

Cites & Insights

Crawford at Large
Libraries • Policy • Technology • Media

Sponsored by YBP Library Services

Volume 7, Number 4: April 2007

ISSN 1534-0937

Walt Crawford

Balanced Libraries

Thoughts on Continuity and Change

Walt Crawford

A Cites & Insights Book

That's my new book, now available exclusively at <http://www.lulu.com/waltercrawford/>. You *could* think of it as an extension and expansion of the July 2006 perspective FINDING A BALANCE: LIBRARIES AND LIBRARIANS (*Cites & Insights* 6:9, July 2006, pp. 2-19, citesandinsights.info/v6i9b.htm), but I'd rather say the book was inspired by that essay.

Here's a little of what I said last July that applies to the book as well:

Think of this set of stories as my re-entry into the set of discussions around Library 2.0. Think of it as a follow-up to a discussion at LISNews, where I suggested that life was frequently a matter of grays rather than blacks and whites and was taken to task by two others who

claimed everything was black and white if you just understood it thoroughly....

I favor change (when appropriate) and adore good uses of technology—I've been a change agent and technologist throughout my career. But I also favor continuity and have a healthy respect for established methods as worthy of consideration, not veneration...

I'm heartened by what I see as a tendency toward balance: More parties thinking about not only the possibilities of new services, but also the problems and the need to relate those new services to the overall spectrum of a library's services. I see more recognition that every library is (and should be) different, that no community is homogeneous, and that libraries generally aren't failing.

Inside This Issue

Library Access to Scholarship	5
Finding a Balance: Improving and Extending Services	14
Perspective: Informal Notes on the Lulu Experience	23
Between LIBRARY 2.0 AND "LIBRARY 2.0" and FINDING A BALANCE: LIBRARIES AND LIBRARIANS, I published something over 40,000 words last year on continuity and change in libraries, although many (maybe most) of those words weren't mine. Given the range of topics in <i>C&I</i> , that was more than enough focus one new topic—but I kept thinking about the issues and collecting appropriate comments. The result is this book.	

Why and What

Why a book? Several reasons:

- I believe the fifteen essays that make up *Balanced Libraries* work better as a book than as fifteen different *Cites & Insights* Perspectives. Some chapters can stand alone; some require the context of earlier and later chapters. It's really too long for the ejournal.
- I believe the book adds value to the ongoing set of discussions, experiments and changes in libraries and librarianship. While *Cites & Insights* clearly adds value, books work differently than ejournal articles.

- The time seems right. Several books are coming out or have just appeared explaining various aspects of social software and “Library 2.0” tools and ideas for libraries. I suspect they’re all worthwhile. I list five in the bibliography even though I’ve only read one of the five, based on what I know of their authors’ writing and thinking. *Balanced Libraries* should complement these other books, working at a different level.
- Print-on-demand publishing makes it feasible to do a timely book that I don’t anticipate huge sales for. “Timely” is a relative thing, but I can say that revisions to the text continued up to the end of February 2007.

As for the “what,” that’s simple. *Balanced Libraries: Thoughts on Continuity and Change* is a 247-page 6x9" trade paperback (including bibliography and index). \$21.95 plus shipping. Only available at www.lulu.com/waltcrawford/. There’s no ISBN. (That story was told at *Walt at random*.)

The book’s just over 71,000 words long, of which some 20,000 words are quotations from other people’s blogs, reports, articles and list posts. The rest is my commentary, interpretation and thinking.

I think it’s a handsome book, but of course I’m biased. The typography is similar to (but larger than) that in *Cites & Insights*. Thanks to my wife (not only the professional librarian in the household but a fine amateur photographer), there’s a lovely wraparound cover. It was taken July 20, 1996 in Papeete, Tahiti.

Cites & Insights 7:1 (January 2007) included the rough-draft version of Chapter 2, “Patrons and the Library,” under the flag FINDING A BALANCE. That same flag appeared over a second-draft version of Chapter 14, “Balanced Librarians,” although the essay title was THE BALANCED LIBRARIAN. A third and final excerpt from the book appears in this issue—Chapter 9, “Improving and Extending Services.” For the other twelve chapters you’ll have to buy the book.

Thinking through the title

I started working on this book last fall. It’s been a while since I’ve done a book and I wasn’t sure I’d complete this one and find it worthwhile. I hedged my bets—writing individual chapters as *C&I* essays with the thought that I could use any completed chapters that way if the project fizzled out. At the time, the working title was *The Balanced Library: Continuity and Change*.

By the time I published a draft chapter (December 20, 2006), I was half certain I’d eventually finish the project (and halfway through rough-draft chapters). That chapter yielded more positive feedback than I’d expected. By January 24, 2007, when *C&I* for February 2007 appeared, I was 75% confident it would happen. That chapter yielded *much* more positive feedback than expected. That’s probably why the project reached fruition earlier than expected: There’s nothing like positive feedback!

As I was revising the book, I rethought the title for what may be too-subtle reasons. Given how strongly I feel about the uniqueness of each library, I decided *The Balanced Library* had too final and “unitary” a feel. *Balanced Libraries* recognizes that balance will be different for each library. I added *Thoughts on* to the subtitle because this is not the kind of “finished statement” some of my earlier books were (e.g., *MARC for Library Use* and *Technical Standards: An Introduction for Librarians*). This is a set of organized thoughts—mine and others—offered as part of an ongoing set of conversations. It’s possible a new and substantially revised edition (or a sequel with a different title) will appear in a year or three.

To encourage those conversations, I’ll add 16 posts to *Walt at random*, each with “Balanced Libraries” as a category. One post is for the book as a whole, one more for each chapter. The posts will be stubs, resting places for comments. I will *not* remove comments because they’re negative. I *will* remove comments that constitute personal attacks, are slanderous, use offensive language, are simply irrelevant to the topic (or have spam URLs), or give strong indication that the commenter hasn’t read the book. I hope you’ll read the book before commenting, although I have no way of knowing who buys or reads the book.

Who’s There?

There may be a few others quoted in ways that didn’t allow for footnoting, but here’s who’s quoted in the book (and listed in the bibliography):

Andrew Abbott, Stephen Abram, Richard Akerman, Andrew Richard Albanese, Lori Bowen Ayre, Charles W. Bailey, Jr., Mike Baldwin, Andy Barnett, Jeff Barry, Steven J. Bell, John Blyberg, Abigail Bordeaux, Brary web diva, Peter Bromberg, Sophie Brookover, Liz Burns.

James B. Casey, Michael Casey, Simon Chamberlain, Mary Carmen Chimato, Dan Chudnov, Sarah Clark, Laura B. Cohen, Karen Coombs, Laura Cros-

sett. Benjamin Daeuber, Lorcan Dempsey, Ryan Deschamps, Cory Doctorow, Bill Drew, John Dupuis.

Eli Edwards, Nicole Engard, Amanda Etches-Johnson, Lauren Etter, Woody Evans. Meredith Farkas, David Free. Rachel Singer Gordon, Kathryn Greenhill.

Jeff Hall, Chrystie Hill, Tim Hodson, Sarah Houghton-Jan, Kathleen Hughes. Joseph Janes, Iris Jastram. David Lee King, Keith Kisser, M. Kraft, Ellyssa Kroski.

Jeffrey A. Lackney, Steve Lawson, Mark Lindner, Don Litzer. Jennifer Macaulay, Jack Maness, Brian Mathews, Dale McNeill, Katherine Mossman, Mr. Krumpus.

George Needham, Joshua M. Neff. Steve Oberg. Marie L. Radford, Lee Rainie, S.R. Ranganathan, Chris Rippel, Angel Rivera, Amanda Robertson, Joe Robinson, Rick Roche, David Rothman.

Mary Beth Sancomb-Moran, Sarah, Michael Sauers, J. B. Schallan, Eric Schnell, Greg Schwartz, Tom Scott, Aaron Smith, Brian Smith, Alice Sneary, Michael Stephens, Jill Stover, Richard Sweeney, Michael Wagner, Stuart Weibel, Jessamyn West, Morgan Wilson. Paul Zafjen.

If you're wondering *where* I quoted them from, you'll find almost all of them in the web copy of the bibliography (excluding items not freely available online) at waltcrawford.name/bl_bib.htm

PoD, Money and Downloads

I'm doing this as a publish-on-demand/print-on-demand (PoD) book for rapid turnaround and because I don't expect it to sell well enough for a traditional publisher. I plan to do several more Cites & Insights Books unless this one fails miserably, all in areas where I believe a trade paperback is the most useful way to present a story and where I don't believe the book is likely to sell 1,200 copies. It's an experiment to some extent. I don't plan to take out ads touting the book. I don't imagine it will be reviewed in the professional media. It will live or die based on my readership and the extent to which people who read it find it worthwhile and say so.

I am *not* offering this book as a download, at least not initially. If I've underestimated the appeal of the book and it yields as much income as I received for the *Library Technology Reports* issue I wrote (*Policy and Library Technology*, vol. 41, no. 2, March/April 2005), I will add a \$2 PDF download version to my Lulu bookstore, with that download version bearing a

Creative Commons BY-NC license (which means you're free to send copies to other people). I'm guessing the chances of that are small.

You'll find a separate, informal, incomplete article about my Lulu experience elsewhere in this issue. It's worth noting one aspect here. Lulu is *not* a publisher and is clear about that. Lulu offers production and fulfillment services. I retain copyright and control. If some other publisher is so entranced by *Balanced Libraries* or one of the other C&I books that they want to publish it under their imprint, that's not an issue with Lulu. Would I go along with such an arrangement? Sure, for the right price and with the right arrangements. I won't hold my breath waiting for offers.

Chapters

I can't easily summarize each of the 15 chapters. I can list the chapter names and provide the first paragraph or so of each chapter.

1. *A Question of Balance*

A library system that stands still is unbalanced and headed for trouble. A library staff obsessed with Hot New Things and aiming for new users at the expense of familiar services and existing patrons is unbalanced and headed for trouble. Very few libraries fall into either extreme, but sometimes it seems as though we're urged toward one extreme.

2. *Patrons and the Library*

Here's a novel idea: Organizations should pay attention to the people who use their services and pay their bills. Here's another one: Organizations should find ways to involve *all* the people within their community who could or should use their services.

3. *The Library as Place*

Librarians have new ways to offer services outside libraries, but libraries still serve a variety of important roles as places. Academic libraries have famously been the heart of campuses, frequently situated at the physical center in recognition of that role. Public libraries serve as one of the last great public gathering spots in many communities—and can serve as the centerpiece for growing community spaces as communities rebuild themselves.

4. *Existing Collections and Services*

Library services—and the library collections that support them—have always been balancing acts. Yes, you can add new services and collections without dropping old services or collections, *up to a point*. At some point, however, resources pose a barrier. The acquisi-

tions and licensing budget doesn't grow just because there are interesting new things to acquire. While librarians have done remarkably well adding new services to their workload, at some point even the most dedicated librarian must balance extra load with having a life.

5. *Time and Energy*

This chapter and the next three touch on barriers libraries and librarians face in working toward a healthy balance of change and continuity, recognizing that a healthy balance requires change and experimentation. For many library people, the biggest issues are time and energy—not enough of either.

