for this egocentric search is *Cites & Insights* 6:2 in PDF form. (Doing the ego search on Google Books, Scholar and blog search yields nine books [the first *Balanced Libraries*], 848 blog posts and 58 articles respectively—and says the special issue has been cited in 50 articled, which is gratifying.)

Going to narrower views of Google, here's what I find:

➢ Google Books shows 2,840 results—of which only 2,260 are from the 21st century. Note that *many* of these—particularly the most recent—are not about libraries and librarianship at all.

➢ Google Scholar shows about 2,850, of which 2,030 are from the last six years.

➢ Google blog search shows about 86,300 results—and, given that software libraries are included, that doesn't seem *at all* improbable. (Of the first 20 results, only six have anything to do with libraries.)

Bing

If Google's numbers are questionable, Bing's—particularly for phrase searches—sometimes verge on the ludicrous. (I use Bing as my default search engine and like it, but the numbers…) "Library 2.0" as a phrase yields "514,000,000 results." On the other hand, if I add "Walt Crawford" that drops down to a mere 247 results, which seems a bit on the low side. (In both cases, the Wikipedia entry seems to pop up from any number of sources.) Oddly, Bing does *not* give pride of place for the combined search to C&I 6.2: Instead, the omnipresent Wikipedia article shows up first (and, in various copies on other websites, also third, fifth, sixth, seventh…).

LISTA

The free version of Library, Information Science & Technology Abstracts offered by EBSCOhost yields 529 results for "Library 2.0," all from 2000 through 2010. Limiting that to 2005-2010 still leaves 525 results, of which 309 are marked as being in "scholarly (peer-reviewed) journals."

Since LISTA does allow limiting by individual years, it's possible to do a quick comparison to items in Worldcat.org. I find four results from 2005 (three of them relevant), 28 from 2006, 130 from 2007, 169 from 2008, 138 from 2009 and 56 from 2010—not limiting those results to ones that are actually on topic but assuming that most re-

sults in LISTA probably are. This is a different curve from that for Worldcat.org, peaking a year later and declining somewhat more slowly, but it also suggests that the halcyon days of "Library 2.0" in the literature are numbered.

Here's a graph showing both Worldcat.org and LISTA—noting that, while Worldcat.org counts are normalized to eliminate irrelevant items and duplicates, LISTA counts are not.
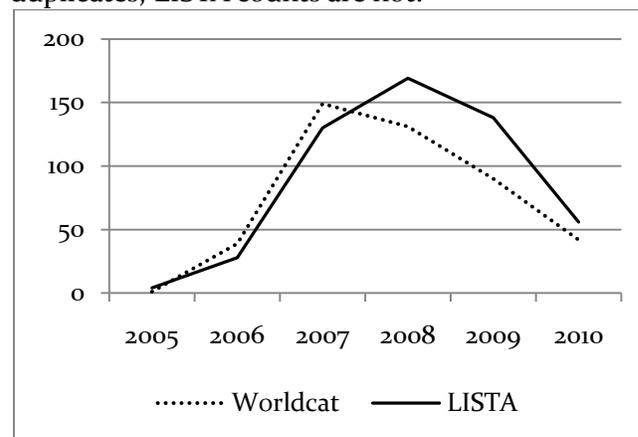
I'm guessing that a count of blog posts including the phrase "Library 2.0" and limited to library-related blogs would show a similar pattern, perhaps trailing off more slowly—and that a similar count done five years from now will show a long tail emerging. I believe this does provide some indication that the *phrase* "Library 2.0" was beginning to go out of style in 2009 and continues to wane—and that may be a good thing.

Conclusion? The term has been used a lot—not always in an actual library context. The peak years for "Library 2.0" as a library topic were probably 2007-2008. The term will stick around, but seems likely to fade into the background in the future. Which may make this a particularly opportune time to discuss a handful of fairly recent items.

Library 2.0 as Such

Was there ever a clear, useful, *consensus* definition of Library 2.0? Don't quote Wikipedia at me: I will tell you with 100% certainty that the current shape of that article is at least partly due to some of us lacking the tenacity and patience to keep pushing at it, and even then "loosely defined" appears before the non-definition.

LITA had one of its "ultimate debates" at the 2009 Annual Conference, this time on "Has Library 2.0 Fulfilled its Promise?" The group sent "starter questions" to "debaters" beforehand and David Lee

King posted his responses in a July 15, 2009 post at his eponymous blog. What's his definition—or, rather, what does Library 2.0 mean to DLK?

> How am I supposed to answer that? It means … "a job!" I usually say it's two things: 1. web 2.0, as it affects libraries; and 2. some of the underlying philosophies of web 2.0, but applied to non-techie things in a library. Ideas like patron-centered change and participation in the creation of content and community. Doing things a different, non-librarian way would be included here. Things like getting rid of Dewey.

So now doing things in a "non-librarian way" is Library 2.0? As for "patron-centered change," it's hard to read that with a straight face after responses to cases where patrons, *when asked*, are a lot less interested in "web 2.0"-style services than they are in traditional public library services.

Another question, "Will these technologies help libraries or are they just hype?" gets an answer I regard as halfway reasonable:

> None of the major, popular tools are hype in and of themselves, I don't think. Yes, they can be HYPED, but they're not hype. Facebook and twitter being mentioned on Oprah and Conan O'Brien? Hype. Me conducting real business using those tools? Not hype.

I'm not sure why *mentioning* Facebook or Twitter on a TV show constitutes hype. By using "major, popular tools," King defangs any attempt to point out tools that have turned out to be more hype than reality.

It's not King's job to track other libraries but I'm a little disappointed when, in response to a question on libraries that are leading the way, he mentions his own library and Darien, then uses a handwave for the rest: "Lots of other libraries doing parts and pieces of this..." By July 2009 it's a little hard to say whether "leading the way" has much significance, but if it does, there should be *dozens* of easy-to-name examples, some of them *not* well-funded libraries.

There's more here and some of it's pretty good. I'm less enchanted with some of King's responses to "What's next?" He has "more people reading RSS feeds...when the print newspapers all disappear sooner than we all think." I'll pretty much guarantee that "all" print newspapers aren't going to disappear any time soon...and particularly not sooner than "we all think," given those who seem to think it's already happened. (Last I heard, 100

million Americans still read daily papers...as do a healthy percentage of younger Americans.) What this has to do with Library 2.0 or patron-oriented library service? You got me. I'm pretty sure most public libraries won't attempt to replace daily newspapers; I'm also pretty sure RSS isn't on its way to universal adoption.

How did that debate go? I didn't attend, but there are several posts from people who did. The other panelists were Meredith Farkas, Michael Porter and Cindi Trainor. The program was well attended, as these "debates" usually are. As a rule, I no longer comment on reports from conference programs I didn't attend, and such reports these days tend to be liveblogging, particularly difficult to use as a secondary source. I will quote from Sean Fitzpatrick's reportorial-style July 14, 2009 post at *Inside Scoop*, specifically from the opening paragraph [emphasis added]:

> **The panel couldn't exactly agree on what Library 2.0 was**, let alone whether it's fulfilled its promise, but traditional ways of thinking may not even be sufficient to judge Lib2.0 effectiveness.

That last clause suggests a classic circular argument: If you're not a Librarian 2.0, you're *incapable* of judging Library 2.0 effectiveness.

Roles and responsibilities for 2.0 technologies

That's the estimable Meredith Farkas on August 30, 2009 at *Information Wants To Be Free.* She was emailed a question she found interesting "and probably better answered by the 'hive' than just by little old me":

> I was wondering if you had any advice or links to websites or professional literature that deal with this issue. That issue is: how do libraries deal with the roles and responsibilities of 2.0 technology? Some of it crosses borders and/or job descriptions. Who is in charge or responsible for tweets on twitter, the library marketing director, the reference librarian, the library director, etc. I suspect this is something that we will just have to work out as an organization. I'm just wondering if anyone else has any wisdom they might share in this regard.

An interesting question—and one that focuses on a toolkit ("2.0 technology") rather than an overarching whole. Here's most of Farkas' own take:

> ...There probably isn't much professional literature on this topic because how the roles and responsibilities are assigned depend very much on organizational size, organizational structure, and who is really interested in doing it. At a library

with a very small staff (like the Luria Library at Santa Barbara City College) it may be an interested director who takes responsibility for these 2.0 initiatives. At libraries where the lines between tech and public service are very clearly delineated, it may be the tech folks who are in charge of the Twitter account, whereas, at a library (like mine) where tech librarians do reference shifts and public service librarians are well-trained in library technologies (and every line is extremely blurred), it may be a joint responsibility or the responsibility of the public services librarians. In some libraries (perhaps most?), people have taken this on because they're simply the ones most into marketing and/or web 2.0 tools. In bigger libraries where there is a marketing director or an outreach librarian or a digital branch manager, that person may be in charge of these initiatives.

She specifically asked for other people's thoughts and got 14 responses, some of them fascinating for small things as much as direct answers. For example:

➢ Lynda Kellam applies an interesting label to 2.0 tools: "At our library the tech dept didn't seem interested in the **lofi** technologies like twitter/blogs.... The public services librarians have been the web 2.0 instigators. The instruction library and I started facebook and twitter for student outreach because we have the most direct contact with students. Unfortunately a lot of these tools are associated with us rather than with our positions, which may be a problem for the library if we leave..."

➢ "Eeyore Librarian" is concerned with fallout from failed initiatives: "we...are also working on follow through/back-ups etc so we do not end up littering the internet with our dead/wilted social initiatives."

➢ Kenley Neufeld started 2.0 usage at his community college library but has since "handed out the tweet keys to the other librarians"—but he's still handling the Facebook account. He notes that the *campus* wasn't using Twitter—and the campus marketing team didn't get on board until he set up a campus account and did some tweeting, at which point the marketing team took over. "They have a policy of only one employee having access to the Twitter account rather than the whole team." Neufeld thinks it depends on the goal and the manager... "I'll always be a player with new online toys

and my staff is very generous in letting me play and try new things."

➢ Steven Bell: "Given the user participation and user-generated content nature of web 2.0 tools, it seems to work best when every librarian who has an outreach function as part of their position is contributing to the effort to use the technology to connect with users. And that is what happens at MPOW, although some librarians are more involved than others... That said I see another dimension to this. I think it can be helpful to have some designated specialists...."

➢ Joan Petit, an instruction and reference librarian, started the library's Facebook page "over a year before our university even had one." "Like a lot of projects, sometimes the best coordinator is the one who is most interested. And I think we need to avoid being prescriptive about who 'should' be running these services."

➢ Lyn Leslie: "Various people at our library take on the web 2.0 initiatives, particularly those in user services as we are the ones dealing with the customers, their learning and their queries..."

➢ Ellen Filgo, her library's e-learning librarian, says she "has the biggest crossover of interest/time/job responsibilities. Therefore, I write our reference blog (with help of some other ref librarians) and keep the twitter updated (with the help of the marketing director and the director for public services—we all have the password) and monitor the Facebook page (with the two directors I just mentioned and one other interested librarian as admins...). I also monitor the Flickr account and the delicious links, etc."

➢ Angel Rivera, Outreach Librarian, is "the one who has started the 2.0 initiatives at my library from the library's blog to the FB page"...and mentions, as did others, the uncertainty of those initiatives' future if he leaves.

➢ Tasha Saecker, who may be the first public librarian to comment on this post, says, "As the library director and one of the geekiest on staff, I do a lot of it. That said, I also allow anyone on staff to blog, update the website and tweet. Few take advantage of Twitter or the blogs, but it is there if they

wish. Our website is updated by many hands in all departments. I love the feel of the varying styles, showing our public that we are human and interesting."