6. *Balancing Generations*

I call it gen-gen: The unfortunate tendency to generalize about generations. I've also used KTD, short for Kids These Days—the idea that the newest generation is somehow composed of mutants who are entirely different from any past generation and won't change as they grow older. It's easy to fall into gen-gen when talking about library patrons *and* library staff. I believe it's nearly always unwarranted and harmful. I recognize that my belief won't stop gen-gen—and there are very real age-related issues for library services.

7. *Pushing Back: Balance or Resistance?*

As librarians seek dynamic balance for their libraries, with the ongoing set of changes that implies, you'll encounter pushback, some of it forceful. That's almost certain in a library incorporating new ideas and improving existing services. If you never encounter pushback, it may be a sign you're being a little too cautious in your explorations.

8. *Naming and Shaming*

Do words matter? Does the *choice* of words matter? I believe they do and it does—and I believe badly defined terms can get in the way of nuanced discussions. That's the “naming” part of this chapter—some notes on “Library 2.0” and related terminology issues.

9. *Improving and Extending Services*

[See FINDING A BALANCE elsewhere in this issue]

10. *New Services*

Some of the ideas discussed in Chapter 9 will be new services for your library—and some of the ideas discussed here may be extensions or improvements in your case. Whether new or improved, these changes and extensions may offer better service for your current patrons—and could bring more patrons into the library community.

11. *Promotion and Participation*

A balanced library tells its story. As services change and grow, that story changes. Promotion, marketing, telling your story, public relations: They're all roughly equivalent, and any agency that relies on people for its funding, support and use needs to do it. I prefer story telling to marketing, just as I prefer patrons to customers, but I'm using a variety of terms almost interchangeably. You should use whatever term you're comfortable with.

12. *Competition and Cooperation*

When your balance starts to come undone, one reason may be a sense that your library won't be competitive unless you *act now* to transform your institution. That raises an important question: Competitive with what?

13. *Success! Success?*

You've done it. Your library has started a blog, added RSS feeds for new-title lists, improved holds handling and notification, promoted online patron feedback, implemented a new frontend for your catalog that supports patron-generated reviews and collaborative recommendations—or maybe rethought needlessly restrictive policies and made the library a little more welcoming.

Now what?

14. *Balanced Librarians*

I'm arguing for balanced libraries—libraries that balance continuity and change, short-term and long-term needs, reaching out to new patrons and offering *even better* service to existing users. Balanced libraries require balanced librarians. I'm using “librarian” in a much broader sense than usual: Not only ML[IS] holders, but everyone who works in a library or who works in library-related operations and considers themselves primarily a library person. For purposes of this essay, I *am* a librarian.

15. *Change and Continuity*

There's nothing new about change in libraries. If someone says libraries haven't changed in a long time, they're generally wrong. Good libraries have managed to change while maintaining continuity whenever feasible, providing a balance that serves their patrons and their communities.

Buy It, Read It, Review It

I think the book's worth reading—otherwise I wouldn't have written it. I believe it's fairly priced. \$21.95 for a trade paperback original in librarianship

is on the low side, and from what I've seen Lulu produces high-quality books on excellent paper.

If you have a blog and do read the book, I'd love to see a review—no matter how that review comes out. If you don't have a blog, there's always the whole-book *Walt at random* post. If you like the book, be sure to mention it to others.

Library Access to Scholarship

Open Access and Rhetorical Excess

This started out as a typical periodic roundup on OA and related areas, covering topics where I feel I can add value to the excellent work done by Peter Suber, Charles W. Bailey, Jr., Dorothea Salo, Heather Morrison and others.

It turned into a themed essay when I realized that the first topics all featured rhetorical excess of one sort or another and I needed to quote substantial portions of some items to provide reasonable context. In the end, I couldn't even cover all the rhetorical issues and keep this at a reasonable length.

There's nothing new about rhetorical excess in the open access battlefields. The big publishers and some of their society kin have long engaged in misleading rhetoric on open-access issues. On the OA side, rhetorical styles range from Peter Suber's and Charles W. Bailey, Jr.'s calm analysis, through Johnny One-Note's incessant pounding away at a single theme and repetitious phrasing, to an overheated and offensive approach taken in one recent speech.

I don't believe the facts have changed that much. Neither have misleading statements of those opposed to open access. Some tactics *have* changed, generally not for the better. Two particularly interesting cases at the moment are at extremes: The "pit bull" hired by publishers to assault OA and the astonishing equation of traditional publishing with slavery.

Since I consistently urge readers who care about access to read Peter Suber, Charles W. Bailey Jr., Dorothea Salo, Heather Morrison and others, I'll also urge you to read the first essay in *Cites & Insights* 6:8 (June 2006) if you haven't already or if you've forgotten it. You can also get PERSPECTIVE: THINKING ABOUT LIBRARIES AND ACCESS at citesandinsights.info/v6i8a.htm. It's short. It sums up my own rhetorical stance and beliefs, for what they're worth.

I'm going to quote a small portion of LIBRARY ACCESS TO SCHOLARSHIP from November 2004 (*C&I* 4:13) because it illustrates how little change there's been in the rhetoric for and against open access:

"For the rest of this essay, I'm going to do something I should have done back in June: Provide a numbered key to the standard arguments against OA publishing (as opposed to unique arguments such as 'it distracts attention and money from OAI archiving'), so I can simply list the numbers used in specific pieces. For this issue at least, here's a subset of those arguments:

- "1. STM publishing has developed over centuries and works just great as it is.
- "2. \$1,500 (or \$500 or \$525) can't possibly pay the real costs per article; OA isn't sustainable without charging (\$3,000, \$4,500, whatever).
- "3. OA publishing weakens or undermines peer review.
- "4. Research grants don't include publication funding.
- "5. OA/article-fee publishing gives well-funded scientists advantages over others.
- "6. OA/article-fee publishing will prevent scientists in developing nations from publishing.
- "7. OA publishing undermines professional societies that subsidize their activities through journal profits.

"I'm qualifying 5 and 6 because not all OA publishing involves article fees; quite a bit is sponsored in some other manner."

There are other arguments, of course—OA is socialist, OAI mandates mean the government's trying to take over scientific publishing, an astonishing new "OA is censorship" claim and the increased pitch of internecine battle within the OA "community"—but these seven continue to dominate anti-OA discussions. They've all been discredited thoroughly and repeatedly, but they keep raising their ugly heads.

Publishers under Siege!

Who knew the Public Library of Science was so much more powerful than Elsevier, Wiley and the rest of the Association of American Publishers? (Who knew Elsevier was an American publisher, for that matter?) Those poor beleaguered publishing houses are trembling under the might of PLoS, PubMed Central and the rest of the OA behemoths.

Why else would we have this story from *Nature* (also a commercial publisher): "PR's 'pit bull' takes on

open access” by Jim Giles, published January 24, 2007 and corrected January 25, 2007 (www.nature.com/news/2007/070122/full/445347a.html). Excerpts:

The author of *Nail ‘Em! Confronting High-Profile Attacks on Celebrities and Businesses* is not the kind of figure normally associated with the relatively sedate world of scientific publishing. Besides writing the odd novel, Eric Dezenhall has made a name for himself helping companies and celebrities protect their reputations, working for example with Jeffrey Skilling, the former Enron chief now serving a 24-year jail term for fraud. ...[H]is firm, Dezenhall Resources, was also reported by *Business Week* to have used money from oil giant ExxonMobil to criticize the environmental group Greenpeace. “He’s the pit bull of public relations,” says Kevin McCauley, an editor at the magazine *O’Dwyer’s PR Report*.

Now, *Nature* has learned, a group of big scientific publishers has hired the pit bull to take on the free-information movement, which campaigns for scientific results to be made freely available.. From e-mails passed to *Nature*, it seems Dezenhall spoke to employees from Elsevier, Wiley and the American Chemical Society at a meeting arranged last July by the Association of American Publishers (AAP)..

The consultant advised them to focus on simple messages, such as “Public access equals government censorship.” He hinted that the publishers should attempt to equate traditional publishing models with peer review, and “paint a picture of what the world would look like without peer-reviewed articles.”

Dezenhall also recommended joining forces with groups that may be ideologically opposed to government-mandated projects such as PubMed Central, including organizations that have angered scientists...

Susan Spilka, Wiley’s director of corporate communications, said Dezenhall explained that publishers had acted too defensively on the free-information issue and worried too much about making precise statements. Dezenhall noted that if the other side is on the defensive, it doesn’t matter if they can discredit your statements...

“We’re like any firm under siege,” says Barbara Meredith, a vice-president at the organization. “It’s common to hire a PR firm when you’re under siege.” She says the AAP needs to counter messages from groups such as the Public Library of Science (PLoS), an open-access publisher and prominent advocate of free access to information... Minutes of a 2006 AAP meeting sent to *Nature* show that particular attention is being paid to PubMed Central...

Brian Crawford, a senior vice-president at the American Chemical Society and a member of the AAP executive chair...[said]: “When any government or funding agency houses and disseminates for public consumption only the work it itself funds, that constitutes a form of selection and self-promotion of that entity’s interests.”

There you have it: AAP is under siege by PLoS and PubMed Central. Public access equals government censorship because government-funded research would be more accessible. And, of course, Big Lie #3. Let’s call “open access equals censorship” Big Lie #8, although #1984 might be more like it.

Early reactions and followups

Dorothea Salo offered a calm, reasoned comment on this piece in “On the Association for American Publishers, *Caveat lector*, January 25, 2007, saying in part:

I think that’s the action of a terrified group of amoral scumbags who see the future rushing in and will do whatever they can think of to stop it. I think it’s the action of a terrified group of amoral scumbags completely bankrupt of actual insight or innovation and utterly desperate to keep their current unjustifiable profit margins. I think, in short, it’s the action of a terrified group of amoral scumbags. I am just that appalled.

If I were a scholarly publisher, I would distance myself from this fiasco far, fast, and publicly... and if my rep on the AAP had been involved in any way other than “vigorous opposition,” that rep would be fired immediately—not just from representing the publisher to the AAP, but *altogether*. Elsevier, Wiley, ACS, and (it would appear) others have a lot of explaining to do.

[Is it just me who hears Desi Arnaz in that last sentence? Probably. Hey, we need digressions now and then, especially when rhetoric strays as far from the truth as the AAP initiative.]

Peter Suber was all over the story in a series of *Open access news* posts. First he quoted most of the *Nature* piece and offered his first reactions (modified to reflect a 1/25 change in the *Nature* story, and reacting also to portions I didn’t quote above):

1. I’ve read this several times and still find it incredible. Why would the AAP pay \$300-500k for advice on how to misrepresent the issue? The next time you see an AAP press release on OA, ask yourself this question.
2. Does the AAP even need the advice? It has been falsely identifying government archiving with government censorship, and falsely identifying threats to publisher revenue with threats to peer review, at least since the debate over the NIH policy in 2004...
3. I hope that publisher-members of the AAP will disavow these tactics and that journalists and policy-makers will understand the difference between intellectual debate and media message.
4. Kudos to *Nature* for uncovering and reporting this story.

Since then he’s cited and linked to reactions from all over, including many more than I’ll note here. If you follow OAN posts since January 24 you’ll find a wide

range of commentary, including a slashdot thread. I'm generally citing sources that I follow anyway, plus a few that were simply too choice not to mention. Even though this may seem like a long section, it's a small sample of *many* commentaries!