➤ "Ashley," another public librarian (or, rather, part-time clerk in an "incredibly small library in a very small community") says, "I use these tools personally and we all thought that I would be the best at managing our myspace and twitter etc. because I am pretty much the unofficial teen librarian and they are the reason we are using these tools. The director, however, is the one who takes care of the actual website… It really does depend on who wants to do it. If we left it up to someone who didn't really care, it would show in the dry, boring content of the profile or what have you, and really do the opposite of what was intended."

➤ Ann Owens agrees with Steven Bell: "there should be a unified message and… administration should keep a finger on the pulse."

➤ "Patrick" offers a reality check from one who has moved on: "As others have mentioned, **cutting edge** technologies like these are often produced through the initiative of passionate and committed staff. Unfortunately, keeping these projects going after that staff leaves or is reassigned is another matter altogether. It's not enough to build the tool or sell it to your patrons. You need to sell it to your staff as well and get somebody else investing their time or attention. I'm relatively certain every new 2.0 project I began at my last library has now faded from memory (and not for lack of usefulness)."

Lofi or cutting edge? (Emphasis added in both cases.) That may depend on your institution. I've omitted items on formal institutional communication policies, which, if not kept simple, could stifle "human" 2.0 usage.

Library 2.0: Not Just for Users

This February 24, 2010 post from Jenny Levine at *The Shifted Librarian* covers quite a bit of ground in a thoughtful essay—an essay in which she seems to be as tired of "the moniker" itself as some of us were early on.

> The hard part, though, is that Library 2.0 doesn't really replace anything. Like so many library services, the opportunities these new tools afford us

are in addition to everything we're already doing, which causes problems, because we don't get additional resources to implement them. To serve as many of your users as possible, you have to be in as many of the places where they are as possible… That means being out in your community physically and digitally, and that's one of the pieces of L2 that I think was never adequately explained.

The rest of the post is about how "L2" tools can help staff. It bears reading, perhaps with the mild caveat that some of these free tools for syndication and archiving will themselves require monitoring, since the permanence of "free" is always in question. That said, Levine's right: Some of these tools can make library staff more effective even if they don't succeed as direct patron-outreach efforts.

Is Library 2.0 dead?

Given the name of the blog at which this February 25, 2010 post appears, *librarytwopointzero*, that must be a painful question for this blogger to ask. The post may have been prompted by the closure of the Library 2.0 Ning (remember Ning?), but the blogger also cites "the decrease in blog posts and increase in micro blogging" and changes in some blogs. The blogger quotes Brian Mathews from a January 5, 2010 post:

> I wonder if 2010 is the year that many of us academic librarians will shut down our blogs? There were a bunch of us who launched three or four years ago and who posted regularly. It felt sort of like a Gen X movement. However I've noticed a steady overall decline in post quantity in 2009. Walt probably has an algorithm to measure that. I think the probable cause is that many of us were moving past the newbie stage of librarianship and were really starting to sink our teeth into the profession. Now we're just too busy for constant online reflection. Additionally, Facebook and Twitter have evolved to replace the long form narrative (blog posts) in favor of quick bursts of ideas… That's my excuse for seemingly abandoning this blog.

Mathews follows that "excuse" noting that it's a new year and "I have a new attitude"—and, in fact, Mathews' blog does show more posts in March-May 2010 than in March-May 2009, and almost as many as in March-May 2008. Do I have "an algorithm to measure that"? Not really. I show overall liblog posts in March-May 2010 as down a bit less than 10% from 2009—which, in turn, was down just a bit more than 10% from 2008. The median posts per blog was down even less: From 28 to 26 posts over the quarter. On a *per-blog* basis, 2007 may have

been the peak. On an overall basis, I believe the picture is that most microposts no longer appear and people with very little to say have stopped saying it. (I am, to be sure, an incurable optimist.)

Although the blogger ends by saying "library 2.0 is not dead, as I would have to change my blog..." the key paragraph may be the antepenultimate one:

> In many ways, the Library 2.0 seems a fallacy of the past. A word we used to start a conversation about. A word we used to bind us and throw around ideas. It was something new at the time.

The term may be a "fallacy of the past." The concepts live on (I'll spare you my opinion of the notion that "we are now in the realm of semantic web/web 3.0"). I think that's a healthy change.

Deconstructing Library 2.0

Andy Woodworth offered this on February 19, 2010 at *Agnostic, Maybe*—and started a multipart conversation on his blog and elsewhere. Woodworth is relatively new to librarianship and came to Library 2.0 late, so he "followed the trail" based on search engines and Wikipedia's article (describing that entry's list of writings as "antiquated" because it ends in 2007!). After trying to place the "principles" listed in that article, he arrives here:

> So, this concept is an intersection of a still-yet-to-be-realized vendor request, knowing and engaging your audience market research, and an evolving service model? Perhaps I do not understand. Were libraries not doing any of these things before?

He also suggests that the definition itself may be "antiquated" (I could get to loathe that term being applied to three-year-old things) and says it was "written before the rise of the current social media and Web 2.0 tools and websites." I think that's wrong: while there have certainly been new tools and sites since 2007, the basics were already in place.

But that's not the most interesting part of the post. Consider this:

> All too often, especially when it comes to technology, people will cite a recent survey or fact about the sale of technology or usage statistic and use that to make broad pronouncements of something that the library should be doing. But the causal connection logic doesn't follow. For example, if the total number of smart phones sold in the United States went up last year, this does not necessitate that libraries need mobile applications or sites. How many of those phones sold are replacing current phones? How many of those mobile users are li-
> brary users? If I said that there are 1,000 people in a town, and that there were 600 people who have smart phones, this is not an immediate call to develop mobile resources. The question that this scenario begs (and that never seems to be asked) is how many of the library users have smart phones *and would want or use a library mobile resource*. While it could be argued that the creation of mobile resources might entice the non-library smart phone user to become a patron of the library, the counterpoint I would offer is simply, "Prove it." Where is the correlation between the broader trends and the library user? [Emphasis added.]

> On that note, I rarely (if ever) see a posting, press release, or story about something new the library is offering that references a user survey or focus group or even an anecdote... There appears, to me, to be an endless loop of libraries adopting practices (either service or technology) which do not catch on. These failures are then chalked up to a failure to publicize, staff training or awareness, or lack of interest when there was little or no user feedback indicating such a tool or service was desired in the first place. How much of a stranger are we to our patrons? If I stopped ten random people in your library tomorrow, had them write down what they wanted on a piece of paper, would you be able to guess what it was with any accuracy?

Whew. (Actually, I suspect I could guess the two most common answers in most public libraries: "More books" and "Longer hours.") Woodworth then asks some tough questions ("How much is Library 2.0 really driven by the user experience?"), finishing with this one:

> Is the term Library 2.0 dead? Is it more of a quibbling point for people who are looking to argue about the present and future of libraries? Does it really mean anything anymore? Has it become more of a "Blind men and an elephant"? What does it matter anyway?

There are 36 direct comments (including Woodworth's reactions to responses). I am bemused to find Michael Porter now saying of Library 2.0, "personally, I never liked it, and felt pretty confident that at some point it would be the recipient of backlash. It's part of why I avoided using it as much as I could professionally." Woodworth responds: "In playing devil's advocate, how does this differ from Library 101? You have bundled together concepts that you feel all librarians should know and given it a name that is synonymous with basic instruction."

Since T. Scott *did* always find the term troubling, it's no surprise that he says, "I always thought

the term did more harm than good (and posted several times on my blog to that effect). I've been relieved to see that it has apparently had its heyday and fallen out of fashion."

David Lee King, in a *long* comment, includes one of those flat statements I find both wrong and confrontational in answering Woodworth's question "Were libraries not doing any of these things before?" King: "Nope. Not in the 'library 2.0' way, anyway." You can read his much longer answer—and I don't buy it except as a circular definition. Even King, however, says of the term "Library 2.0" itself: "Get past the term/wording... but are those principles dead? In a great number of libraries, I'd say they haven't even gotten to a beginning point yet."

Peter Bromberg says that while the term may be losing steam, "the principles of Library 2.0 (transparency, using technology to extend our services into social networking spheres, connecting with our customers where they are, helping our customers connect and share with each other, and generally flattening the hierarchy and shifting more control to our users) are very much alive." He suggests that talking less about the term may mean "many of these principles are now more or less accepted as shared values in our profession." To which Jennifer Parsons notes, *correctly in my view*, that "If that's the case, then the idea of 'Library 2.0' might be a lot older than we think."

I commented: "Here's another voice saying: (a) the principles, tools, ideas that were temporarily gathered up into 'Library 2.0'–many of which preceded that nomenclature–are doing just fine and will continue to be relevant at least in part, (b) the 'movement' pretty much collapsed. There never was an agreed definition, and in the long run that didn't matter." Even Michael Stephens seems ready to drop the term: "The term itself, in my mind, describes a moment in time..."

"Library 2.0: Not Just for Users," discussed above, is partly a response to this post, but seemed worth discussing independently. David Lee King responded to both Woodworth's and Levine's posts in "Have We Emerged Yet?" on February 25, 2010—and his answer is "I don't think so." That is, the new technologies have not yet "become boring and...commonplace."

> Here's what I'm noticing when I speak at a library staff day event. I'm usually brought in to speak about "emerging trends and transformations"

(translation—web 2.0 tools, services, and underlying philosophies). At these libraries, there's usually a small cluster of staff that "get it" and are glad I'm there. There's also usually a couple of staff that think that I'm somehow ignoring the digital divide, forgetting about people who need reading glasses, or even making library services tough for old and poor people.

> Then there's everyone else. For the most part, this larger group hasn't really adapted to emerging tools, services, or philosophies (but are very willing to learn and to experiment). This is where the new stuff isn't yet commonplace. For example, maybe some of them have personal Facebook profiles, and use them to reconnect with high school buddies, or maybe their daughter who lives out of state. But when I introduce them to using an organizational Facebook Page to connect with their community— to "be the library" to those people, in that digital space ... well, that's a whole different enchilada.

> It's the very same reaction that some staff might have if they were told to get out of the building, attend a local community focus group ... and represent the library while there. It's different like that ... in the same way.

Yes, but...is it a given that every library's director is *happy or willing* to have each and every staff member "represent the library" on social networks?

Buffy Hamilton posted "It's in the Way That You Use It: What Library 2.0 Means to Me" on April 5, 2010 at *The Unquiet Librarian*, again following up on Woodworth's post and Levine's "incredibly thoughtful and articulate response." Hamilton has given this much thought, including responding to Laura Cohen's "manifesto" much more positively than I did. She thought about her own practice as a high school librarian. It's an interesting and thoughtful response well worth reading (and difficult to summarize). Hamilton concludes:

> For me, the concepts of "Library 2.0" and "Librarian 2.0" are "tags" that reflect my broader vision or "subject heading" of librarianship and provide an umbrella to frame and connect the various theoretical lenses and paradigms that inform my philosophy and practice as a librarian.

Going to Extremes

The major headings in this essay are, at least partly, a way to break things up. They're also the way I labeled groups of leadsheets (the first pages of posts and articles) while organizing them. I find some sort of clustered relevance to the heading— but, for example, I'm *not* saying that the writers

here are extreme, only that extremism of one sort or another comes into play.

False and true library universals

That's Steven Chabot, writing on July 23, 2009 at *Subject*/*Object* in a post partly inspired by one of my grumbles about false universalisms—e.g., "We [all] are (or soon will be) connected to the internet all the time," where the [all] doesn't always explicitly appear but is generally implicit. (The post Chabot links to, "We and me," appeared during the brief period in which *Walt at Random* was on ScienceBlogs. The link now yields a 404, but you'll find the post—with slightly garbled formatting, as happened with most of the restoration from SixApart to Wordpress—on July 22, 2009 at walt.lishost.org)

That post—and, no, I don't usually rehash my own *Walt at Random* posts here (be grateful!)—included a minor epiphany:

> The breakthrough recognition: It's not false universalism. It's elitism. "We" really means "**the people who matter**." Doesn't make it any more right. Does make it a lot more understandable. Without that recognition, I'd have to believe that some We-ists are hard of hearing, hard of understanding or a bit daft: Surely they're aware that their universal assertions are nowhere near being universal?
>
> But once you substitute "the people who matter" for "we," it's all clear. Maybe all the people who *matter* really are connected 24/7. Maybe all the people who *matter* do use iPhones.
>
> The trouble with all this, for public librarians at least, is that good libraries serve the whole public– and specifically serve those who "don't matter," who aren't part of the elite, the in crowd, the over-privileged.

Chabot only quotes the first paragraph. He then claims three "universals that do apply to our work as librarians": That everyone seeks knowledge, not just information; that everyone has a right to education, from birth until death; and that people need recreation.

> The danger that Walt identifies, and I agree with, is that when blinded by one kind of universal— the myth of universal connectedness—we are missing the other universals. That not everyone can even use a web browser, let alone Facebook, Twitter, and the like. That not everyone has a cell phone, or if they do they can do anything beyond make calls. The one benefit of my job is that I interact with users of all ages and skill levels. Some people use the social features of the software I've implemented very well. And yet the woman down the hall from me can't find the "Internet" because all she does is make icons for the few sites she uses, and clicks them from her desktop.

I'd say none of the items in that paragraph are universals at all: They no more apply to everybody than "we all use iPhones." As to the three true universals...well, they're tricky. A "right" to lifelong education? I'm not so sure. Everyone seeks knowledge? That would be great (if largely irrelevant to most of what public libraries do), but I'm afraid it's unlikely: Many people seek *confirmation*, not knowledge. (Chabot uses Fox News as a prime example of providing "information"—but Fox News succeeds admirably at providing ongoing confirmation or affirmation for the preferred worldviews of its viewers, even when that involves disinformation.) I might go so far as to suggest that many people actively avoid gaining knowledge if that knowledge conflicts with their established views.

This is a quibble. Chabot is arguing that education and knowledge are more important for libraries than information *as such*, and that librarians should be aware of this. I agree.

So, what can we do?

Carolyn Foote asks that question in an October 18, 2009 post at *Not So Distant Future*, again working from other posts, this time within the school library arena. Specifically, she's commenting on work by Joyce Valenza and Doug Johnson "about the issue of 21st century librarians and what responsibility we all have to embrace new technologies." Here the "all" *is* explicit. Valenza and Johnson wrote a *School Library Journal* article, "Things That Keep Us Up at Night" (October 1, 2009 issue), that does seem fairly hardnosed in its universalisms. After informing us that libraries (without "school" prepended) "may no longer be relevant" and school librarians, "as we once knew them," may no longer be relevant—note the present tense, not the future tense—the piece goes on to say that, apparently, *all* school librarians *must* "know more about current information strategies than our school's technology coach"; that all school librarians *must* "embrace networked media" and that those who don't "are dragging our profession down"; that librarians are missing the potential of a "post-literate society—and more. (Yes, there's a link to a Manifesto.)

I have to admit that, every time I get close to the world of school librarians, I'm tempted to run

away. I see a fair amount of what I'd consider extreme position-taking, but I'm not sure I know enough to be sure that it's unreasonable. Maybe it's an arena in which overstating your case, making things into either-or, is necessary—but maybe not. You might want to read "Where are the others?" (in Doug Johnson's *Blue Skunk Blog*, dated October 7, 2009, but not written by Johnson) and particularly the comments on that post. Among other things, Johnson in his comments in that stream comes off as much more nuanced and less confrontational than Johnson in the *SLJ* article and some of his own posts.

Getting back to Foote's post, she continues to wonder about one of Johnson's questions, "How can we give a voice to those who choose not to network?" and whether early adopters are using a tone that tends to drive other people out of the conversation:

> It is very easy to become insular, self-referential, and overly steeped in 2.0 language to the exclusion of those we would like to join us in conversation.

Heck, "2.0 language" all by itself is insular and self-referential; someone who's *not* an early adopter would reasonably consider that phrase to be gibberish. Foote goes on to say something I'd love for every "we must" writer to read, twice:

> I would posit that we need to watch our language–in our enthusiasm, we can overwhelm others with all the bells and whistles and options. And I question if that is not counterproductive to our aim. Yes it is amazing to show what is possible, but if we don't also show a step-by-step roadmap for getting there, then it is just so much 'pie in the sky.'

A little moderation can go a long way. Tell us "many libraries would find blogs and Facebook effective, economical new ways to communicate with patrons" and I'm on board—and I'm guessing many librarians would say "tell me more" and might proceed to take action. Tell us *"every library should be on Facebook"* or "if you're not [X], you're losing," and many of us will *appropriately* respond with a one-finger salute and tune you out from then on.

The comments on this post are also interesting; you might be better off reading them directly.

The Sacred Cows of Library Technologists

Now here's something you won't see very often: A blog post (by Cindi Trainor, on November 2, 2009, at the *ALA TechSource blog*) that references a discussion in Google Wave! Trainor links to the Wave home page, not the actual discussion, so I can't comment on the discussion itself.

> Digression: I logged into Google Wave, possibly for the very first time. No, I couldn't find that discussion...but that was after recoiling in horror from the interactions of Diigo and Google Wave, namely loads of odd little sticky notes all over the screen. Which you can turn off in Google Wave, but not—apparently—in Diigo itself. Friendly design FTL, once more.

After hearing an iconoclastic talk on sacred cows of librarianship, Trainor posed a question about sacred cows of library technology. It was interesting to see some of the responses, especially in light of supposed truisms of "Library 2.0." Look at the very first one:

> **"Our users haven't asked for that."**
>
> Some libraries do not experiment with offering services and resources digitally because the patrons in the building say that they do not want them... A good way to estimate whether a digital service will be successful is to ask users of your website, though even users of your digital spaces may not know right away whether they would use a service if offered digitally.

Hmm. So first we have "patron-oriented librarianship" as a basic principle—but if patrons say they don't want them, well, you must be asking the wrong patrons. So instead, ask *only your most web-oriented patrons*—and if *they* don't respond favorably, they probably don't know enough.

> **"Library technology=Windows or Mac."**
>
> While the majority of the use of digital library services and resources takes place via desktop or laptop computers, mobile use is rapidly increasing. Computers are everywhere—our DVRs and cable boxes are computers, as are our in-car GPS units. Perhaps most widespread, our cell phones and other small-screen devices that can access the web, like Apple's iPod Touch and eBook readers like Amazon's Kindle, are computers. What does your library website look like on these devices?... There is an important lesson here for library administrators, and it's not that every library MUST have all of these things, but rather that technology budgets must be nimble enough to arm your technology staff with the tools and training required to create mobile-friendly services.

Here's a new universal with interesting implications for libraries under budgetary pressures that manage to serve their in-person users extraordinarily well: You *must* budget so your "technology

staff" (which many libraries lack entirely) are ready to create mobile-friendly services. (I'm amused by the question as to what library websites look like on DVRs and cable boxes and GPS units. I'm pretty sure the answer is "nothing at all.")

Here's one of those comments that helps me understand why people get left behind even with the best of intentions, when Robert McDonald says:

> "Right now," he writes, "I am talking about SMS text and mobile devices—soon I guess I will mean wave or some other technology. Email and Chat are for old people like me, not for our current users."

Wowser. So email and *chat* are obsolete for a library's *current users*?

"Cutting-edge is better; bleeding-edge is best."

This isn't really a sacred cow of library technologists in general, but it comes close to being one for the extremists of Library 2.0. Here I'm going to quote the discussion paragraph because it's so sensible:

> Just because a shiny gadget or tool is available, it doesn't mean that there is a need for it in each library. "Anytime we fetishize the container over the information we're creating a golden idol," writes Joshua Neff, extending the "sacred cow" metaphor. Amy Buckland agreed, writing, "I'm always amazed that libtechs are so enamored of tools long before they come up with uses for them. Then we try to shoehorn library services into a tool just so we have it." Experimenting with low-cost or no-cost tools like Twitter will only cost staff time, but implementing expensive (think federated search) or complex-but-free technologies (think Drupal) because it's the cool thing to do can be a very costly lesson for a library to learn, in terms of budget, staff time, morale and user satisfaction.

Can I get an Amen?

"<insert your favorite software or vendor here> is the only way to go."

Examples here include open source software and library vendors, but also being a "complete Microsoft shop." Oddly, nobody seemed to object to librarians who seem to feel that Apple is the only source of truth and light; I guess that sacred cow only has one horn and poops rainbows.

"Technology is the domain of the few."

This strikes me as being a nonexistent sacred cow. These days, it seems to be the other way around— the argument that every librarian *must* be a technologist. The idea that every librarian (and yes, it's been explicitly stated as every librarian) must be up on X and Y—always technology-related—and able to explain Z and B technology-based platforms to patrons is today's sacred cow.

Thinking Outloud About the Echo Chamber

Maybe this post doesn't belong in this section at all—and I am, as elsewhere, hanging a broader discussion off Bobbi L. Newman's January 25, 2010 *Librarian by Day* post. If there's an "extremism" aspect to this, it's not in what Newman says (that much of the time, "most of us are preaching to the choir") but in some of the reactions and notes.

There are two aspects to the echo chamber. One is that you're preaching to the choir— sounding off primarily to people who agree with you and not *reaching* others with cogent alternative viewpoints ("Those who disagree" in shorter words) or those who haven't yet gotten or accepted your message. The other is that you're not hearing or, in some cases, not *listening* to those who differ—that you're in that chamber and that choir.

It's one thing to say, "I'm not reaching those who need to hear this." It's another to add "and I need to hear what they have to say, *because I could be wrong*." In a great many cases, I don't believe that second component exists—and those of us who aren't "hearing this" in the sense of *agreeing* with it will, eventually, ignore you when it becomes clear that "conversation" must be on your terms. (This is not addressed to Newman directly, at least not on this issue.)

Newman's post was triggered in part by a remarkably ignorant item on libraries from Seth "Fortune Cookie" Godin—and the depth of his interest in actual conversation is evident from the total lack of comment capabilities on his blog. Godin doesn't want a conversation; he wants a choir. Thus, when *thewikiman* discusses "the Seth Godin Uber-Echo Disaster," I think it's a little offbase. Godin makes it impossible for a conversation to take place; librarians had no choice but to discuss among themselves (and others who might listen). Indeed, that blogger has a fair dose of "us vs. them" even in his post:

> I'm generalising here, but it seems like the people who really get the whole need to reinvent and revitalise libraries, and the role of the information professional, are the ones already online and reading what each other have to say. The dyed-in-the-wool librarians who like to kick it old-school and

refuse to engage with the problems we're facing, aren't likely to be reading blogs, or sifting through Twitter, in the first place. So the initial problem is the best ideas are being kicked around in an enclosed space that only reaches people who start off receptive to exciting ideas, rather than getting to those who are resistant to change.

What do I miss here? The sense that there might be a middle ground, that there may be a whole slew of library people who aren't just counting days until retirement but also don't "really get" this blogger's version of the truth.

I'm not going to go through the whole set of responses to Godin, several of which are excellent, since that tangent would take more space than this whole essay and do little good. (Yes, I know Godin commented on one of the many posts. I find his comment disingenuous and unhelpful—and if he really is "Not sure what I did to ignite snark," he has a reading or writing disability.)

Looking at the comments, I see that David Lee King is convinced he's reaching beyond the choir. I do wonder sometimes whether King *listens* outside the choir and whether he accepts the possibility that his message is not 100% correct. Newman uses the word "unconverted"—and that's problematic right there, as she notes later on:

> The more I think about the term the unconverted the more I don't like it (I know I started it) it implies that we are right and they are wrong. I'm not sure either is the case, I think meeting in the middle is the most important.