Christina Pikas (*Christina's LIS rant*) offered a quick comment on January 24 with an addendum on January 29. On the 24th, Pikas noted:

So this plays on a couple of irrational fears 1) articles published open access will not get respect (and therefore tenure, promotion, etc) 2) articles published open access aren't any good and can't make it elsewhere—we so know this isn't true as many high impact, high quality journals have open access articles. The government censorship bit is absurd.

On January 29th, she linked to a CHM-Inf post by Brian Crawford including these comments:

I want to assure you that our purpose is to communicate important information about the added value that publishers bring to the scholarly publishing process—information not widely known or appreciated by policy makers. Scholarly publishers have been slow to recognize that the misleading soundbite messages and aggressive lobbying tactics of those who wish to influence government and public policy have been orchestrated and funded by organizations wishing to advance their own agenda. That they continue to do so without regard for the very real risk of damage to science and the public, should peer-reviewed publishing be compromised by unnecessary government intervention, needs to be countered with clear and concise messaging of our own.

An astonishing example of how misleading the accusations against publishers can be appears in today's *Washington Post*...where reporter Rick Weiss asserts that the AAP has "...for years waged an intellectually nuanced battle against medical associations and advocates for the ill" and also quotes a SPARC representative who accuses us of engaging in a "disinformation campaign." Nothing could be further from the truth. AAP/PSP, acting on behalf of its member and other publishers, is actively involved in facilitating author participation in the current voluntary NIH public access policy, and has offered to assist NIH as it struggles to implement its own policy...

Regrettably, the news reports above were somehow stimulated by reporters gaining access to internal emails and background information shared within AAP/PSP and among those volunteer publisher representatives who have worked so hard to support the health and vitality of our industry by helping to improve our education and outreach. The inappropriate disclosure of this information is very disturbing to me personally, and I regret that it has led to such a gross misinterpretation of our motives and methods.

And ending with a statement from AAP/PSP that I'm quoting *in full* here:

Some commentators have expressed surprise that the publishing industry is making its case about an important issue that could affect the future of research and science. We believe it's important to be clear about serious unintended consequences of government mandated open access.

Private sector non-profit and commercial publishers serve researchers and scientists by managing and funding the peer review process, disseminating authors' work, investing in technology and preserving millions of peer-reviewed articles as part of the permanent record of science. Peer review is the complex and expensive system that provides the checks and balances necessary to ensure that what is made publicly available has been verified by experts. Peer review helps keep science independent of politics or ideology. Thanks to publishers, scientists today have more access to more peer-reviewed articles than ever before. We don't believe there is a credible substitute that can provide the same level of contribution and support to science.

There are proposals under consideration that would mandate more government involvement and put this system at risk. Legislation that would undermine the quality, sustainability and independence of science would have consequences on all those who rely on sound science.

The AAP/PSP will continue to ensure that all sides of the debate are heard.

Pikas' comment is that the reply "actually seems to dig them into a deeper hole and confirm they're not behaving themselves as a non-profit society publishing to promote science." I see the deeper hole: It was inappropriate for others to *reveal* that AAP/PSP is paying big bucks to a pit bull. Crawford's message also says SPARC is lying (no amount of charitable reading can turn "nothing could be further from the truth" into anything but an accusation of lying) and asserts that AAP/PSP has been *helping out* NIH in its "struggles," which I'm sure NIH finds comforting. David Goodman responded on the same list, noting that the "inappropriate disclosure" revealed "what you wished to conceal." He has more to say, mostly undermining AAP/PSP's arguments.

Heather Morrison's take is "Stop fighting the inevitable—and free funds for OA!" (January 25, *Imaginary journal of poetic economics*.) I'm never fond of "inevitable" and don't believe 100% OA is either inevitable or likely, but her point is an interesting one: The amount spent on pit-bull lobbying would cover the direct costs of 785 OA journals done using Open Journal Systems. That figure leaves out some real-world costs of journal publishing (e.g., human effort for editorial tasks and peer-review administration,

which may not always be donated) even for nonprofit e-journals, but it's an interesting point nonetheless.

Andrew Leonard pulled no punches in the title of a January 26, 2007 *Salon* story: "Science publishers get stupid." The tease: "How's this for doublespeak: 'Public access equals government censorship?'" It's a short, lively article, best read in the original—and you should also read the comments (15 single-spaced pages worth when I printed this out on January 30, 2007), which Leonard calls "extraordinarily good—much better than my own post, I have to confess—with multiple viewpoints expressed." I must quote one blockbuster sentence from Leonard's article, after noting that his column isn't obliged to show the restraint of *Nature's* reporter:

Which means I'm free to point out that any publisher of scientific research who even begins to entertain the notion that free access to scientific information can or should be equated with government censorship should be mocked mercilessly in every publication, online or off, free or subscription required, evanescent as a blog or solid as a hard-copy Encyclopedia Britannica, from now until they beg forgiveness from every human on this planet for their disingenuous mendacity.

Now that's writing!

As for the comments, they range broadly. Several wondered how peer review would happen with OA or implied that it wouldn't. One managing editor confuses the issue by focusing on *print* costs (as does another defender of the current system). One raises the old (and not entirely empty) claim that peer review enforces orthodoxy. One calls scientific publishers "leeches" with special scorn for Elsevier. At least one failed to understand that OA publishing *is still publishing*—it's not just articles sitting on scientists' personal websites. Mary McFadden confidently states absolute falsehoods ("Authors have to pay to submit to open access journals") and things that are false for almost all STM journal publishing ("Publishers pay their writers"), and seems to equate OA with tobacco companies. Here's a gem: "In the open access model a published paper, even a bad, ridiculous or dangerous one, is regarded as equal to any other." Andrew Leonard notes a forthcoming book from Eric Denzenhall that speaks of a "frenzy of anticorporate witch-hunts" and calls for companies to bring out "the brass knuckles" against detractors.

Barbara Fister reacted to Brian Crawford's final statement in the *Nature* piece, the one ending "that entity's interests," in a January 26, 2007 *ACRLog* post "Truthiness in publishing": "What?! Dude, those are

my interests. I *paid* for them." Fister notes that the issue is not how illogical the arguments are: "they're supposed to cue anxiety attacks. They seem to have forgotten that they're dealing with fairly smart people, though." As she notes, the "censorship" claim is a double-edged sword: Make *all* articles available via open repositories and it goes away. Dorothea Salo does a nice translation of the AAP/PSP posting and statement in a January 28, 2007 *Caveat lector* post, best read in the original.

The AAP/PSP move and its repercussions were discussed well beyond the library community. As you'd expect, comments and reactions included a lot of issues that can serve to cloud the access situation. One post at *Savage minds* seems ready to throw *all* media operations out as pointless intermediaries (seemingly ignoring the difference between STM journals, where content is *contributed* or subsidized, and most other media, where at least creators are paid for their contributions). One response appears ready to toss out peer review as well, apparently feeling link analysis will do just fine—another voice for the idea that the truth is determined by popularity. ("Creation scientists" should love this idea, since they'd be such strong tenure candidates.) This particular commenter also seems to say internet-based systems are a "largely unknown world to the people in their forties, fifties and sixties," tossing a remarkable chunk of gen-gen into the discussion. (Didn't think you were already a washed-up old technophobe at 41? Now you know: Welcome to the Luddite Society.) As you'd expect (since part of the post was about one association's involvement with AAP/PSP), one commenter objected that people might not join the association if free access to the journals wasn't there as an incentive—and later raised the free-rider issue.

I added one parenthetical comment in the preceding paragraph because the popularity of creationism in the U.S. has always seemed like a good argument against "peer review by link count" as a reasonable methodology. As I'm looking through notes, I see "Open access, toll access, and intelligent design" on OAN (January 28, 2007), where an ID "scientist" asserts that being against OA favors "Darwinists" while ID proponents are "systematically excluded." Suber notes that the OA movement has no interest in removing peer review and other forms of quality control—and suggests OA might "undermine support for intelligent design by spreading knowledge of science beyond the narrow sphere reached by high-priced

subscription journals.” That sounds good, but I think it’s a little too optimistic. Any daily newspaper with a good science reporter should be handling these issues well. *Scientific American* costs \$25 per year; *Discover* \$20, *Popular Science* \$12—and, for that matter, the primary weeklies aren’t that costly for enthusiastic individuals (*Science* and AAAS membership is typically \$110 to \$140, *Nature* \$200 or \$338 for two years, *New Scientist* \$64). There’s plenty of free scientific literature online, including websites for most of these journals. OA may do a lot of things, but I don’t believe it will improve general scientific literacy among the general population. Willingness to read and think counts a lot more than high subscription prices in these areas.

The Association of Research Libraries (ARL) weighed in with an undated issue brief, “AAP PR campaign against open access and public access to federally funded research,” (apparently issued February 1, 2007, based on the creation date in the HTML version). A background summary closes with these comments on Brian Crawford’s followup statement:

Statements such as these are puzzling and raise questions concerning the actual role of publishers in the scholarly communication process. They present opportunities to engage in conversation with faculty, researchers and staff about the changing nature of scholarly communication and the contributions various communities make to the communication process. For example:

- the library community, not the publishing community, has been responsible for the preservation of the record of science.
- peer review is accomplished by members of the Academy.

The brief offers four of the “simple messages” and clear commentary on each one. The four:

Equating public access to federally funded research and/or open access with the destruction of the peer review system.

Publishers are “preserving millions of peer-reviewed articles as part of the permanent record of science.”

Public access equals government censorship.

The government is seeking to nationalize science and be a publisher.

The first is our old friend Big Lie #3; the response notes “Publishers’ own studies have found that open access journals are peer reviewed as frequently as comparable subscription journals.” Regarding the second, ARL notes “the library community, not the publishing community, has historically played the role of steward in preserving the permanent record of sci-

ence”—and that when JSTOR began digitizing backfiles, they discovered that “publishers rarely had complete sets of their own journals.” Oops. Fortunately, libraries used to have those complete sets. Some still do.

I love the first sentence of ARL’s response to Big Lie #8: “The logic of this claim is perhaps impossible to parse.” ARL then explains what’s really happening with NIH and PubMed Central, but it’s hard to top that “**Wha?**” reaction. Then there’s the fourth, which I’d call Big Lie #9—but it’s so outlandish it’s hard to believe anyone could take it seriously. The government is a publisher, of course, and has been for a very long time—and if “nationalizing science” is a big concern, PSP should be calling for an end to NIH and other Federal funding for science. Oddly, I have heard no such call.

Ben Goldacre writes a “bad science” column in *The Guardian*, available at www.badscience.net. His February 10, 2007 column, “The price is wrong,” calls OA “so self-evidently right and good that it’s hard to imagine how anyone could disagree” and discusses PLoS, Biomed Central and the Dezenhall hiring. It’s a short column. Goldacre offers an interesting sidenote:

And these closed journals are hardly the kind of people whose pockets you’d want to line. Reed-Elsevier, for example, is one of the largest academic journal publishers in the world—they even own the *Lancet*—and they are the same company that runs the DSEI international arms fair in London, selling vile weapons to murderous regimes for cash profit extracted from very real suffering and pain, in countries that you will never visit on holiday.

Whew. Loads of comments—54 as of February 12, adding 25 pages to the less-than-two of the column. Notes on OA in physics, one that offers #5, 6, and 7, one that assumes “general taxation” will have to pay for OA. One from a marine biologist pointing out that he writes for free, he does peer review for free, but there’s institutional inertia against publishing in OA journals. Knowledgeable comments pointing out real issues of funding. Claims that Biomed Central is lowering standards to make more money. One commenter tells people to “go to the British Library” as a solution (for Brits) to access issues.