If you don't like Facebook or other social media, go find another career

Just to end this extreme section, here's Angel Rivera (on October 25, 2010) at *The Gypsy Librarian* discussing extremes such as Michael Stephens' first "Office Hours" column at *Library Journal*. To wit, these paragraphs (emphasis added in Rivera's post):

> **If the online world is not for you, then neither may be a career in librarianship.** The most prevalent LIS jobs in the next few years will probably be ones where you're not tied to your desk and you communicate well beyond the physical walls of the building.

> It's not just students who should participate in this online world. Librarians must find their niche as well. Five years ago the conversation went on in blogs. Now it flows vibrantly across media platforms, enabling a stronger connection with library users through marketing, outreach, and the human touch.

Rivera calls this "somewhat arrogant and condescending not to mention alienating." More of what he has to say and has discussed with colleagues:

> On reading the column, we see that it refers to being constantly plugged in to the mobile device of your choice. Then there is the thing about the human touch. Being constantly online and connected is not exactly conducive to the human touch. Sooner or later you may have to deal with a real person...

> And then I thought about another colleague of mine who wins awards for her scholarship in history as well as provides excellent service to the library and its patrons. She's definitely found her niche, and it does not involve the twopointopian vision of the online world. No Facebook or Twitter for her. Should she give up her career in librarianship because the online world is not for her? If she was entering library school now, would she be told she does not fit in? And before some apologist chimes in, allow me to point out that my colleague is not a Luddite. She avails herself of electronic tools that meet her needs, keeps up as needed, and maintains an excellent local and civil war history website that has received state and national praise. By her admission though, she does not care about Twitter and really has no use for Facebook nor a lot of online social media. Should we have kept her out of librarianship because the online world, as narrowly defined by some people, is not for her?

> I write and raise these questions as someone who has found places in the online world. I also use social media... I use online social media tools in my work as well as for my professional development. I am still figuring out my niche, but that is part of the learning process for me. But I do know that my niche does not include the attitude of "you either get it or you don't, and if you don't, we don't want you here." That attitude has bothered me since the earliest days when the term Library 2.0 was emerging... And it bothers me now. When people ask if I am sorry that I became a librarian or have any regrets, I can usually that I like what I do. But statements like the one by Stephens make me wonder because I do not want to be associated with such attitudes.

At about this point, some voices within librarianship will bring up "charitable reading." Rivera sees that one coming:

> And no, I am not going to "try to look at it in a charitable light." That is a cop-out. He wrote it, with the backing of his reputation, and he clearly stands by it in making it public. Now, he can

choose to dig in his heels, expand the statement or try to clarify it, but the statement is out there, and it seems pretty clear.

Personally, for what little my opinion is worth, the statement seems divisive. I see plenty of excellent librarians who work hard, provide excellent service to their patrons, and the online world is not really for them. I don't think they should be deprived of a career because they are not interested in Facebook or lack a Flickr fetish...

Think Rivera's extreme in his own way? Consider this comment on his post from Meredith Farkas:

I had the exact same reaction to the column and was planning on writing a post pointing back to yours, but then decided that I didn't want the storm of criticism that it would have inevitably engendered. I often worry that there are too many librarians and LIS students who are overly focused on the online world and not focused enough on the fact that as a librarian you're going to need to deal with PEOPLE. IN PERSON. A LOT. A good librarian isn't necessarily immersed in the online world, but they keep up with trends in the profession and know how to effectively reach out to patrons whether they are on Facebook or at the Campus Center. It require creativity, good people skills and BALANCE.

When someone who has done as much to encourage understanding of, and appropriate use of, new technology as Farkas, and who has done as much to encourage frank discussion, *avoids* posting because they don't want "the storm of criticism that it would have inevitably engendered," there's clearly some extremism in play. Do I think Farkas is being thin-skinned? Absolutely not; I think she's being realistic. Michael Stephens is ready to say that if you don't agree with him on this topic, *you don't belong in librarianship*; others may be subtler in disdaining those who disagree (and quick to urge "charitable reading" when called on their extremism), but they're out there.

Ch-ch-ch-Changes

A set of discussions, all somehow related to Library 2.0 and balance in libraries, that I also find have something in common with one another. Uneasiness about some aspects of library change? Maybe, maybe not.

The Digital Divide Inside the Library
Kate Sheehan posted this August 13, 2009 on the *ALA TechSource blog*. She asks an interesting question: With librarians declaring that "Technology is

Reference"—that is, that you can't be a reference librarian without strong technology skills—is that a one-way street? Do library techies need to have public service experience or skills? (It *must* be an important question: The paragraph it ends appears twice, as the first and fifth paragraph of the post.)

The answer may just be a personal one. I have been a back-office techie and found that I was somewhat unmoored by the experience. I felt that I was a walking bundle of solutions looking for problems. But I did have time to explore technology I wasn't as familiar with and I learned a lot. Keeping up with technology isn't something easily done from a public service desk.

After some discussion, Sheehan gets to what I think may be a more interesting issue:

...I see a lot of snark online that's veering towards a dismissive attitude toward public service librarians who seem hesitant about techie insights and ideas. Like any good bipartisan, I think it's important to remember that we're all driven by the same goals—we want to provide the very best to our patrons. Often, that librarian with the "negative" perspective is thinking of patron complaints she has handled in the past. Chances are, those angry patrons have been mollified and assuaged by the very person who seems to be raining on everyone's parade. That's not always the case, of course, but if we think it's important to listen to our crankiest of patrons, shouldn't we also pay attention to our coworkers who help them?

This isn't entirely a digital divide. The front-office/back-office divide has been around for decades, more so in libraries large enough to *have* full-time back-office staff. I do wonder how many techie librarians have the patience and people skills to deal with really rough reference interviews and disagreeable patrons. It's pretty clear that some advocates for Library 2.0 and other technology-based change don't have much patience with librarians of any stripe who have doubts.

Online, librarians are focused on pushing forward those who are resistant to change. We vent on twitter and blogs about the luddite librarians who don't understand why they can't change the text in an image on their library's website or who panic at the prospect of migrating to an open source ILS.

Libraries need change and we need to get better and quicker at adapting—there isn't room for actual luddites in the library. But when it comes to working with our colleagues, I think we're headed toward a double standard... We expect librarians to keep up with tech and be willing to learn more about it, but

we're less skilled at differentiating between problematic resistance to change and thoughtfulness.

…Our patrons are at the heart of our libraries and time spent with them shapes and informs staff perspectives. It's easy to huff at experienced librarians who seem slow to learn new technologies and dismiss their concerns, but it's also lazy and immature. We owe it to our users and our colleagues to take the time to look for insight from all corners of our organization.

The dozen comments are interesting, including the note that tech-savvy librarians can be impatient with the patrons they *do* serve—and that you should "never underestimate the value of a non-technical perspective about a technological issue." One person in a rural library points out another divide: Most small libraries (there are more small libraries than large ones) simply don't *have* full-time technologists. "Olivia" admits her own shortcoming and wonders whether it might be common: "I've been noticing an unfortunate tendency of my own lately: it seems that the more immersed I become in technology, the less patience I have for face-to-face interactions."

Libraries: Not About Books

This one, by Liz Burns on January 4, 2010 at *Pop Goes the Library* (reposted at *A Chair, A Fireplace and A Tea Cozy)* is long, heartfelt, from the same space I frequently feel part of and, in the end, somewhat misguided in my opinion. Burns isn't saying libraries aren't or shouldn't be about books—she's complaining that books are being overlooked. I'm sympathetic to that complaint, particularly when I see people saying libraries need to run away from books as a brand (as opposed to *building from* books as a brand).

Here are the first four paragraphs, collapsed into one paragraph to save space:

Hang out a little bit in library-land, and you'll soon hear the talk about books. Or, rather, not about books. Yes, libraries are about more than books. I totally agree. No argument there. But it does disappoint that "more than books" has become "not about books."

So far, so good—even if it does seem odd on a blog that's about pop culture and rarely seems to have anything to do with books (unless they're comic books). But the next paragraph stops me cold. It references LISNews' "Ten Librarian Blogs to Read in 2010," quotes the introductory paragraph, then gets to the point:

Now, before you start thinking of the various librarians who blog about books and publishing, and wonder who has been picked to "inform, educate and maybe amuse", I'll save you the trouble.

One book blog; *Awful Library Books…*

And a bit later extends that, after saying there are some "great librarian blogs" in the LISNews list:

[L]ibraryland doesn't usually include books, publishing, reading, readers advisory (and those who blog about them) in lists such as this. Hang out in libraryland, and you find all sorts of things about technology and community and marketing etc etc. But books? Publishing? Readers Advisory? Not so much.

"Libraryland"? So this is a general indictment of whatever "libraryland" might be? Nobody talks about books, publishing and RA? Really?

Then she focuses on "Library 101" and its lack of attention to print books—and, as always, I'm not going to go there. That effort is no more indicative of "libraryland" as a whole than is the group blog on which this post appeared, and there certainly wasn't a huge groundswell of unanimous acclaim for the effort.

Burns then proceeds to tell us, at some length, that there *are* people who blog about RA and books and publishing and collection development. Eventually, she names three such blogs and takes another swipe at the LISNews list (regarding *Fuse No. 8*, which is *not* the name of the blog *A Fuse #8 Production*), saying "Any 'must read' list of librarian blogs that does not include Elizabeth Bird of New York Public Library is a list that says, 'we're not really looking at books when we make our lists, thanks.'"

That's heavy stuff…and if the LISNews list was intended as a comprehensive list of important liblogs, I might agree. But that's not what it is. If Burns has a complaint, it should be with those "Top X Library Blogs" list that appear on linkbait sites sponsored by for-profit colleges and universities. I pointed this out in a comment:

In defense of the list, it's not "the" 10, it's "a" 10—and it's one in a series. In 2009, the list included Brave New World (entirely devoted to publishing and books); in 2008, Judge a Book by its Cover; in 2007, Conversational Reading. Plus blogs devoted to cataloging and other aspects of (primarily) book support…

More to the point: Just as libraries are about books **and other things**, many of the blogs are about

books **and other things**. Is there something wrong with that?

Burns responded to my comment saying "There are different perspectives on this. at TEA COZY david lee king responded about Library 101 & there was some discussion there, also." I read the comments at that repost. I saw nothing that would negate or undermine anything in my comment—unless, of course, you believe that David Lee King speaks for all of "libraryland." I don't believe he does.

I dunno. Maybe this post belongs in "Going to Extremes." It is, in its own way, as divisive as some of the Library 2.0 stuff. Burns seems to say that if a blog isn't *entirely* about books (or publishing or RA), it's not about books at all and is, therefore, leaving books behind. That's nonsense.

The annual LISNews lists are based on suggestions from LISNews readers. Did Burns and others propose good book-related blogs only to have them consistently ignored? I doubt that. I've always had mixed feelings about Blake's lists, a little more so when my own blog appeared in the 2010 list. But claiming that one of the LISNews lists somehow reflects universal libraryland attitudes is divisive and wrong.

As far as I can tell, there are 115 liblogs *primarily* devoted to books (or other media) out of some 1,304 total. That's less than one in ten, and that's not surprising: There are many, many book and publishing blogs *outside* the library field, while there are very few non-library blogs that touch on other areas of concern to libloggers (e.g., cataloging, integrated library systems, library use of social networks...). I've noticed that most book-oriented blogs don't show up in the primary online list of blogs at LISWiki, a list that is self-maintaining. In other words, most librarians who write book and publishing blogs *don't bother to make them known* to the library community as a whole. Given that, it's hard to fault other people for not being aware that they exist. The book-blogging community is clearly a strong one but seems to be largely insular by choice.

There is also the issue of exclusivity. I know of dozens, probably hundreds of liblogs that discuss book and publishing issues as one set of topics within a broader set. If you tell me *Confessions of a Science Librarian* or *The Gypsy Librarian* regard books as unimportant, I'll tell you you're wrong, but neither blog could be called a "book blog."

Come to think of it, *Walt at Random* was part of that 2010 list. So far, 153 posts, considerably more than 10% of all posts, are about books and publishing. Another 173 posts are about a particular group of books. In all, more than one-quarter of the posts on my blog are *directly* about books and publishing. But it's absolutely clear that Liz Burns doesn't consider me to be someone who "blogs about books and publishing," just as she dismisses two others of that ten who frequently discuss books and publishing. Her criterion appears to be exclusivity: If a blog isn't *all* about books, it's *not at all* about books. That's exclusionary thinking, and it's just as unfortunate from the book-oriented arena as it is from the technology arena.

What Public Libraries Should Be
Amanda McNeil posted this on February 2, 2010 at *Opinions of a Wolf*—which is stated to be largely a book and movie review blog. McNeil's a young librarian and sees a "near united front" among other librarians, one that I've missed somehow:

> There is a debate going on about what public libraries should be. So far, the librarians seem to be presenting a near united front, repackaging the library as a social place. A place filled with programs such as speed-dating, Rock Band night, rent a person events, and more. A place where you can rent newly released movies and videogames. A place where, "Books are being pushed to the side figuratively and literally." The few detractors from this mindset are generally portrayed as old, crotchety patrons who just don't understand the times.

I think that overstates the unanimity and the extent to which most public library folk wish to "push aside" books, but it's certainly true that the mindset portrayed gets a lot of press and its advocates speak loudly and write frequently.

> Well, I am a young librarian, and I don't like where public libraries are headed. To be clear, when I say young, I'm 23 years old. Additionally, although I spent one summer working in a public library, most of my experience is in academic and medical libraries. However, I think this puts me in the semi-unique position of understanding some of what public librarians deal with, but also being a member of the general populace they are seeking to serve.

I think "semi-unique" overstates the case, but let that go. What does McNeil find amiss with this new model of the library? Excerpts from the rest of the post:

When did public libraries turn into community centers instead of centers for life-long learning? In a democracy, it is vitally important that the populace seeks to self-educate, to question, to delve into matters themselves. A key element of that is literacy, and of course it is important to draw reluctant people into literacy in creative ways. To this end, I'm supportive of libraries containing genre fiction, romance novels, graphic novels, etc... However, whatever happened to the materials that truly make people think? I used to frequent the public library, but last year, I just got sick of the junk I was seeing in the "nonfiction" section. Autobiographies of the most recent reality star and not a single one of Albert Einstein, for instance.

Public libraries are not only supposed to encourage literacy but also thought and learning. True, deep thought about serious issues...

The public library is also supposed to be about equality. Anyone who lives in the district can have a card and access the sources. Now though we're seeing libraries hosting various features that patrons must pay an additional fee to use...

It sickens me to see the public library going from a place revered in the community as a place of literacy, learning, and equality to a bastion of the non-thinking, pop culture junk we're fed by those who don't want us to actually better ourselves. You may as well be handing out Soma with the library cards, and if you don't know what Soma is, try reading *Brave New World*.

Whew. Apparently the (single) public library McNeil *used to use* has entirely forsaken balanced collection development in favor of pure pop culture. Did she speak to the librarians and ask what was going on? Is it true that her (former) library has given up on all materials that encourage life-long learning?

If so, that's terribly sad...but not, I believe, a reasonable generalization about the state of public libraries. (As to the third paragraph: I agree that providing fee services is a slippery slope that will almost always wind up hurting the library's position as a bastion of equality.) The first comment from another young librarian thinks that libraries need to be both—and, I believe, suggests that most public libraries can and do combine good book collections with social functions. McNeil's response makes it clearer that she's generalizing from her own public library to assert that public libraries have, *in general*, given up on "serious books." When another commenter notes that people don't seem to *read* the serious nonfiction,

she says "isn't that part of the point of the public library? To educate the masses, to expose them to new ideas?" To which I can only say, not exactly. Good public libraries foster *learning*; they do not and cannot force *education*. A good public library will, and I believe most decent public libraries, do, contain lots of serious nonfiction—but a public library cannot and should not force patrons to read those books.

McNeil's final response in the comments is one with which I agree entirely:

Balance is definitely the key, and it's something that sometimes gets lost in the fray of debate. I think libraries shouldn't be afraid to innovate, but they shouldn't innovate thoughtlessly or desperately.

Nor do I. Neither do I believe most public libraries *do* innovate thoughtlessly or desperately. I think this particular post is a little unbalanced—but then, there are hundreds and probably thousands of posts even more unbalanced in the direction of ignoring books and espousing "give 'em *entirely* what they want" as the totality of library service, so maybe I shouldn't complain.

Just for fun, I looked up a few recent biographies on Albert Einstein in Worldcat.org, accepting the nearest-to-you default listing. The first is at my city's library and another six public libraries within 27 miles. A juvenile biography is also at my small city's library and eight more within 27 miles. Another—a specialized work, consisting of essays marking the centennial of Einstein's special theory of relativity—isn't at my city's library, but it's at four others within 27 miles. Those are, in fact, the top three results on Worldcat.org—I didn't plow through pages of results looking for good hits. Going down to the next pure biography in the list—hmm, it's at my city's library too, along with seven more within 27 miles. And the next: yep, at my local library and eight more within 27 miles. (The town we lived in before this one? Has all of the books I mention here.)

I live in a small city, about 75,000 people. The library is modestly funded (not starving but not rolling in dough, with only the main branch retaining everyday service). It has **40 books** on Albert Einstein. I'm hard-pressed to see that McNeil's example is typical of my own public library or, frankly, most of those around here. My suggestion would be that she go back to her public library and raise her issues there.

What Can We Drop?

Andy Burkhardt asked that question on March 16, 2010 at *Information Tyrannosaur*. Burkhardt's an academic librarian—specifically, an Emerging Technologies Librarian. As such, his primary focus is new services and tools—and he's aware that libraries and higher education are "constantly adding things."

> Perhaps we should start thinking about what we should drop. What should we stop doing? What should we do less of so that what we are doing flourishes. We trim plants that get too large. We pick off sick leaves and remove excess foliage. By doing this the plant flourishes.

"We can't do it all. We have to strategically choose what to give attention and resources to." Burkhardt doesn't provide an answer; he asks "So what can you drop?"

It's an interesting question and yielded only two answers (there are five comments, but three of them are by Burkhardt). One, from a serials librarian, suggests dropping checkin and claiming. Another, from David Lee King, is a non-answer that raises its own set of problems:

> I tend to look at the "what can I drop" question a different way. Instead of asking that, I say "focus on your priorities"—if you are focusing on and doing your organizations priorities—stuff in your strategic plan, system-wide goals, etc—the stuff you should have already dropped simply won't get done. It'll be dropped by default.

I've seen variants of this answer elsewhere: Focus on the *important* stuff and let the rest slide. There are two potential problems. First, many *necessary* tasks aren't *priority* tasks, but if left undone will, in time, undermine the organization. Second, many things aren't explicitly stated in strategic plans and goals, but are vital to the library's ongoing health.

It's interesting that there weren't more concrete suggestions—but most such issues are local, so maybe it's not important.

Technology and Learning Outcomes

Catherine Pellegrino posted this on April 5, 2010 at *Spurious Tuples*, riffing off "Sometimes strength is simply avoided weakness," my April 3, 2010 *Walt at Random* post about personal technology choices. Looking back at that post, it was one of my better efforts. Portions of my earlier post:

> We may get a Wii when we get an HDTV. We may not. We'll probably get a DVR, since our S-VHS VCR will become largely useless...and maybe we'll replace the freebie DVD player that we've been using for two years now with a Blu-ray player. Eventually. (We're not complete Luddites. We do have Netflix–at the 3-movie level–and watch one movie a week that way, along with an hour or so of TV or old series on other nights. The third "movie" is for TV series we don't think we'll want to watch more than once.)
>
> Why don't we have lots of gadgets? Not because we couldn't afford them (even now, we can afford most anything we really want). Partly because we both hate shopping. Partly because my wife, decades ago, brought me around to her way of thinking: "You don't buy something unless you're sure you're going to use it." But there's more to it than that.
>
> In my case, specifically, it's not because I feel superior to those wasting their time with constant email checking, twittering, channel surfing on the 500-channel deluxe cable/satellite, and all that jazz.
>
> Rather, it's (partly) because I suspect I would be entirely comfortable with constant email checking, twittering, rechecking FriendFeed, channel surfing, trying out new apps...and, frankly, I don't think I'd get much writing done. Or much serious reading either.

It was a very *personal* post—I assumed that others are better at multitasking (or background distractions) than I am, and I specifically closed with:

> Is this another "Why I'm Not Likely to Buy an iPad" piece–one that has nothing to do with my general dislike of the Jobs Reality Distortion Field and closed environments? Maybe. I suspect that, if I owned an iPod Touch or an iPad, I'd like it a lot– and I'd spend a lot of time with it that I could otherwise spend reading, thinking, writing. For now, I've made my choice. For others, who balance such things better than I do, you may note that, unlike Cory Doctorow, I have not the slightest intention of suggesting that anybody else shouldn't buy an iPad. Unless you're finding that things are out of control (financially, in terms of balance, or in terms of better uses of your time), you should follow your joy.

A quick update, for those who care (which should be nobody at all). We *did* get an HDTV. We have not, so far, purchased a Wii. We did buy a Blu-ray player, the same day we purchased the HDTV, and it was an excellent use of very little money. (With the store's self-price-matching, the Blu-ray player turned out to be effectively free.) We have not purchased or leased a DVR, for reasons I've discussed in the blog (having to do with 50 watt usage at all times, which would increase our *total* household electricity consumption by more than 10%). Every-

thing else in that post still stands, including broadband speed slow enough that Netflix streaming is unacceptably low-quality on the absolutely first-rate HDTV. Oh, and as of January 8, 2011, I'm back on Twitter...for a while. (waltcrawford, but don't expect many tweets.)

Back to Pellegrino's post...which seems to spring partly from that quoted sentence in the second quoted paragraph above: "You don't buy something unless you're sure you're going to use it." Pellegrino:

> Walt doesn't ask "what can this new tool do?" but rather, "what do I want to do, and which tools will help me do that in the most efficient way possible?"
>
> But the reason I'm posting about this is because in the shower this morning (really) I realized that his decision process about technology is nearly identical to the decision process we use to determine the learning outcomes for a class, course, or program. Instead of asking, "what do we need to cover?" we ask, "what should the students be able to do at the end of this session/course/program?"
>
> So for example, instead of saying "hey, I need a smartphone!" I ask, "what do I need in a phone?" When the answer is "the ability to call for help and be reached in an emergency," the choice is clear: my $8/month cheapie phone from Virgin Mobile is perfect. But when I say, "hey, I've got a toddler, and he does cute things, and I want to capture that on video," I go out and discover that (relatively) inexpensive and (very) easy to use video cameras are available. So, purchasing a video camera is a logical response to what I want to do.
>
> Likewise, instead of saying, "we need to cover reference books, the catalog, at least three databases, interlibrary loan, and explain about plagiarism in this session," we ask, "what do students need to be able to do for this assignment?" And then we have them practice doing just that.

Pellegrino ends modestly: "So I'm not really sure where I'm going with this, but I thought I'd put it out here anyway." I think she's saying something significant—and finding more value in my post than I put there deliberately (for which I'm grateful).

Focusing on outcomes rather than tools should *not* be novel. For libraries and shiny tools, I think the process may need two steps, quite apart from the background "how does this fit into our ongoing mission and how does this meet *our* community's needs?":

1. Making sure there's an actual need that a new tool, methodology, social network or whatever will help your library meet—not that you're making up a use in order to justify the shiny.