The Other Extreme: Publishing as Slavery

I find it hard to even type those three words, so extreme is this particular case. Here’s part of how it was reported in the *PLoS publishing blog* (February 18, 2007, thanks to Peter Suber for the link):

In a characteristically provocative talk last week, Richard Smith, who is on the Board of Directors of PLoS, accused traditional subscription-based publishers of acting like slave owners. And he compared open access advocates to abolitionists.

Richard was speaking at the BioMed Central Open Access Colloquium, alongside other “abolitionists,” including my colleague Ginny Barbour, Senior Editor at *PLoS Medicine*. The talks have all been archived on the colloquium website.

In his slavery analogy, Richard recalled the famous George Yard meeting. On 22nd May 1787, 12 men met in a printing shop at 2 George Yard in the City of London determined to end slavery. At that time, said Richard, more people were slaves than were free and the British economy depended on slavery. Yet by March 1807 slave trading was abolished in the British Empire.

Today's traditional publishers, he argued, are the slave traders. The research articles and many of the academics who write them are the slaves. "And the shock troops of open access—Paul Ginsparg, Harold Varmus, Vitek Tracz, Pat Brown, Mike Eisen, Stevan Harnad—are the abolitionists," he said.

At the end of this report, Gavin Yamey (who wrote it) signals agreement:

For the sake of global scientific progress, human development, and poverty alleviation, it is surely time to end the slavery of traditional publishing.

While I'm no friend of Stevan Harnad (after the things he's called me, such friendship would be difficult), he deserves credit for this fast, forthright response in the post's comments:

The slavery/abolition analogy is tasteless and totally unjustified. If OA proponents wish to help OA, let them promote OA rather than vilifying publishers.

Even though Harnad's one note is OAI, which doesn't inherently disturb the current publishing regime, he's right on the money here. The analogy falls into the same category as Holocaust/Nazi analogies—it benefits nobody and tends to stop rational discussion, while trivializing one of history's great tragedies. It's also nonsense. Elsevier and Wiley do not place scientists into indentured servitude. There are alternative journals—and if there aren't, it's not that hard to start one. Unlike Harnad, I'm perfectly willing to vilify publishers—but within the bounds of reason.

I admit to considerable surprise at Peter Suber's commentary on the Yamey post and the Smith analogy: There is none, or at least none I could immediately find. Some participants at Liblicense rightly condemned the analogy (“repulsive” was one term used), but I haven't seen an outpouring of outrage

that even approximates the justifiable unhappiness with AAP/PSP's extreme.

If OA advocates fail to react as strongly to outrageous assertions on one side as they do to outrageous acts on the other side, that serves to trivialize the movement (as another commenter on Yamey's post noted). The effect on Tom Scott seems clear. His February 20, 2007 post is entitled “Sinking to a new low” and says he's “kind of had it up to here with the whole thing.” I disagree with Scott's equation of AAP/PSP's PR situation (where the person hired seems to be telling them to lie, lie and lie again) with the OA working group's lobbying efforts (unless Scott can cite an example of lies on the part of OAWG or the lobbyist).

But I can see where Scott's coming from. If I was actively involved in pushing OA, the report on Smith's speech (and the relatively muted responses) would hit me like a punch to the gut. Maybe it's because, like Scott, I don't see OA as either a moral imperative or *the* most important issue in scholarly publishing (although it's right up there). Maybe it's because these two extremes (and a couple more to come, see below) make his final paragraph somewhat plausible:

And some publishers and some open access advocates will remain locked in a deathstruggle of rhetorical spin, relying on their lobbyists and their public relations flaks to help them craft their soundbites, convinced that it's those bastards on the other side who have absolutely crossed the line, while they themselves are managing to stay just barely on the side of truth and justice. And if they have to push that line a little hard sometimes, well, it's all in the service of a good cause—whether that be eliminating the slavery of traditional publishing or preventing the complete collapse of scholarly communication as we know it. It is, after all, the most important issue of our time.

I *do* consider Dorothea Salo a friend but her comment on Scott's post left me lukewarm:

Um, the identity of the AAP's PR guy didn't bother you? Or the particular tactics he was endorsing?

I wasn't thrilled by Smith's presentation either, I may say; it was at the very least unacceptably racist. But a thoroughly tasteless analogy is still a bit less than an open lie like “OA = government censorship” in my book.

“Wasn't thrilled” is a little short of the flat denunciation Smith's presentation calls for. The lesser of two evils is still evil.

Still More Rhetoric

Here's another declaration from a bunch of publishers—this time, the International Association of Scientific, Technical & Medical Publishers. Peter Suber ran

it unabridged (except for signatures) on February 13, 2007 at *Open access news*, and I'm doing the same in the interests of fair play:

Many declarations have been made about the need for particular business models in the STM information community. STM publishers have largely remained silent on these matters as the majority are agnostic about business models: what works, works. However, despite very significant investment and a massive rise in access to scientific information, our community continues to be beset by propositions and manifestos on the practice of scholarly publishing. Unfortunately the measures proposed have largely not been investigated or tested in any evidence-based manner that would pass rigorous peer review. In the light of this, and based on over ten years experience in the economics of online publishing and our longstanding collaboration with researchers and librarians, we have decided to publish a declaration of principles which we believe to be self-evident.

1. The mission of publishers is to maximise the dissemination of knowledge through economically self-sustaining business models. We are committed to change and innovation that will make science more effective. We support academic freedom: authors should be free to choose where they publish in a healthy, undistorted free market
2. Publishers organise, manage and financially support the peer review processes of STM journals. The imprimatur that peer-reviewed journals give to accepted articles (registration, certification, dissemination and editorial improvement) is irreplaceable and fundamental to scholarship
3. Publishers launch, sustain, promote and develop journals for the benefit of the scholarly community
4. Current publisher licensing models are delivering massive rises in scholarly access to research outputs. Publishers have invested heavily to meet the challenges of digitisation and the annual 3% volume growth of the international scholarly literature, yet less than 1% of total R&D is spent on journals
5. Copyright protects the investment of both authors and publishers. Respect for copyright encourages the flow of information and rewards creators and entrepreneurs
6. Publishers support the creation of rights-protected archives that preserve scholarship in perpetuity
7. Raw research data should be made freely available to all researchers. Publishers encourage the public posting of the raw data outputs of research. Sets or sub-sets of data that are submitted with a paper to a journal should wherever possible be made freely accessible to other scholars
8. Publishing in all media has associated costs. Electronic publishing has costs not found in print publishing. The costs to deliver both are higher than print or electronic only. Publishing costs are the same whether funded by supply-side or demand-side models. If read-

ers or their agents (libraries) don't fund publishing, then someone else (e.g. funding bodies, government) must

9. Open deposit of accepted manuscripts risks destabilising subscription revenues and undermining peer review. Articles have economic value for a considerable time after publication which embargo periods must reflect. At 12 months, on average, electronic articles still have 40-50% of their lifetime downloads to come. Free availability of significant proportions of a journal's content may result in its cancellation and therefore destroy the peer review system upon which researchers and society depend

10. "One size fits all" solutions will not work. Download profiles of individual journals vary significantly across subject areas, and from journal to journal.

I find the second sentence suspicious, unless IASTMP is claiming that no STM publishers are part of the DC Principles group or AAP/PSP or, for that matter, Elsevier, ACS and others who have been far from silent. I suppose "largely" could be the key—no doubt there are many smaller STM publishers who *have*, in fact, remained silent. Then there's that "agnostic" word "beset" to describe the "propositions and manifestos."

Some of Suber's reactions:

Is it odd to criticize evidence-free proposals in the same document in which one declares 10 principles to be self-evident?

There are dozens of empirical studies supporting OA...

Publishers who call for evidence have to live by evidence. For example, that means not asserting without evidence that OA archiving will undermine subscriptions and peer review (see Principle 9). It means acknowledging the evidence that OA journals perform peer review. It means acknowledging the evidence that in physics, the field with the highest levels and longest history of OA archiving, the Institute of Physics and the American Physical Society have found no cancellations attributable to OA archiving...

The only reason why authors of scholarly articles need copyright is to assure proper attribution and the integrity of their work. In every other way copyright is an access barrier that limits their audience and impact. Could the publishers be confusing authors of journal articles with authors who earn royalties from their writing?,,

Principle #5 is a red herring, as far as I can tell, since very few OA advocates call for abolition of copyright—and especially since most publishers seize STM article copyright from the creators, something they couldn't do in mainstream publishing. #6 is tricky: "rights-protected" is the key phrase, and there's no indication that publishers will *act* to preserve (which hasn't typically been their duty). #8 is also a red herring, since *nobody's* arguing otherwise—but note the

omitted case here: Electronic publishing may indeed have costs not found in print publishing, but it *should* eliminate much larger costs directly associated with print publishing. And, of course, despite the public-service claims of #1, we're talking about *price* rather than cost—and some STM publishers are extremely profitable by any measure.

#9 is remarkable. These publishers are so “agnostic” they're now claiming that even a 12-month embargo is insufficient—and, of course, if a journal is cancelled, that somehow destroys *the whole peer review system*, since apparently nobody except established publishers is capable of doing peer review. (“Peer review” appears four times in this set of “self-evident” principles, with not the slightest admission that there's nothing magical about the process preventing OA publishers and new publishers from carrying it out.)

Heather Morrison takes particular issue with the first sentence in #1 in a series of *Imaginary journal of poetic economics* posts on February 13, 2007. She calls it “extremely misleading” to call this “*the mission*” since many publishers clearly have other key goals such as profits. She quotes from the strategy and vision statement of Elsevier: “a goal of achieving higher levels of revenues and earning growth”—with nary a word about “maximum dissemination of knowledge.” Wiley's About page says nothing about dissemination of knowledge, but does talk about investing. McGraw-Hill's mission statement mentions “provid[ing] essential information and insight that helps individuals, markets and societies to perform to their potential” but mostly talks about growth, financial performance and shareholder return. I imagine Morrison could carry this on for a while. The primary mission of any stockholder company is to *make money* (unfortunately—it gets in the way of long-term planning). There's nothing wrong with profit, to be sure.

Charles W. Bailey, Jr. discusses the Brussels Declaration in a February 15, 2007 post at *DigitalKoans*. He boils it down to “the scholarly publishing system ain't broke, so don't try to fix it,” and notes that it makes even less of an effort than the DC Principles to offer any strategies for eventual free content (other than datasets). Here's much of the rest of his comment:

Sadly, it suggests that the “Brussels Declaration” publishers fail to fully understand that the decades-old serials crisis has deeply alienated several generations of librarians, who are their primary customers. Publishers count on libraries being captive customers because scholarly publishing is monopolistic in nature (e.g., one journal article does not substitute for another article) and, con-

sequently, demand is relatively inelastic, regardless of price. However, it is a rare business that thrives by alienating its customers...

Driven by endless library serials cuts for journals in their disciplines, a growing belief that scholarly literature needs to be freely available for global scholarship to flourish, and excitement over the new potentials of digital publishing, scholars increasingly want to change the system as well. As has often been noted, the open access movement is not anti-publisher, but it is publisher-neutral, meaning that, as long as certain critical functions (such as peer review) are adequately performed, it does not matter how freely available scholarly works are published.

In my view, publishers add significant value to scholarly journals and other works. Some of these value-added functions are currently difficult to replicate; however, given technological advances in open-source digital publishing software, the number of these functions has been dwindling. A key question is: How long will it be before the most difficult production-oriented functions can be easily replicated, leaving non-technical functions, such as branding and prestige, to be dealt with?...

The clock is ticking...

As William Walsh (cited by Peter Suber) notes (in a Georgia State University Library blog):

Number of times peer review is mentioned in the press release **3**

Number of times peer review is mentioned in the declaration **5**

High-priced advice given to publishers by Eric Dezenhall: “[A]ttempt to equate **traditional publishing models with peer review.**”

Number of OA models incompatible with peer review **0**

Speaking of DC Principles

That group of nonprofit publishers still opposes any action that would actually improve OA. Peter Suber excerpts a February 20, 2007 press release opposing FRPAA (I've excerpted his excerpts):

A coalition of 75 nonprofit publishers opposes any legislation that would abruptly end a publishing system that has nurtured independent scientific inquiry for generations. One such measure, the Federal Research Public Access Act, introduced in the 109th Congress, would have required all federally funded research to be deposited in an accessible database within six months of acceptance in a scientific journal....

In essence, such legislation would impose government-mandated access policies and establish government-controlled repositories for federally funded research published in scientific journals....

“The long tradition of methodical scientific inquiry and information sharing through publication in scholarly journals has helped advance medicine to where it is to-

day,” said Martin Frank of the American Physiological Society and coordinator of the coalition. “We as independent publishers must determine when it is appropriate to make content freely available, and we believe strongly it should not be determined by government mandate.”...

The Coalition expressed concern that a mandatory timetable for free access to all federally funded research could harm journals, scientists, and ultimately the public. Subscriptions to journals with a high percentage of federally funded research would decline rapidly....

Undermining subscriptions would shift the cost of publication from the publisher who receives subscription revenue to the researcher who receives grants. Such a shift could:

Divert scarce dollars from research... Result in only well-funded scientists being able to publish their work... Reduce the ability of journals to fund peer review... Harm those scientific societies that rely on income from journals to fund the professional development of scientists...

“By establishing government repositories for federally funded research, taxpayers would be paying for systems that duplicate the online archives already maintained by independent publishers,” Case noted. “The implications of the U.S. government becoming the world’s largest publisher of scientific articles have not been addressed,” she added...

I see Big Lies 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 (#7 isn’t a lie, it’s just a bad argument against OA) and the “archiving equals publishing” nonsense that could be Big Lie #9. Peter Suber offers extensive notes in a same-day post, noting that “there’s nothing new here” and the major arguments have been answered repeatedly. But, you know, keep OA advocates on the defensive and *the truth doesn’t matter*.

And here’s the AAUP!

This one surprised me: *AAUP Statement on Open Access*, dated February 2007. The full statement (6-page PDF) is at www.aaupnet.org/aboutup/issues/oa/statement.pdf. Much of it appears to call for broader exploration of OA beyond articles to scholarly monographs. There’s this gotcha in the summary:

Bypassing this laboratory stage of experimentation and development and plunging straight into pure open access, as attractive as it may sound in theory, runs the serious risk of destabilizing scholarly communication in ways that would disrupt the progress of scholarship and the advancement of knowledge.

That may be true, and to the extent that there have been calls for *all* scholarly publishing—monograph and article alike—to go OA *immediately*, it’s a point worth discussing. I haven’t heard many such calls, but the full statement suggests that an American Council

of Learned Societies report does make such a call. I glanced through the 51-page ACLS report (you can download the PDF or request a free print copy from www.acls.org/cyberinfrastructure/), and I don’t see a call for “plunging straight into pure open access,” but I didn’t read it word-for-word.

AAUP’s statement is interesting and worth reading. It notes that National Academies Press is doing very well with its “read books online for free, pay for PDFs or print” model. Two pages of the statement offer “points to be kept in mind” when discussing “the more radical approaches that abandon the market as a viable basis for the recovery of costs in scholarly publishing and instead try to implement a model that has come to be known as the ‘gift economy’ or the ‘subsidy economy.’”: “BOAI-type” open access will require large contributions from authors or other sources (and drops in the humanities equivalent of #5); overall costs won’t change all that much but mostly shift (a comment that notes that 17% to 20% of the “publishing costs” of monographs relate to manufacturing); required full OA article publishing “will undermine existing well-regarded services like Project MUSE”; university presses cover 90% of their operating costs from sales—and only 15% to 20% of those sales are to libraries; and the fifth—a tricky one that seems primarily to oppose open access in general:

5) If commercial publishers should decide to stop publishing research under the constrained circumstances envisioned by advocates of free-to-user open access, what happens to the journals abandoned by these publishers? How many of them could universities afford to subsidize through faculty grants? How much could universities with presses increase the output of their presses to accommodate the monographs now published commercially? The answer so these questions could involve significant new capital investments. In addition, the case of scholarly societies under BOAI-style open access is particularly worrying. As non-profit organizations committed to supporting effective scholarly communications and professional standards in their fields, these societies provide a wide range of services to scholars and scholarship, including annual conferences, professional development opportunities, recognition of scholarly excellence, and statistical information on such matters as enrollment and employment in their fields, as well as respected publishing programs. Whether a given society’s publishing activities underwrite other services or must be supported by other revenues, funding for essential professional and scholarly activities would be jeopardized by a mandated shift to free-to-user open access, increasing the financial burdens on individual scholars as both authors and professionals.

There's old friend #7 in all its glory, and my response is the same as ever: It is unreasonable to expect libraries to underwrite the activities of professional associations (other than library associations), no matter how beneficial those activities may be. If they need underwriting from academia, that underwriting should come from the appropriate departments.

Otherwise, assuming that "abandoned journals" would move immediately to e-publishing, I believe the answers to the first two questions can be straightforward (the second may be better answered by university-published OA journals than by faculty grants). As much as I want to see STM journal subscription costs move partly to enable libraries to maintain better monographic collections, there would be significant capital available for new investments—which would not need to cover the high profit margins of the commercial publishers or their high overheads.

This statement deserves more discussion. I haven't seen all that much so far. I'd want to poke at some details in the first point, specifically the claim that a 250 page monograph with no illustrations involves publishing costs of "close to \$20,000 to \$25,000" *even if no printing is done*. Assuming scholars prepare monographs using word processing, that is one heck of a lot of copyediting and markup!

If ACLS is calling for an end to print monographs sold for fair prices, I think they're going too far, but I didn't see that call in their report. If anyone's saying we should *immediately* shut down conventional publishing and move to all-OA, all-the-time, *right now*, for all scholarly communication, I'm on AAUP's side. I believe the truth lies somewhere in between—and note that most of the AAUP statement is not full of rhetorical excess. Maybe the AAUP statement serves as a slightly calmer end to the set of heated items covered here.

There's More—but Not This Time

I had to omit a bunch of fascinating stuff I lump under "internecine warfare," with green OA advocates harrumphing against gold OA, gold OA pushers (particularly those striving to maintain existing revenues through other means) demeaning green OA, green-OA purists opposing broader use of institutional repositories or assuming preservation roles for repositories, and back-and-forth about the real issues and costs of publishing and peer review. There are also some longer pieces I'd love to comment on.

Not this time. I suspect most of you lack the patience to read 10,000 to 15,000 words on library access to scholarship in one issue of *C&I*, even if they came to some satisfactory conclusions). I *know* I lack the patience to write that much on this topic in one or even two issue cycles. OA is neither going away nor suddenly becoming all consuming. We'll discuss more of this later. Meanwhile, as always, if you care a lot about OA, pay attention to the people who cover these issues full time.

Finding a Balance

Improving and Extending Services

There are barriers to change, but a library that isn't changing is, almost by definition, stagnating. Healthy libraries change, continuously and with continual feedback from your patrons and the rest of your community.

You can find ways to deal with barriers in the process of discovering, evaluating and implementing changes. Change can revitalize your staff. *Effective* change may free up time and money to do new things and reach new patrons by doing old (but still important) things more efficiently. One virtue of web-based techniques is that they are frequently inexpensive or free: Cost need not be a barrier to change.

The next few chapters consider aspects of balanced change in libraries: Improving and extending existing services, implementing and promoting new services, telling your story and hearing other stories while avoiding hype, thinking about competition and cooperation (trying to minimize the first and maximize the second) and coping with success—or failure.

Not a Laundry List

I'm not going to list lots of possibilities for improving existing services and extending services to new groups of patrons. I doubt that any library-based readers of this book have *not* carried out improvements and extensions in the last five years. I suspect most of you are in the process of improving and extending right now.

There are plenty of resources for better ways to do things. Logon to WebJunction, a key and growing resource for sustainable improvements in public libraries (particularly smaller libraries). Check the catalogs of ALA Editions and other library publishers. Follow the professional literature. Check the Library

Success wiki and related wikis. When you have success stories, contribute them to the appropriate resources at Library Success and WebJunction.

What Services in Public Libraries?

Two sources may help you think through what your current services actually are—and what they should accomplish, since your library's story is, first and foremost, its effects on your patrons and community. The first comes from the Public Library Association (PLA, a division of ALA) in the form of an ambitious *proposed* set of “new service responses.” Each service response couples a desired outcome with the category of service a public library should provide to achieve that outcome. The *PLA Blog* (plablog.org) has a post with comments for each of the draft service responses (choose “Service Responses” as a category), and there's a summary page that links to PDFs with further draft descriptions for each of the responses. The service responses below appear in a draft post provided before discussion at the ALA 2007 Midwinter Meeting, stripped of the brief description for each item. While the wording may change, this provides an excellent way for you to consider *your* service array.

Be Informed Citizens: Local, National, and World Affairs

Build Successful Enterprises: Business and Non-Profit Support.

Connect to the Online World: Public Internet Access

Create Young Readers: Emergent Literacy

Discover Your Heritage: Genealogy and Local History

Express Creativity: Create and Share Content

Explore Our Community: Community Resources and Services

Get Fast Facts: Ready Reference

Learn to Find, Evaluate, and Use Information: Information Literacy

Learn to Read and Write: Adult and Family Literacy

Make Career Choices: Job and Career Development

Make Informed Decisions: Health, Wealth, and Other Life Choices

Satisfy Curiosity: Lifelong Learning

Stimulate Imagination: Reading, Viewing and Listening for Pleasure

Succeed in School: Homework Help

Visit a Comfortable Place: Public and Virtual Spaces

Welcome to America: Services for New Immigrants

Alice Sneary posted a set of “13 ways of looking at a public library” at *It's all good* on February 8, 2007

(scanblog.blogspot.com). It's another way of checking your library in terms of “what a public library is, was, and is in the process of becoming” (again stripped of descriptions, so you should **read both posts in the original**):

1. Technology center.
2. A resource for small businesses.
3. Workforce training center.
4. Source of all government forms/applications.
5. Resource for job seeking.
6. Resource for tax preparation.
7. Health Resource center.
8. Teen center.
9. A community center.
0. Immigration center.
11. Music and art center.
12. Research Center.
13. Social center.