2. Making sure there's enough buy-in to be effective: That there's enough staff recognition and agreement on the significance of the need and solution to give the solution a fighting chance at success.

#2 instantly requires clarification for those who don't read most of what I write about these things. I am not, *not* saying "don't start a project unless you're sure it will succeed." Far from it: Modest experiments that fail can be enormously useful learning experiences, and "failability" may be a key aspect of many new projects.

But there's a difference between failing because it turned out not to be the *ideal* solution (for whatever reasons) and failing because it was doomed from the start. Take library blogs ("please," but who remembers Henny Youngman anymore?). If your library starts a new blog to serve an apparent purpose and, after six months or a year of reasonably frequent posts, you find it's really not getting read or seeming to accomplish much, that may be a failed experiment, one you can learn from. But if your library starts a new blog because one staff member thinks it's a great idea, the blog has four posts the first week, two the second, one the third and none for the next three weeks, and nobody but the first staff member ever posts to it unless they're *required* to (and those posts have that "this is a mandatory post" style that's almost always recognizable)—well, that's not a failable experiment, that's a doomed experiment.

There is a difference, and it's a useful difference if you can spot it. One key may be looking at needs more than tools, and I think Pellegrino's post points this out nicely and succinctly. It's a shame that, eight months later, there have been no comments.

Jaron Lanier Interview
Jessamyn West put this up on January 7, 2010, but it's not on either of her blogs: it's at www.librarian.net/talks/lanier/ She interviewed Lanier (who recently wrote *You Are Not a Gadget*) for *LJ* and, of course, couldn't use most of the interview in the article—so the whole thing appears there. It's roughly five thousand words, which as an interview isn't all that long (a bit more than six pages of *Cites & Insights*, if that helps).

It's not directly about Library 2.0, of course (although it *is* about "Web 2.0") but I think you'll find it worth reading. A few excerpts:

> [Regarding libraries diving into 2.0:] …If you're going to engage with this stuff at all, engage with it at a level that's deeper and broader than at the level that's presented to you by the vendor. So, sure, try facebook if you like, but remember that facebook itself is a recent design and a very small idea, in a way, in a long stream of ideas. What I'm much more concerned about is myopia where people try facebook and twitter and believe that that's universe and that that's the internet. And also the ideas that are embedded or implied about personhood, authorship, or communication within those designs is what technology means and that's all wrong…

> [Regarding Andersonomics, where creative artists give their stuff away but make a living from their Real Fans—a concept West finds improbable:] …If you want to know how many people are making a living by giving away things on the internet then making it up in lectures, there's an easy way to gauge this, because the people who hire lecturers are lecture agencies: I've never met anyone who earned a substantial living from lecturing who didn't have a lecture agent. So all you have to do is go to the major lecture agency within town and look up the number of clients who are doing this. I've done this casually, and I think the answer is under 100, probably under 50. Maybe between 50 and 100. So there are people who are doing it, and of those, I'd have to say the vast majority have day jobs.

> So, Chris Anderson has done pretty well on the lecture circuit but he also has other gigs with Conde Nast and *Wired*, so he doesn't have to rely on it, which is a huge thing. Being able to make money is one thing. Being able to make reliable money is how you can have children. They're totally, totally different things. So, I don't think he would quit his *Wired* job…

Very few creators—writers, musicians, whatever—can actually make a living from personal appearances and "freemium" offerings. As a general model, it just doesn't work. Regarding making a living writing for the internet:

> There is a little bit of paid writing going on. Not a lot. Once again, I think we're talking about dozens, not hundreds. Maybe hundreds. So, it's this very small community, but they're very vocal and very influential. And that's sort of like a little micro version of traditional publishing. And so that's online but it's very specialized world in a geek way and I think would be very hard to replicate elsewhere…

A key thing to reading Lanier: *He's done it*—he's one of the few who can make decent money these ways. But he's also clear-headed enough to look beyond his own success. Lanier also goes into some current and future uses for public libraries, a discussion worth reading and nearly impossible for me to excerpt—and it's a future in which "Shhh" may play a role. Here's one relevant paragraph, after Lanier says that the only way he finally got the book written (after many years of delay) was to go to the British Library and gain "the quietude to actually sit down and write a book."

> To me there's clearly something missing in the formula that we're developing for civilization. There's something missing and I think that the library will naturally come to fill that gap. And making the library into some sort of alternate Facebook access point is exactly the wrong way to achieve that.

Also worth reading: Lanier's take on "the singularity" ("It's a fantasy. There's nothing to be protected from. It's stupid."), the virtues of fragmentation and more. Clearly, I need to read Lanier's book…

Social Networks and Libraries/Librarians

Maybe that should be "social media and libraries" but I continue to feel that "social media" is a nonsense term useful primarily to marketers and speakers. I have *lots* of stuff flagged in various areas of social networking; this sampling is of things that seemed to fit within a broader context of Library 2.0 and balance.

Libraries and Online Social Networking
Andrew Finegan posted this on February 25, 2009 at *Librarian Idol*. Finegan's in Australia, which may or may not be relevant. He starts out strong:

> Eloquence. Empathy. Comprehension. These are but some of the basic interpersonal skills that are absolutely necessary, when it comes to being a librarian—being able to relate to, understand, and communicate with members of the library community.

> We are often excellent at this face-to-face and over the phone. We use these skills to foster appreciation of our services amongst our clients.

So how does it go when libraries get involved with social networking?

> I often observe the deluded assumption of "If we build it, they will come".

And then, when the library blog sits deserted, or when the facebook/myspace page doesn't get any friends, the nay-sayers step in, shunning social media as a fad that has no relevance to libraries.

So, here's one thing I'd like to see. If we're so focused on libraries using social media, then we need to train our librarians up on *actual social networking skills for online communication*.

While I'm tempted to note that some of us aren't so much naysayers as non-universalists, saying that social networks might not be the be-all and end-all for *every* library, I'd rather focus on Finegan's prescriptions. Briefly (as usual, there's excellent expansion in the original post):

Get your librarian to find an online community and infiltrate it. Get them to become a "regular" in that community. Engage with others in the community. Become the "resident librarian" [in that community].

Remember—it's not all about you, and it's not all about the library. It's about community, conversations, and collaboration. You can't build an online community from scratch based around a library website. That's crazy.

In short, I think Finegan's saying "you'll do better bringing the librarians to existing social network communities than trying to build new communities around the library's presence." And I think he's probably right.

One fairly long comment, from "Zaana," relates this notion to some others previously discussed. In part, Zaana says:

People (not just libraries) seem to think they need these technologies without asking themselves why they need it, how is it going to benefit them, how is it going to add value to their life. Social media works best when defined and targeted to a niche audience (note niche does not mean small, just specific).

Indeed.

Neophilia, Diversion, Networking, Sharing, and Discussion

Wayne Bivens-Tatum wrote this on May 11, 2009 at *Academic Librarian*. People were asking why he hadn't joined social networks they found useful (Twitter and Friendfeed, "but the question could probably apply to more of them") and gives *his own* answer:

The simple reason is, I don't see any way I would benefit from these services. Some people would consider that statement an incentive to either persuade me that I would benefit or dismiss me as a Luddite

who just doesn't "get it." But I do get it. I know some of the ways people benefit from these services. It's just that I don't want those benefits. Partly, it's a personality issue. I'm not very social, and I don't have interests in common with many people. For example, I have almost no interest in: television, pop music, celebrities, fashion, food, cooking, new movies, sports, contemporary fiction, cars, gardening, crafts, diets, scandals, or the weather.

After *explicitly* stating that he's not ridiculing the motives and wonders why people get offended if you don't share their values, he discusses some of the motivations he finds for social networking.

There's **neophilia**, love of the new, and he says he's susceptible to it—but what he views as "the new" may be different. He distinguishes between awareness of what's new and feeling the need to *adopt* all the new things—just as I feel I can understand what Twitter is without necessarily tweeting. He also mentions **diversion**: "Some people approach these social networking tools seeking diversion. They seek to distract themselves from their daily routine, pop in somewhere for a chat, read a few posts by someone to kill some time." He has his own diversions (yes, he's on Facebook), but finds that "constant diversions—far from being valuable--are instead a burden in my life." Maybe that's another way of saying what I was saying in my "weakness" post: I avoid some possible diversions because I suspect they'd distract too much from less diverting but more important things (important *for me*).

Networking? That's a long discussion and has much to do with the purposes of networking. I'll leave it for you to read directly. Then there's **sharing**—and here, B-T recognizes it as one of the motivations for his blog, but not for Twitter.

The sharing that other librarians do benefits me, and it's possible some people have benefited from my own sharing, but it's difficult to think of anything worth sharing for me that can be reduced to 140 or 160 characters. I'm not really interested in what you're doing at the moment, and can't figure out why you'd be interested in what I'm doing. What would it be? Here's what I'm reading? I spend most of my free time reading philosophy or writing in my journal. Would any of you really care that I'm currently reading Brighouse, Barry, Anderson, and Cohen on justice? What would I have to say in 140 characters that would matter for those subjects? I've searched Twitter for any tweets on topics of interest and found nothing I'm

interested in. Nor am I interested in "trending topics" or "nifty queries." One reason I'm writing here less is that I'm reading so little to do with librarianship, and I hesitate to inflict upon readers some of my thoughts on topics that don't have to do with education or librarianship.

Then there's **discussion**, "Another worthwhile motivation, at least for some of these services." Here...well, you'll have to read his expansion for yourself. I find the odd mix of professional and personal discussion on Friendfeed worthwhile *for me*, even if it sometimes does become gossip. Is that gossip a "complete waste of time"? Possibly...but I don't claim to be high-minded 100% of the time.

I suggest reading this essay not because you'll agree with B-T's thinking, but because he's thought it through in an interesting manner. Maybe his reasons for avoiding Friendfeed and Twitter are your reasons for joining them, and there's nothing wrong with that. *Of course* one commenter objects that you can't judge a social networking service unless you actually try it for a while—and I find B-T's response wholly satisfactory. There are some other interesting comments as well.

The discussion continues

The May 19, 2009 post "Online social networking isn't for everyone" by John Dupuis at *Confessions of a Science Librarian* springs partially from Bivens-Tatum's post and brings a broader library perspective to bear:

> When we build [social networking] systems, we need to build them for everyone. Not just the coolest and most technophilic. We have to build for who our audience really is, not who we wish they would be.
>
> And sometimes we just have to recognize that not everyone will be interested in what we have to offer, even if they seem to fit our profile in other ways.

Dupuis likes B-T's post, finding it "thought provoking and stimulating," and says:

> Now, the message I take away from it is this: building community is very hard. Everybody wants to build a new Facebook for scientists or librarians or a way of engaging a campus full of university students, but the important thing to remember is what do your potential audience really want. Which of those five features [mentioned in B-T's post] are you trying to provide? What are the ways your audience are already fulfilling those needs? What are the potential gaps that you can fill? Is what you're offering very clearly better, easier to use, less disruptive to existing workflows?

> And most importantly, when you consider preaching to the unconverted, will enough people care?

This post drew a *lot* of comments (for a liblog), 22 including Dupuis' responses...and, unfortunately, the first one is a snipe at Wayne Bivens-Tatum that's both pointless and, I think, based only on reading the *excerpt* Dupuis quoted. That comment ends "If people truly don't see benefits then fine, but the opinion cited suggests ignorance concerning how the web can be used." I honestly don't see how a literate person could read the entire B-T post and conclude that he's ignorant about how the web can be used—and, after some comments from others, the person who wrote the first comment admits that "as a web enthusiast, I tend to assume that people 'don't like it' because they 'don't get it.'" Which is a common failing among enthusiasts! (Wayne Bivens-Tatum responds further down: "As for 'getting it,' I get it. Really, I do. I'm just not interested in it." That's a message that seems unpalatable to some folks.) An interesting comment stream in general, including Dupuis' use of "de-hermiting" as one of his reasons to be online—a term that's nearly perfect for my time spent on Friendfeed. (One interesting thing about this comment stream: Dupuis has a large audience among scientists, so you're hearing from two slightly-overlapping communities. I find that on Friendfeed as well, and *love* it.)