That list omits two service areas that are fundamental to public libraries, as was noted and recognized in comments: reading for pleasure and services for children. Taken as an *extension* of the PLA list and a different way of looking at some aspects of library service, I believe it's helpful in evaluating what you do and what you should be doing.

Evaluate and Rethink

Continuous improvement requires continuous evaluation—and continually improving ways to involve your user community in that evaluation. You can't evaluate everything at once, of course, but you should revisit most of your policies and services periodically. Just to throw out a few examples:

- Do you have a carefully developed acceptable use policy for internet access within the library? *Why?* What makes internet resources different from books or magazines, in terms of acceptable use within a library setting? Wouldn't it be more straightforward to have an overall acceptable-use policy that applies to all library resources? Eliminating redundant policies saves time and makes application more consistent (and defensible). For that matter, you might be able to simplify library policies in general by taking a different approach. Read and think about “Don't doesn't work” by Michael Sauers (at Webjunction). I find his case for consistent, simplified,

behavioral policies compelling—and almost certainly time-saving.

- If most of your users have email accounts, wouldn't you save money *and* serve your patrons better by sending email reminders just before items are due (and early overdue notices by email), instead of paying printing and postage costs to send out overdue notices (many of which, I suspect, bring in less money than they cost to prepare and mail)? Your library system *should* be able to produce such reminders automatically, and library patrons who can renew, reserve and be reminded online should be only too happy to provide email addresses.
- If you're carefully preparing new title lists (overall or by subject) to post in the library or on your website, you may find that new-title blogs fed by your ILS are faster and easier. Sure, these primarily serve connected users and serve aggregator users best, but such blogs can also feed your website—and, with a little stylesheet work, you can probably print out decent-looking physical lists from the same blog. For many libraries, this could be a way to save time using new technologies, serving some users a little better without reducing service to other users.
- Do you have programs that have outlived their usefulness? Don't automatically eliminate a program or service because it's now used by a small percentage of your community, any more than you'd automatically weed classics just because they're not circulating much anymore. Instead, *find out* who still values the programs, services or collections. See whether you can meet their needs as effectively through more contemporary substitutes. I discussed the need for libraries to pay special attention to exceptional patrons and needs before. I won't attempt to suggest percentages, but will note that advocates of IM reference have called it a success with 2% of reference transactions using IM. They may be right: That 2% may represent patrons who should be part of your community aren't able to come into the library and find IM the most effective way to ask questions. The percentage isn't the issue. Balancing services and their users against resources may be.

- Ariel made article-level interlibrary transactions faster and cheaper. Regional delivery networks and union catalogs do the same for physical interlibrary transactions. Are there other ways that cooperative action and new technologies could reduce the costs (time is *always* a cost) of traditional services that are still important.

Some decisions will be difficult. Some may not. Does your library have a solid collection of title CD-ROMs (that is, CD-ROMs other than reference and games) purchased during the glory days of such CD-ROMs? Are they circulating? If not, you might do a little sampling: Will they even *run* on the computers your patrons are using today? If the answer is No (as it's likely to be for CD-ROMs that rely on direct access to hardware functions or CPU speed for timing functions), then you have an easy way to free up some shelf space and maybe make a few bucks from patrons who do have older computers or think they can provide compatibility tweaks. Since shelf space is also a finite resource, that's a savings.

Notes on Possible Extensions and Improvements

There are two ways to extend a service: Add new features to the service or find ways to provide that service to new audiences. The latter may be more valuable, particularly in a time where feature-rich services are overkill in many situations.

You have placebound services and place-independent services. Are there placebound services that could easily and inexpensively have "virtual" analogues? An obvious example is e-audiobooks that can be circulated and downloaded remotely: These extend audiobooks to new places and new audiences. If you haven't done so already, offering holds (including "holds" on books on the shelf) and renewals via your website should be a natural extension of existing circulation services. If your budget allows it without constraining more important services, offering delivery to patrons who legitimately benefit from such delivery might be a natural extension as well.

Another range of possibilities extends existing services to a broader range of patrons in a way that might be transformational. If your library is like many public libraries, you specialize in local history—collecting, recording, reformatting as needed. If you're able to digitize those materials and provide enough

metadata to make them findable, you can add substantially to the numbers and types of uses—and you may find it makes sense to go farther and become a center for *creating* publications (digital, print on demand or otherwise) based on local history. If that sounds like a strain on your resources, consider the possibilities. Friends groups might be delighted to fund and support such projects. So might local history groups or funding agencies. Once you start mounting well-described, high-quality elements of your local stories on the web, they can become part of a wider body that supports all sorts of new stories—genealogical research (family histories), specialized historical research, what have you.

Improvements can be trickier. You need some assurance that changes constitute improvements for your *patrons*, rather than being hypothetical improvements that patrons find irrelevant or annoyingly complex. Each community is different. Each service has a different set of potential users. Graphical extensions to your online catalog may provide valuable new ways for patrons to explore your collection (assuming most patrons care about your online catalog one way or another, which I suspect is not the case in most public libraries)—or they may represent little-used distractions that make your website look gimmicky. I honestly don't know. I do know that some *local* research is warranted (with the results publicized) and that results are likely to be different within different communities.

Let's look at comments offered recently by libloggers. Some relate to extensions and improvements. Others may be new services, if your library doesn't already do something along those lines. It's rarely a bright line.

Increasing Circulation—and Determining Value

A post on *Publib* asked for suggestions for ways to improve low circulation in a library. Dale McNeill offered 17 suggestions in a long, thoughtful November 13, 2006 post. Among them:

- 1) Ask people in the community... If there are some common problems (hours, lack of selection, bad attitude from staff, that sort of thing), you'll know pretty quickly.
- 2) Weed. Weed a lot.... Look for trends.... Note: I am recommending that you *examine* these books. There may be reasons to keep all, some, or a few of these items.
- 3) Look at the books on the shelves... Are the shelves too full? Are the books dusty or worn? Are some books invitingly shelved face out?

4) Do you literally buy books that people want to read?...

5) Carefully examine use of the collection by broad areas... Now, compare these usage figures with budgets. You might want to make some changes.

6) Every time a customer checks out a book, have staff ask "Did you find everything you were looking for?"...

7) If there's a bookstore in your community, visit it often. Notice what people are reading and browsing...

9) Every single time someone asks for a (real) book, offer to get the book in some way—ILL, purchase, whatever you can offer...

11) Ask a friend (maybe start with a librarian) to look for a book in your catalog and find it in the library. Have them evaluate the experience...

12) Ask the staff for ideas—make anything fair game...

15) Talk about the library—outside the library.

16) If other staff are comfortable, make a little display of books they like....

17) Look at demographic information for your community. Then look at your customers. Who's missing?...

I think all the above can be summarized as: really know your community, involve staff, and market your merchandise.

One interesting thing about this list: While it's very much patron-oriented and based on patron involvement and feedback, little if any of it involves new technologies. It's a set of hints toward improving existing service, toward a balanced library with better use.

James B. Casey commented on the list on November 14, 2006, noting its excellence but also noting that other measures of use of the library may be even more important than circulation:

What you are already doing right may need to be examined more closely. Our Library has experienced growing traffic (as evidenced by growing door counter readings), sharply rising attendance at programs and community meetings held in the Library (over 50% in just one year), and dramatic increases in interlibrary loan requests (+25%) through direct patron placed holds. Even our in-house use of periodicals increased by 51% last month over October 2005. Nevertheless, circulation of books declined by 3% and has been sinking gradually during the past 4 years. The public wants—and expects—a different mix of services. We can't just "hang our hats" on circulation as the prime measure of success anymore. We have to look at different numbers. Maybe there will never be a "common denominator" of success that can be wrapped up in a statistical package...

Many public libraries show increasing circulation. Some, apparently including Oak Lawn (Casey's library), appear to be increasing *value* to their commu-

nities despite decreased circulation. The goal of a balanced library is to improve services to *your* community—not to achieve a given arbitrary statistical goal.

Content Creation and Conversion

Stuart Weibel notes a comment on a previous post at his blog from a future librarian from a small developing country (the comment was by “Ivans” and was attached to an August 26, 2006 *Weibel lines* post, weibellines.typepad.com):

This is what I would like to do when I go back: create an open space with resources for the creation of intellectual property. It would house musical instruments, a recording studio, computers, broadcasting capabilities, publishing, etc. all the material produced there will make up the collection.

It's a vision of a library (or a communal *atelier*, or whatever) that creates the material it collects instead of passively collecting it.

The notion of a library engaged in creation *instead* of collection would be radical and generally unwise for the U.S.—but in some situations, it's not implausible. On the other hand, *adding* creation to collection is not only reasonable, it's not entirely novel. A number of public libraries have TV studios to produce public-access shows. Virtually all public libraries now have what it takes to do desktop publishing (a computer and word processing software with good layout capabilities, which describes every mainstream word processing program today, as far as I know; *Cites & Insights* uses nothing more than Microsoft Word XP, as does this book). Turning a quiet space into a part-time recording studio is getting easier and cheaper all the time, and I'd be surprised if there aren't public libraries with good mixing boards and the like (most likely, any library with a TV studio automatically has a recording studio as well).

Weibel finds the idea interesting and raises questions that you should consider in his original post. Here's a little of what he has to say:

The notion of a *creation* library, as opposed to purely a *lending* library, is an idea that has a good deal more credibility in the era of the Web and the currency of long-tail perspectives.

In a bricks-and-mortar library, the prospect of a sufficient number of patrons being avid consumers of locally-created content seems tenuous, unlikely to justify the creation and curatorial costs, especially if we're talking about public funds.

In a global Long-tail economy, the notion seems less outlandish... [C]reation of local content might be

thought of as a cultural cache that looks a lot like scholarly publishing.

Setting aside the notion of a purely-creation library, I wonder whether creation of local content might serve a broader niche than scholarly publishing.

There's anecdotal evidence to support that notion. Don Litzer and Andy Barnett published “Local history in e-books and on the web: one library's experience as example and model” in *Reference & User Services Quarterly* 45:3 (Spring 2004). Along with the scholarly apparatus needed to make this a refereed scholarly article, Litzer and Barnett describe an innovative low-budget project at McMillan Memorial Library in Wisconsin Rapids, Wisconsin—to make a library's local history holdings *usable* by digitizing them, then measuring the extent of that use. This form of digitizing—making material available on the web that was previously only available in one location—is also a form of publishing.

The use turned out to be substantial. Here's part of what the authors concluded:

If the use statistics provided in this study are close to representative, they indicate strongly that, as a public service, the use of digitized local history made available by a small to medium-sized public library on the Web is significant and worthy of the investment made in it. Whether a library digitizes in-house or outsources; whether it digitizes its own materials or accepts donations of digitized documents, the demand exists, waiting to be satisfied, for digitized local history.

...Digitization of local materials is not merely a high-tech information transfer, but another way in which libraries can unify their communities by reminding them of the history and legacy they share.

McMillan Memorial's hardly unique. Some libraries have moved to creation as well. The Public Library of Charlotte & Mecklenburg County produced some remarkable title CD-ROMs back in the day. Since then, they've engaged on a substantial program of web publishing to support the local community and communities far beyond PLCMC's venue. Indeed, PLCMC now includes a traditional publishing operation, Novello Festival Press. As for McMillan Memorial, their local history site contains a substantial body of digitized local works.

These aren't unique examples. I'd be surprised if there aren't already hundreds of public libraries with digitized local collections and dozens engaged in some level of content creation. Libraries are largely about stories, and public libraries should be about *local* stories as well; once you're acquiring, organizing,

and providing such stories, moving on to create them and make the means of creation available seems like a natural extension, one made much easier by contemporary technology.

What's On Your Website?

David Lee King considered the types of content you might find on a library website in an August 22, 2006 David Lee King post (www.davidleeking.com):

Traditional Content, or “Stuff we Buy”: this is the no-brainer area...

Original Content, or “Stuff Librarians Create”: Library employees create great content, and most of it should be featured prominently on our websites. [Examples:] tipsheets on using databases, topical pathfinders, Reader's Advisory guides... digitized local history content... blogs, wikis, etc.

Attendable Content, or “Things you Attend or Visit”: My library puts on seminars, classes, storytimes, exhibits, and even concerts once in awhile.

Collaborative Content, or “Interacting with Patrons”: ...content that patrons create or help to create. [Examples: polls of favorite romance videos, commenting on blogs, wiki content added by patrons.]

Library/Librarians as Content, or “Content About the Library”: Library services, locations, staff contacts, etc.—everything under that “about the library” link found on most library website pages. [Also] information on your home-bound books program [or] free wifi at the library.

King's expansion of the first category says it should be “format-agnostic.” I'd argue that's only partly true. Most traditional content will continue to be “come and get it,” items in physical form—and libraries should generally select formats based on patron preferences. I don't believe King would argue with that.

Some of the 14 comments on the post may be worth noting. One person wonders whether “how people can help us”—Friends groups, etc.—belongs, and notes that libraries may spend too much time on “about the library.” Another used the post to think about “what would help our patrons the most”—and notes that, for that library's community, *paper* versions of some of this content is also needed and possibly more useful. One notes that collaborative content also includes online reference and similar services. Sarah Houghton-Jan commented separately on August 29, 2006 at *Librarian in black* (librarianinblack.typepad.com), agreeing with the general model and agreeing that librarians “spend waaaaaay too much time” explaining governing structure and the like, time that

might better be spent on “trying to reach out to the online users.”

What's on your website? What *should* be there? Does King's list provide some ideas for organizing that content to make it more accessible and useful? Does the list create possibilities for original and collaborative content that would enhance your services and make them more available?

Extending Service at a Price

A number of bloggers have written about ideas related to extended delivery services and the “library NetFlix model.” Those discussions get tricky. I'll note some of what's been said, but also my objections to certain of the extended service concepts—objections rooted in what I regard to be two fundamental bases for today's public libraries:

- **Radical equality**, offering service without regard to the patron's income or willingness to pay.
- **Radical confidentiality**, making sure that a patron's reading history is their own business—and not allowing patrons to give up that confidentiality without fully understanding the consequences.

Lori Bowen Ayre argues for premium service at a price, both in dollars and confidentiality, in a September 7, 2006 post at *Mentat* (www.galecia.com/weblog/):

A true 2.0 library will get the information to the user wherever the user wants it. It will allow the user to specify the format of the item in and the manner in which they will receive it. A 2.0 library will let customers who wish to pay for premium services do so, e.g. Fed Ex Next Day Delivery for \$15, Messenger Delivery today for \$20.

A 2.0 library will find a way to get the item into their user's hands or inbox regardless of whether that requires buying the item, borrowing the item, digitizing the item, or downloading the item. All 2.0 libraries will have reciprocal relationships for borrowing and returning items so that most any library can borrow an item from most any other library regardless of library type or region.

A 2.0 library will provide an easy-to-use self-addressed stamped envelope that can be used to return the items by mail (think NetFlix...and hold that thought).

[H]aving helped our user find stuff to read that they are going to *love*... we allow them to build their book queue. Now, if they choose, each time they return an item by mail (using those handy return envelopes mentioned above), the next item in their queue goes out to them. Just like NetFlix.

Because we're asking our customers to rate the books they've read (which allows us to build their customized

recommendations), we will know which books really knocked their socks off. When weeding time comes up, we notify the people who *loved* that book (or something similar) that they can now buy that book...

I wasn't the first to object (I was second). GeekChic put it simply enough:

You said "Why can't we charge for some services?" As a public library person, my answer would be—because we serve people who can't afford it and we're in the business of bridging the divide, not broadening it.

As well, many of our patrons would say "Why do we have to pay—we already pay taxes?" And they would be right.

Ayre's response was that libraries should be able to charge for *some* services, and she goes on to deprecate the current user population of libraries in a manner that surprised me:

My belief is that we need to broaden our service offerings so that we are relevant to a broader range of people—not just services for people with little money and few options. I want the public library to be the place everyone goes to get their books, do their research, or to find the answer to a complex question. But unless 'convenience-based services' are offered as an option, people who can afford to spend money but not time, will increasingly choose non-library solutions.

I noted that most people, including most affluent people, *do* use public libraries—and that libraries shouldn't be "*the* place everyone goes to get their books": "If everyone gets all their books from public libraries, the book industry fails or becomes part of the government. I'm not sure how that's a good thing. I also said this:

I believe and suspect that \$premium\$ services will have the effect of degrading free (prepaid) services over time, with the help of governmental agencies that see the library happily turning itself into a self-sustaining business. I believe this is a bad thing.

Here's part of Ayre's reply—and note the second sentence in Ayre's paragraph above, beginning "I want the public library to be the place everyone goes to get their books":

My idea is not that everyone 'borrows' their books from libraries (thus putting booksellers out of business). My idea is that I can go to the library and get help selecting and sourcing my information resources, some of which I may purchase and some of which I may borrow, some of which I may pick up, and some I need FedEx'd to my office overnight.

In this case, charitable reading reveals a typical problem with blogs and particularly blog comments: While Ayre has just contradicted herself, it may have been a result of fast, off-the-cuff writing. I've done the

same. So have we all. I'm much more concerned with the paragraphs that precede and follow that one:

The idea that government agencies would decide that libraries are self-sustaining businesses and should therefore cease to be funded with our taxes is a frightening thought and one I (and every other librarian) would fight to the death against. However, I'm not sure that's a reason to not charge for any services at all.

In my mind, the \$premium\$ or convenience services are very much supplemental to the library's core services which would remain free.

The problem is twofold. While that might be Ayre's intent, it's more likely that—as with lottery funding for schools, public radio memberships and other "new revenue" sources, governments looking for spare money will find ways to *reduce* tax funding, making libraries more and more dependent on "extra-cost" services and less able to provide robust free services. The second is that most libraries have limited amounts of labor and time available. Time spent serving "paying customers" is likely to take priority over "baseline" services, making them less significant and less well supported over time.

The discussion didn't end there, although there were no more comments on that post. David Lee King posted on October 12, 2006 about the Netflix model—but in his case, his new library *has* the money to do a piece of it. \$360,000 in the Topeka & Shawnee County Public Library budget was earmarked for mailing reserve items to patrons—and that's what the library does: All holds are mailed out. King commented:

Why in the world do we do this? Because our patrons absolutely love this service...

Awhile back, Topeka looked into cost[s] of the mailing holds programs vs. doing holds the normal way (a shelf in the library, constant babysitting of said shelf, staff time to shelve, reshelve, calling patrons who forget to pick up items...) The cost [difference], believe it or not, was minimal.

This is an interesting (and also not unique) model, but note a key element: It's a service that *patrons as a community* have agreed to pay for, at least by supporting library taxes. It's a *free* service, available to all patrons. As such, it may (or may not) raise cost and feasibility issues, but it doesn't raise equity issues. Since this library is mailing reserve items, not maintaining a queue and storing patron circulation records, it does *not* raise confidentiality issues.

I am *not* suggesting you offer book delivery or any other service as an extra-cost feature. I believe

there are serious issues with starting to charge patrons for public library services. The claim that “basic services” continue to be free for everyone is doubtless true, but “basic” can be a slippery term. Public libraries aren’t public radio. They should not become the province primarily of the wealthy and privileged within the community or interrupt services a few weeks every year to pester their users for handouts.

Rethinking the Website

A library’s website is, in most cases, its primary face for virtual users. That may change, as libraries find ways to make more of their online content and services findable, leading more people to the library—but those people will still wind up on some portion of the website.

You need to evaluate and find ways to extend your web-based services *at least* as often as you do more traditional services—and you should look for innovative ways that your web presence can feed back into and support your physical resources and services.

Laura B. Cohen offered her idea of an ideal “Library 2.0” academic library website on October 11, 2006 at *Library 2.0: An academic’s perspective* (liblogs.albany.edu/library20/). Set aside both “Library 2.0” and “academic” for the moment. Cohen’s suggestions may be worth considering by other kinds of libraries and does not require the baggage of the terminology. Portions of her idea (stripped of some elements specific to academic libraries):

[S]uch a site would run on a wiki-based content management system. This system would be flexible enough to easily restrict individual pages from being edited and open up others. In addition, links to blogs would be strategically placed throughout the site to enable conversations between librarians and users about library resources and services. . . .

Blogs are restrictive relative to wikis in that the typical user cannot create an entry but only comment on it. In the library context, librarians are in control of their Web site content and users can only respond. This is valuable, to be sure, but in terms of radical trust (a Library 2.0 buzzword), it falls short.

So imagine an academic library Web site that does the following:

- * Users participate in creating resource lists. . .
- * Users contribute to research tips. . . .
- * Users add to technical instructions. . .
- * Users comment on library services using blogs linked to the pages of major services. . .

A Web site with this type of configuration. . . would be a far different animal from the typical sites that libraries maintain. . . . The technologies exist to make library sites a joint venture, in which librarians and their constituencies work together to create an online presence that hears voices from both sides of the fence. In a way, this type of site would remove most of the fence.

“Radical trust” is a complex issue hiding behind a simple phrase and requires more discussion than would be suitable here. As you consider how your web services can most effectively and flexibly support your community and your library’s resources, you might consider whether an entirely different kind of infrastructure might make sense.

One point that’s been discussed recently is worth thinking about: The online catalog, for all its strengths and flaws, may not be that important to your patrons and how they feel about and benefit from your library. Peter Bromberg raised this issue in a January 11, 2007 *Library garden* post (librarygarden.blogspot.com/). Some of what he says:

How does the quality of the OPAC ultimately affect the total quality of customer experience and customer satisfaction? I think the answer to that question may be quite different from library to library, depending on the needs of our different user populations. Public library users may be more inclined to be browsers, and may not really care that much about how good the OPAC is. Academic, school and special library users may be more inclined to search for specific titles, or titles within specified subject areas, and may therefore care more about the quality of the OPAC.

But even in libraries where customers rely heavily on the OPAC, I’m not sure that the quality of the OPAC figures that greatly into the customers’ overall satisfaction. (I suspect it often doesn’t. . .)

I like this because Bromberg immediately recognizes *each library is different*—but also because, at least in public libraries, most collection use may have little or nothing to do with the online catalog. Personally, I’d find a card with the Dewey hundred more than adequate as a finding device in my public library; I’m a browser, as are many users. Bromberg offers areas where librarians might have “a much greater impact on customer experience”:

The quality of the library’s environment (“library-as-place”), the library’s customer service, the library’s webpage, the library’s collection, the library’s programs, the library’s outreach, and the library’s marketing.

That doesn’t mean online catalog quality should be ignored. It may mean that, *for some libraries in some*

situations, worry and energy spent on online catalog issues might better be focused elsewhere.