Dupuis returned to this topic on May 29, 2009 with "More on social networking," commenting on Wayne Bivens-Tatum's May 20, 2009 "Updating My Status, or, A Blog Post is a 1,000 Word Tweet" (*of course* I did a word count for B-T's post: 1,158 words, which is close enough). He first responds more carefully to the first comment on Dupuis' post:

> The "don't knock it 'til you try it response" is problematic for many reasons (not that I was knocking anything). To echo one person who commented on my blog, I haven't tried cannibalism or genital piercing either, but I don't want to. The response also smacks of an irritating paternalism, as if a grown man who's reasonably bright and educated is like a child who needs to be told to eat his vegetables. "How do you know you don't like cauliflower until you've tried it?" Not being a child, but instead a rather large man, there's a temptation to suggest the inquisitor take the cauliflower and insert it somewhere very uncomfortable, like the back seat of a Volkswagen. Mostly, though, the response is flawed because it assumes that any given social software application is somehow *sui gene-*

ris, when in fact they are all just variations on a theme. Twitter, for example, is analogous to all sorts of other things, and even if it weren't it's not like it's some difficult concept to understand.

B-T discusses one partly analogous service he does use (sort of), Facebook—a service he finds himself paying less and less attention to. He's never updated his status there.

> Why? Mainly because I don't think anyone would care, just as I'm interested in very few of other people's postings. On a moment to moment basis, I, like most people, am just not very interesting. I'm not necessarily boring, and I do think I have my good qualities, but I really can't figure out what I could say in a few characters that would be worth reading. Writing nothing worth reading may not bother most people, but I try to keep an audience in mind and not bore you too much.

Ah, but maybe we *are* interested—so B-T provides a status update in four paragraphs, what he's thinking about now, which is mostly about writing pedagogy (he teaches a writing seminar). While it's an interesting four paragraphs (527 words—he could do it as four Friendfeed messages or Facebook statuses, but the results would be a little bizarre), he notes with specific regard to Twitter: "What's here says little of substance, and yet I still can't figure out how to condense it to 140 characters. To be clear yet again, I'm not knocking any of this, even if I haven't tried it. I just know what I want to read and how I want to spend my time and interact with others."

Dupuis adds "More on social networking" on May 20, quoting portions of B-T's post and calling the sentence just quoted ("I just know…") the core of the message, and I think that's right. And, as before, Dupuis brings this back to libraries:

> If you build it, what if they just don't come? What if they have no interest in what you have to offer? Most attempts to build the next "Facebook for Scientists" or new plans to "engage the undergrad population via blogs and Twitter and Second Life" run up against exactly what Wayne is talking about.
>
> The challenge isn't that the people in the target groups are Luddites with no interest in technology or with connecting online. It's that they either already have social networking infrastructure (online or offline) that works for them or they're just not as interested in networking as you would hope or like to believe.
>
> It seems to me that one possibility if we want to engage these groups, is that we have to figure out

where they already are and how we can fit into and improve that rather than try and build something completely new that we'll then try and entice everyone to join.

This post didn't draw many comments. One was from a person who sees the issue but *still* has "an impulse to evangelise about new communications methods." Dupuis sees his own impulses in that regard. I wonder whether there's a useful difference between informing and evangelizing that gets overlooked a little too often?

Three from Angel Rivera

Rivera posted "Article Note: On the utility of social networking sites for libraries, and some additional thoughts" on August 21, 2009 at *The Gypsy Librarian*, following up with "A further look at the utility of social networking sites for libraries" on August 24 and "Some lessons I have learned about social networking sites, some the hard way" on August 26. I'll discuss the three as though they were one *long* post; all relate to an article by Heidi Steiner in *Library Hi Tech News:* "Reference Utility of Social Networking Sites: Options and Functionality."

Rivera's been using social networks for a while and has thought about them—and found Steiner's examination interesting. Steiner looks at Facebook, MySpace, Twitter and Ning and their potential for library reference work; Rivera thinks the article could be a springboard for some substantial conversations. Which tools make sense for a particular library? Quoting Steiner:

> As the number of social networks grow, it becomes harder for libraries to determine which services are appropriate for their users and doable given the library's mission and goals.

Rivera says ("SNS" is his abbreviation for social networking services):

> The last part of that statement is crucial. What can you do given your specific and unique mission and goals. A lot of libraries rush to create SNS profiles or pages, often due to the cool image concern, without thoughtful regard to mission and goals. If you add a lack of commitment to this equation, you end up with a dead site once the initial interest is lost. The resulting debris leaves an impression that is worse than not setting up that profile in the first place. The point is to experiment but do so judiciously.

Getting back to Steiner, Rivera notes her conclusions—broadly, that successful use of social networks for reference requires promotion, making

the service known on the library's website, using signage at the reference desk—and updating your social-network presence.

> I would add the following: once you choose an SNS application, you are making a commitment. I am not saying it is permanent, but you are making the commitment of time and personnel. The library use of the applications should be treated seriously... use of SNS is not an afterthought, just something your geeky librarian does on the side, or simply slacking or goofing off... Use of the SNS should be part of the library's strategic plans for service and outreach and treated accordingly...

That's all in the first post. In the second, Rivera looks at the tools. I have no useful comments to offer on that post; you might find it interesting and worthwhile. The third offers four lessons—not prescriptions, but things Rivera's learned over time. I think they're all good lessons, particularly for library use of social networks (and maybe other tools as well). Just quoting the topic sentences of the four points:

➢ You use what works for you.
➢ You need to discard anything that does not work for you.
➢ Don't feel like you have to open yet another account.
➢ Take it seriously.

That doesn't do Rivera justice. Go read the post itself. I'd like to see more attention to the second point, particularly for mandatory course blogs (where "discard" also means "delete the blog; clean your tracks"), but that's me. All in all, a worthwhile discussion.

Libraries and Social Media

From Rochelle Mazar on August 29, 2009 at what's now called *mazar.ca*. Mazar is Emerging Technologies Librarian at the University of Toronto Mississauga, and most definitely not a Luddite.

> I'm all for social media, don't get me wrong. Very much. I'm a big fan of and an advocate for things like Twitter and blogs and IM and all that. I follow social media I use social media, I recommend social media to others. However.

> I don't really understand the libraries and social media stuff. I just haven't seen any compelling reasons why libraries should be all up in the social media, other than it makes us look "with it."

> Here's why I don't get it: social media has a pretty broad reach geographically, and allows you to connect to people who use that particular brand

of social media. So you can reach, say, lots of people who use Facebook or Twitter (or LinkedIn, or whatever), but there's no particular reason to presume that those people are your users. Also: does anyone actually like it when companies/institutions use social media for marketing? I certainly don't. The moment I feel like they're trying to sell me something I stop following them. I like to follow individuals who have particular professional passions; not institutions who have a corporate agenda. I'm not interested in mixing PR in my authentic social media experiences.

That's the start of a 1,000-word post that supports "narrowcasting"—using new technology to engage *your own community*—if you can find a good way to do it, but questions some of the popular uses. I've wondered about the issue in those last few sentences above: I certainly don't see myself "friending" my public library on Facebook and wonder whether Mazar's right when she says, "I think it's only librarians who are interested in libraries on Facebook."

Oh, her library's going to use Twitter—but only as an easy way to make announcements and with no assumption that people will actually follow the feed in Twitter itself. That's not social media, it's specialized broadcasting; Mazar says that and thinks it's appropriate.

> I don't know that I've seen social media yet that I think would make sense for institutions like libraries. Broadcast, yes: interactive...I just don't know. You can have a Facebook page that everyone (including all the staff) will ignore; you can set up a Twitter account and encourage sharing and conversation with whatever patrons find you, but what happens if you actually get all you patrons asking you questions this way? It's unsustainable. It's largely invisible to the real workings of the library.

The post drew 13 comments—and the very first, from Andy Burkhardt, falls into the "your mileage may vary" category: He *enjoys* marketing from companies and organizations via social media. Do most people? I dunno; I'm on Mazar's side in this case. Jeremy Hunsinger says (among other things) "The argument that 'our users use twitter' as a justification for an institution to use twitter is just a poor justification. The question at the heart is... 'how do our library users want to communicate with the library?' and that is not the same as 'how do I want to communicate with my friends and colleagues?'" He says he wouldn't recommend Twitter to any institution currently—but might

recommend that an institution have people watch and respond to certain Twitter discussions as part of their job.

Cecily Walker objects to the use of Twitter as a broadcast/narrowcast medium: "If you won't be replying to your followers, then why use Twitter at all? Your library and your users would be better served by an RSS feed than a Twitter account." She feels strongly that "social" is the key word in social media. (Mazar notes that Twitter's really *designed* for broadcasting, with much less effective conversational tools than, say, Friendfeed and Facebook. Aaron Bowsen partly disagrees with this.) Dorothea Salo asks "Why assume that patrons are the only audience?" and offers other uses of social media—to reach media, other branches of the institution, the alumni, etc.

10 Tips for Managing Social Media Burnout

While this isn't about libraries as such, it's on a blog devoted to nonprofits—*Nonprofit Tech 2.0* by Heather Mansfield. This piece appeared October 22, 2009 and deals with her own experience in coming close to "complete social media burnout." And why not? She was running more than 20 "social networking profiles" and doing 60-hour 7-day work weeks. She'd become a Borg: "My brain was completely fried and those around me were getting pretty fed up with the fact that I was never present, only connected... online, all the time." She's down to seven profiles and five-day 45-50 hour work weeks.

The tips, without the expansions—and I think these *are* directly relevant to librarians and library use of social networks:

> 1. Don't update your organization's profiles on the weekend. 2. Pick a time to quit in the evening and stick to it. 3. Pick one social networking profile and keep it entirely for fun and your personal life. 4. Sometimes just leave the smartphone at home. 5. Take time for lunch. 6. Breathe, exercise, and treat yourself. Seriously. 7. Make time to connect with friends... in person or over the phone! 8. Ignore, block, and delete grumpy, mean people. 9. Stay focused on the Good. 10. Make sure your work is appreciated by the higher ups in your organization.

Most of these are self-explanatory but the expansions may help—and it strikes me that they're all worthwhile.

Librarians and social media engagement

I'm using the more sober title of two in a two-part post by John Dupuis on October 13 and November 18, 2009 at *Confessions of a science librarian*—although I'm fond of the other title as well: "Twitter & blogs as ways of knowing." That one leads off with a quote from Joe Murphy, one of those quotes that will usually yield a "Nobody ever said that" response: "It's reprehensible for information professionals not to be on Twitter."

What?

Since I wasn't on Twitter at the time, I only got some of the feedback indirectly as people referred to it on Friendfeed, with perhaps the best of those references being Steve Lawson's "It is reprehensible for information professionals not to be hyperbolic." Dupuis' own reaction: "A loaded and diva-dramatic statement like that is a sure sign that Twitter has jumped the shark." Dupuis finds a direct contrast in Steven Bell's equally (in my opinion) unfortunate commentary about academic librarians using social networks while at work:

> A passionate academic librarian would be so immersed in their work that he or she would not only not have time for such questionable diversions, but would be so caught up in their work that they would hardly even contemplate stopping for a little break. I'm not suggesting there's anything wrong with the occasional social network visit—it may even be beneficial in giving our brains a needed rest. A truly passionate academic librarian just wouldn't go there.

Dupuis' take:

> It seems we have two "experts" both looking at the same issue—the use of online social networks by librarians. One says that to ignore a particular example is professional suicide, the other says that they are time-wasters, implying they have no worthwhile professional use.
>
> I know where I stand—in the middle.