Cautionary Tales

These are just a few notes on some of the ways you might consider extending and improving your services, and reaching new groups of patrons in the process. I'll close with a couple of cautionary tales, one of which also offers an interesting list of uses for one of the easiest-to-implement new technologies—the blog.

As recounted in a January 12, 2007 post at *The ubiquitous librarian*, Brian Mathews' library has been considering a blog, consisting primarily of "library news." Hundreds of libraries (mostly public) have such blogs. He looked at the Bloglines subscription numbers for some existing library news blogs. The numbers aren't thrilling—in the low two digits in each case. "So is it worth doing a news blog?" He does note that user count could be higher than Bloglines count (and probably is—I'd still use a multiplier of four for likely overall readership, but if the blog's also on a library's home page, it might be higher still).

The point of all this is that I am starting to feel skeptical.

Will patrons care? Will they even bother to read our content? Is it worth the effort?

Mathews plans to launch a subject-specific blog, focusing on 1,300 computer science majors and bundling library news along with "messages that **they** will find important"—industry news, interviews with alumni, job opportunities, etc. "Rather than trying to create interest in a library blog about computer science, I am seeking to create a computer science blog with a librarian as contributor. We'll see where it goes."

Indeed we will. This is both a cautionary tale and a promising one. I don't doubt that many blogs issued by libraries have relatively few readers, for a variety of reasons. That doesn't mean they should be shut down (although, in some circumstances, it might mean *exactly* that). It might mean that libraries should consider alternatives such as the one Mathews is trying.

Finally, Amanda Etches-Johnson posted "a long-overdue update on the special library 2.0 survey" based on 68 responses to a short survey of special librarians. The, which appeared January 12, 2007 at *blogwithoutalibrary.net* (www.blogwithoutalibrary.net/), includes interesting graphs and information, but I'm going to focus on two sets of responses: One on what people use new tools for, one on "issues you might have had while implementing [Library 2.0] tools."

Special libraries use blogs and wikis for a range of things, in addition to other social tools not noted here (RSS, bookmarking, tagging, IM):

An internal blog where we try to share some of the research gems we find

A what's-new-in-the-library blog

Experimenting with the idea of embedding federal government RSS feeds into resource guides for our executive departments using feed2js

A wiki/blog as another means to communicate news and information internally in our library.

We use a wiki for reference service.

Wikis for compiling results of large group research projects.

A blog that only the librarians see, where we post kudos to each other, announcements and links to interesting Web sites.

But there are problems—lots of them, including these:

Hard to get our group to post to the blog or even to read it!

Staff buy-in has been the hardest. They don't see the need for the blog.

Library staff who I am hoping will blog don't "get it". They want to know why they would want to keep a journal, and don't realize this is actually a good tool for current awareness.

It's hard to get people to write for the blog on the public site. Our intranet, however, is thriving with new additions all the time.

Our blog and the RSS feeds from our portal are inside the firewall, so you can't use a reader like Bloglines which is easier to explain and promote than some of the desktop readers.

Firewall issues are huge!

I want to incorporate blogging inside the firewall but tech people don't know how to set it up.

Our parent institution blocks IM.

Enterprise-wide web page "look and feel" requirements make it difficult to use off-the-shelf web-based wiki and blogging tools.

Requires a CMS for the intranet pages. CMS does not allow for wikis or blogs.

Etches-Johnson suggests identifying "low-hanging fruit"—the easiest technologies to implement and use—and getting your colleagues hooked.

As you're looking to extend and improve, it's probably essential not to overreach. Low-hanging fruit can provide real, visible improvements; that may help provide the energy and backing needed to do more and keep moving. Despite what you might read or

hear, this is not a race, not an all-or-nothing situation, not a transformational package. The balanced library will continue to change while maintaining continuity, but *each* balanced library will change in slightly different ways and at different rates.

Find what works for your community and resources. Find the areas that bother your patrons most, the improvements they'd appreciate the most—and the existing services that need to be treated with the most caution.

And make sure you tell the story of what you're doing.

Perspective

Notes on the Lulu Experience

As I was getting closer to publishing *Balanced Libraries: Thoughts on Continuity and Change*, people asked me to comment on self-publishing via Lulu. I don't want this edition of *Cites & Insights* to be "all *Balanced Libraries* all the time," but a fairly long LIBRARY ACCESS TO SCHOLARSHIP assures that doesn't happen.

These are informal notes. They're not finished. How can they be? I'm editing and copyfitting *Cites & Insights* while I wait for the "test copy" of the book to arrive. I won't know how smoothly Lulu's reporting and payment processes work until some copies have been sold and at least a month has gone by. The best I can do is comment on how it's gone so far, and add *Walt at random* posts or a followup after the book's been out for a while (or as I publish the second one, assuming that happens).

The usual caveats apply, maybe more so than in other cases. These are *my* experiences—and the process I followed reflects my background, preferences and current tools. Your mileage is quite likely to vary.

The short version: If you know what you're doing and understand what Lulu does, it's a fairly smooth process—but pay close attention to the details.

Why Lulu?

There are a bunch of publish-on-demand or print-on-demand operations out there. As far as I can tell (checking a variety of online sources), only two of them combine the elements I was looking for:

- No pretense of being a publisher—strictly service agencies.
- No up-front charges except for extra services.

- An online bookstore as the single point for ordering and fulfillment.
- Plausible prices and quality.

The two that emerged were Café Press and Lulu. You've probably heard of Café Press in other contexts. It's mostly a place to create and sell custom t-shirts, coffee mugs, thongs and other tchotchkes with your brilliant logo or design. Lulu is mostly a book service, although it also does offer calendars, DVDs and CDs.

For my purposes Lulu was a pretty clear winner. Just to be sure, I ordered a book I already knew about. The book is attractive—great 60# (24lb. by copier-paper standards) cream book stock, well-made cover, well bound. I don't have *Balanced Libraries* in hand yet, but I'll be happy if it's close to this good.

Getting Started

I've produced camera-ready copy for a fair number of books (most recently *Future Libraries: Dreams, Madness & Reality* and *Being Analog: Creating Tomorrow's Libraries*, but also most of my earlier books), although never directly in Word. I've done moderately complicated templates in Word—e.g., *Cites & Insights*.

You can upload Word documents but that limits you to "standard" typefaces. Since I use Adobe Acrobat to produce *C&I*, it made sense to produce a full PDF under my control instead of Lulu's autoconversion to PDF. That was a little more troublesome than I expected—but we'll get back to that.

I based the "cibook" template on the *C&I* template—reducing the page size to 6x9", changing to single column, modifying margins and adding a gutter, establishing page heading styles and expanding the body type styles slightly. I used traditional page numbering and headings—centered footer page number with no headers for the first page of each chapter, otherwise page number and book name left-aligned on each verso, chapter name and page number right-aligned on each recto. If that all sounds bizarre to you, you're probably better off using an existing book template; I believe Word includes several.

Next step was to complete the book and put it together. The set of chapters ran to roughly 78,000 words. After a third editing pass, that was down to about 72,000—which turned into 265 pages in the 6x9 book template. Copyfitting brought that down to 242 pages and about 71,600 words, before adding a brief index. Front matter almost always requires four pages: Title, title verso (credits and copyright), contents and a blank verso. The final product was 251

pages in all, so I added a “Continuing the Conversation” verso after the last page of the index to bring it up to 252.

There was a problem when I uploaded the PDF: Acrobat doesn’t normally embed “common” typefaces (e.g., TimesNewRoman and Arial). Apparently my bullets and possibly other symbols were in these typefaces. The error message offers a link to a quick tutorial that showed me how to change Acrobat settings to embed all typefaces. I was able to make the changes, reconvert the Word document to PDF and do a correct upload within 15 minutes.

The Cover

I’m no graphic artist, even if I do have amateur background in typography and page layout. Lulu offers flexibility here. You can upload front and back covers as GIF, JPG, or PNG images—Lulu tells you how much space is required for “bleed” (the portion of a cover that gets cut off in processing—since, unlike normal book pages, covers typically don’t have blank margins) and gives you both pixel and inch dimensions for the covers. In that case, Lulu uses a little of the back cover for its logo (unless you say not to) and a stock number/bar code (again, unless you say not to); you select a color for the spine and Lulu puts the book title on the spine.

I chose the alternate route: An all-in-one cover where I provided the entire image as a PDF file. Scanning the selected photo to create the appropriate overall size, I added type for the title, subtitle, author, and “A Cites & Insights Book”—and the title and my last name rotated 90 degrees for the spine.

But how wide is the spine? Lulu offers a calculator. I plugged in 252 pages and got back “0.42 inches” and an appropriate total number of pixels for the all-in-one cover. I prepared the cover to be exactly that size. Then I uploaded the cover—and saw a white strip on the right-hand edge of the front. Why? Lulu said the cover was 9.25" by 12.82" (the bleed is 0.125" per edge)—not the 9.25" by 12.67" I’d designed. It also said the spine was 0.57", not 0.42".

I still had the scanned photo without type, so it was easy to trim it wider, re-add type and upload a revised cover (half an hour total), after which I raised a question in Lulu’s user forum about the calculator.

And got the answer. Oops. The calculator was fine—I just hadn’t recognized that “pocket book” at the top of the calculator was *not* what I wanted. Click on the pull-down menu, go down to “6x9” (leaving

b&w as the choice) and there it was: 0.57", not 0.42". While it’s not one of their most common sizes, Lulu *will* publish true “pocket books” (mass-market paperback size), that is, 4.25x6.875". Those books are printed on 50# white paper, not 60# cream, so they’re thinner for the same number of pages.

Everything Else (So Far)

Lulu’s publishing wizard works very well. Lulu’s price calculator works well: Given the known production cost (based on binding, color or b&w, size and number of pages), you can either choose a target price and have Lulu fill in your net proceeds (80% of the difference between price and production cost) or fill in the profit you want and have Lulu calculate the price.

I’d say the whole process—upgrading my account to a “creator account”, using the book wizard, using the storefront wizard—probably took about an hour, not including the time needed to redo the PDF and do a new cover PDF. Assuming the first copy of the book looks good, it should take less than a minute to make it available, a few minutes to clean up the storefront, and then time to publicize it and publish this *Cites & Insights*.

If you want to get books in bookstores, Lulu’s not the way to do it: The production costs are too high. If you want to produce a special item for a handful of people or do a book that you know won’t get into bookstores anyway (how many of my books have you ever seen in a bookstore other than at ALA?), Lulu so far looks like a good option.

Masthead

Cites & Insights: Crawford at Large, Volume 7, Number 4, Whole Issue 88, ISSN 1534-0937, a journal of libraries, policy, technology and media, is written and produced by Walt Crawford, a senior analyst at OCLC.



Cites & Insights is sponsored by YBP Library Services, <http://www.ybp.com>.

Opinions herein may not represent those of OCLC or YBP Library Services.

Comments should be sent to waltercrawford@gmail.com. Comments specifically intended for publication should go to citesandinsights@gmail.com. *Cites & Insights: Crawford at Large* is copyright © 2007 by Walt Crawford: Some rights reserved.

All original material in this work is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial License. To view a copy of this license, visit <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/1.0> or send a letter to Creative Commons, 559 Nathan Abbott Way, Stanford, California 94305, USA.

URL: citesandinsights.info/civ7i4.pdf