You can guess my own reaction. If not, here it is, as the second comment (right after Dorothea Salo's note that she's also in the middle):

> Need I say? In this case, not being in the middle is simply reprehensible. (No, I still don't use emoticons.)

Bell objected that the excerpt had been taken out of context—a context that, it turns out, isn't even present in Bell's post except as a link to another article. Having read the full ACRLog post, I'm not convinced that Dupuis does him an injustice—and, of course, we don't *have* the context for Murphy's absurd statement (made during a conference program).

I think one distinction is worth making, be-
fore proceeding to Dupuis' second post: Although
it's true that Murphy's comment was a tweet rather
than a post, it also seems to be true that Bell got a
lot more heat for a somewhat extreme position
than Murphy did for what I regard as an outlan-
dishly extreme statement. And yes, I do believe
that's typical: Mild hyperbole that's regarded as
technologically conservative is treated more
harshly than extreme hyperbole from techno-
philes. I have wounds to back up my feelings there.

In the second post, Dupuis admits to "setting
up a couple of straw people just for the purpose of
knocking them down" in quoting Murphy's and
Bell's antitheses—although it's notable that these
straw men were both walking and talking. Here's
what Dupuis actually thinks, however:

> My core assumption is that for academic libra-
> rians, professional development is a key part of
> our jobs. We must keep up with what is happen-
> ing in the broader library world, the worlds of our
> patrons and the the world as a whole. Keeping up
> includes current events, disciplinary trends, appli-
> cations of new technologies and social trends,
> particularly as they affect higher education and
> the lives of the mostly young people who are in
> our student cohort.
>
> So without further ado, John Dupuis' Laws of Li-
> brarian Social Media Engagement.
>
> * Engaging professional communities through
>   online social media is a good thing
> * Not everybody has to be present on every plat-
>   form
> * Pick one or two that make sense for you
> * Stick with the one(s) that make sense and con-
>   tribute to the community
> * Engage beyond the library community

Dupuis is also clear that he doesn't think *every* li-
brarian will join any social network and, while he
doesn't say so, I'm guessing he doesn't really think
they should. But he does think "everyone owes it to
themselves and to their profession to at least give it
a try"—and that this is true for every profession,
not just librarianship. I'm inclined to agree—but
then, since I've been involved in several social
networks (just not all of them), I would, wouldn't
I? And there is the other key message, which really
is explicit in different words in Dupuis' post but is
stated in so many words by Connie Crosby: "It is
okay for all of us to not be everywhere."

To Be Continued…

This essay is too long to run in one issue of *Cites &
Insights.* This ends the first part; we'll pick up in
C&I 11:3 (March 2011).

Bibs & Blather
Where's Chapter 4?

Chapter 2 of *The Liblog Landscape 2007-2010* ap-
peared in the final issue of Cites & Insights 10 (De-
cember 2010). Chapter 3 appeared in the January
2011 issue. So where's Chapter 4? Not here *as a ser-
vice to readers*, if some feedback is correct.

Quoting from Walt at Random

Here's what I said in a *Walt at Random* post on
January 4, 2011:

> I originally planned to publish chapters 2-11 of *The
> Liblog Landscape 2007-2010* in *Cites & Insights*,
> one chapter per issue, with Chapter 2 appearing in
> December 2010, Chapter 3 in January 2011 and so
> on through, possibly, September or October 2011. I
> hoped that I'd see enough parallel book sales to
> justify doing that and, with luck, to justify doing a
> five-year study of liblogs. Because these chapters
> contain graphs and other stuff, the "HTML sepa-
> rates" appear as PDFs with sets of book pages ra-
> ther than in the usual HTML form.
>
> **But maybe not…**
>
> Fact is, as you can readily discover by clicking on
> "Liblog Profiles" as a category (since I pledged to
> do one post with four liblog profiles for each copy
> sold), only four copies of the book have been pur-
> chased–two downloads and two paperback.
>
> That's not as bad as *disContent: The Complete Col-
> lection*, which, halfway through the four-month
> offering, has sold exactly three (count them: 3)
> copies. I've accidentally extended that four-month
> offering to five months (through the end of
> March), but that's as far as it goes. Sad to say, I'm
> confirming my suspicion about "freemium" offer-
> ings and my so-called audience–and it appears to
> be even worse than I thought.
>
> I appreciate one colleague's honesty: he doesn't
> intend to pay for library literature, no matter who
> writes it. I'm getting the idea that this is a general
> opinion, just not usually stated so bluntly.
>
> As to the liblog books, I had honestly hoped and
> expected that some or all of the library school li-
> braries/collections would acquire these. But, you
> know, they're not either from A Major Library

Publisher or overpriced special studies from importantly-named research groups, so...

I don't think it's that nobody wants to read this stuff. I think it's that nobody wants to pay for it.

Here's the track record:

- *Public Library Blogs*: Sold 80 copies, of which 28 are in libraries (according to Worldcat), including no more than three institutions with library schools. Meanwhile, the text portion of this has been downloaded more than 2,500 times in C&I (1,254 as an HTML separate plus 1,321 in the issue, through 12/31/10).

- *Academic Library Blogs*: Sold 43 copies, of which 21 appear to be in libraries–including no more than nine institutions with library schools, and probably significantly fewer than that. (I'm including two Australian possibilities here.) More than 2,500 downloads of the text in C&I (1,225 as an HTML separate; the same 1,321 in the issue.)

- *The Liblog Landscape 2007-2008*: Sold 66 copies, of which 13 appear to be in libraries–no more than nine of them library schools. So far, 1,600+ downloads in C&I (as a full issue), but it's early yet.

- *But Still They Blog*: Sold 19 copies, of which three (so far) are in libraries, at most one with a library school. So far, 1,053 C&I downloads–but it's very early, since that issue came out in September 2010 and these stats only go through 12/31/10.

- Chapter 2 of *The Liblog Landscape 2007-2010*: So far–and it was only out for seven weeks through the end of the year–127 separate downloads and 425 copies of the issue, for a total of 552. Four books sold.

- Chapter 3 of *The Liblog Landscape 2007-2010*: This one was out for less than two weeks through the end of the year, so these are almost meaningless numbers: 48 separate downloads, 371 copies of the issue, for a total of 419 copies. Again, four books sold.

- **Going back:** My 2006 study of the "great middle" of liblogs has been downloaded some 22,000 times, 13,000 of *them* as a separate–and the 2005 study has been downloaded more than 23,000 times, 14,000 as a separate.

So there's a readership, as long as it's free. Which, with any sort of institutional or corporate sponsorship, would be just fine with me.

A year ago, I wouldn't have called 66 copies anything close to acceptable–but if I accept that the liblog studies are mostly a hobby, that's at least enough to pay for software upgrades and the costs of getting the thing into print, even if it's not much more than $1/hour for time spent.

Nineteen copies? Not so much. Four copies (so far)? I haven't yet covered the direct cost of buying a proof copy.

Current plans

I'd planned to include Chapter 4–which starts to get into the meaty, interesting facts and figures–in the February issue of C&I. (No, you haven't missed it: It won't be out for at least two weeks, maybe three, maybe more.)

And I'd still love to do that...if there's some evidence of at least modest sales for the book or download. Let's call "at least modest sales" five copies per chapter, which would yield at least 55 copies of the book as a whole (Chapter 1 is never going to appear in C&I. But if more than 200 copies of the book are sold, I'll change the PDF price to $0, which would make it freely available.)

So once fifteen copies have been sold, I'll put Chapter 4 in the next issue of C&I. Twenty copies: Chapter 5. And so on.

> This, of course, assumes that C&I itself continues for the long run...

If Chapter 3 never appears? Then I'll almost certainly come to my senses regarding the five-year study. (I had a neat new idea about a slight extension of that study, one that could only appear online or as PDFs, since it would require multicolor output, but that neat new idea certainly won't happen if the study doesn't happen.) If neither library schools nor librarians are willing to provide any support for this stuff, then it's clear that I really shouldn't be doing it. Time spent helping out with the Friends store at my local library might be more productive for all concerned...

Sponsorship may, to be sure, change the picture, and firm up the picture for C&I itself. When I know something, so will you.

If not? Well, then let's not waste any more language on alternative forms of publishing or new models or the role of independent researchers. Without the imprimatur of formal publishers and formal journals, the work is, apparently, effectively worthless. If I want to keep writing (other than blogs), I should find topics that publishers will buy rather than topics where I believe I have something special to offer. And that may be a lesson I should have learned a long time ago.

Update and Further Comment

First of all: In case you've forgotten, *The Liblog Landscape 2007-2010*, which covers 1,304 liblogs

and is a uniquely comprehensive treatment, is available at www.lulu.com/content/9829119 in trade paperback or PDF form.

As of January 13, 2011, *no* additional books have been sold, either print or download. (That's for all C&I books at Lulu. One copy of *Balanced Libraries* did sell on Amazon—the CreateSpace edition.) Issue downloads are up to 445 for C&I 10:12 and 441 for C&I 11:1. Downloads of the chapters are up to 134 for Chapter 2 and 65 for Chapter 3.

I got four comments on that post—three direct, one private email that apparently represents a consensus of several library people. That consensus…well, here's how I excerpted it in my own comment, noting that "Z" (whom I regard as a friend and valued colleague) is doing me a favor by being honest about this:

> Z suggests that I'm overstating the interest in these studies based on C&I stats: That most libloggers will download the issue or article, look for their own names and one or two others, and ignore everything else–that people really don't care about studies like this. Z also suggests that the studies might be significant in the long run, but that only institutions would plausibly pay for them. And that's not happening.
>
> I suspect Z may be right. If that's true, and given that my ability to market to ALISE or library schools is nil (and the chances of their buying anything that doesn't have the Proper Stamp of Authority isn't much greater), then the studies really are a waste of my time… which does not inherently extend to *Cites & Insights*.
>
> So, while I was reluctant to write this post, I may be learning useful things, even if they're not things I necessarily want to learn.
>
> For now, I'm going to stop pushing the books. Either they sell or they don't. Which means fewer blog posts but, with luck, ones that are more enjoyable for writer and reader alike.

At this point, I see three possibilities—and I think I'm giving them in reverse order of probability (that is, I think the first is most probable):

1. **Z is right**: Almost nobody (personally or institutionally) much cares about quantitative liblog research and most earlier download figures represent egosearches. I should give it up. (The four copies already sold may represent the viable market?)

2. **There's not enough interest for "Andersonomics" to work**: Some people are mildly in-

terested, but not enough to pay *anything* for the book (during the last week of December and first five days of January, the PDF version was really cheap…). I've already tested that to some extent with the "freemium" *disContent: The Complete Collection* (woo! three copies!) and the "pay what it's worth" experiment with *Cites & Insights* itself since sponsorship ended at the end of 2009 (I won't give the total contributed to date, but it's in the very low three digits). But they'll read it if it's free. (#2 has a broader significance than #1, and I'm now convinced that a special book version of LIBRARY 2.0 AND "LIBRARY 2.0" with index and with update essays included would sell two to five copies at most, so *that's* not going to happen. For that matter, I'm beginning to wonder whether the continuing high download numbers for that issue mean anything…)

3. **It's just too early, and a trickle of sales will follow**: That's the most hopeful outcome, but also the least probable. As a cockeyed optimist, I'll leave the window open: As soon as 15 copies have been sold, I'll schedule Chapter 4 for the next C&I; as soon as 20 have been sold, Chapter 5…and so on. And I'll continue to prepare and post four liblog profiles for each copy sold. Who knows? I might even make it out of the numbers and into the As.

If #1 is right, and maybe if #2 is right, then I'm doing y'all a favor by *not* taking up precious C&I space with chapters of *The Liblog Landscape 2007-2010*. Which may be true.

Masthead

URL: citesandinsights.info/civ11i2.pdf