Cites & Insights:
Crawford at Large

Following Up
Who's Going to Preserve E-Zine Content?

That's the title on a "Backtalk" piece by Marylaine Block in the August 2002 *Library Journal*. I've seen it cited in the places that cite *Cites & Insights*—and a lengthy citation was the lead item in the August 29, 2002, *ShelfLife* (a weekly "executive news summary for information professionals" sponsored by RLG).

The first line of the *ShelfLife* summary: "Walt Crawford of RLG has been spearheading the Coalition of Web-based Library-Related Zines/Newsletter (COWLZ)..." That's almost a direct quote from the antepenultimate paragraph of Block's piece (as an old Limeliters fan, I've always wanted to use that word in an essay): "The archiving situation can be solved by way of the web. Walt Crawford is spearheading the..."

What's that spearhead I feel in my back? Is it being wielded by Marylaine Block, aggressively "following" as a COWLZ participant? (Incidentally, her piece is a good one and probably still available online from *Library Journal*. She assures me that "opinionated" as her one-word description of *Cites & Insights* reflected editorial changes, but I don't object to the terse description. If I wasn't opinionated, *Cites & Insights* wouldn't exist.)

For the 99% of you (rough estimate) who don't know anything about COWLZ other than what you read in the May 2002 *Cites & Insights* (was it really only five months ago?), here's what I think is happening and what I intended my role to be. The 13 other people currently in the COWLZ list may believe differently, and there are more of them than there is of me. (Parse that sentence and see if a duck drops down from the ceiling.) (See also "Feedback: Your Insights" in the June 2002 *Cites & Insights*.)

➢ The lead essay in May 2002 followed up on Marylaine Block's *Ex Libris* 135, "Who's going to preserve zine content?" (Hmm. Familiar

name.) I indicated that I wasn't sure whether it made sense for *Library Literature* (or LISA, or ISA) to index *Cites & Insights*, *FOS Newsletter*, *Ex Libris*, and *NewBreed Librarian* alongside *American Libraries* and *Online*—but that I *was* convinced that these and other online zines and newsletters mattered enough to be preserved for long-term access. (Oddly enough, I did *not* intentionally choose two magazines that are not refereed scholarly journals as examples of library-related publications that are indexed by the major services. That was fortunate happenstance.) As noted in the essay, I also sent out a note to a dozen or so editor/publishers and offered to create a COWLZ list in Topica (which I did). That essay even offered a rough sense of what I thought COWLZ could do and how the group might define itself.

Inside This Issue

Consider two key sentences in that essay: "I have no interest in controlling this process and would be delighted to turn it over to someone else" and "Some of you out there could also tell me...That you have a home for COWLZ, that your firm is ready to index COWLZ members based on some criteria, that you're ready to host a face-to-face meeting of some COWLZ participants, or whatever." Now let's see what's transpired:

➢ Almost all of the editor/publishers I contacted responded favorably and signed up for the COWLZ list, although some of them quite sensibly wanted their own publication to be part of a "dark archive" until (unless) they stopped doing it. A dark archive retains copies of all issues and supports indexing, but doesn't provide full text itself, pointing back to the publisher's

Website instead. That means that all traffic goes to the publisher's site, which is what these proprietors wanted. If they stopped doing it, or failed to respond to an annual tickler, then the dark archive would become publicly accessible, providing long-term access to the ceased publication. A couple simply didn't respond; in one "peer-reviewed" case, that may be just as well.

➢ A few other interested parties joined in—people who don't currently produce Web zines/newsletters but who thought this was a worthwhile effort and wanted to help. They include a former president of NASIG (the North American Serials Interest Group) who may provide the neutral and thoughtful leadership that we need; a librarian willing and able to commit enough well-backed-up, highly-connected Web space to handle anything COWLZ is likely to be in the near future; and a mover-and-shaker who has created his own solutions to various library problems and is showing how some of those solutions could handle COWLZ.

➢ There was a flurry of activity on the list near the end of the academic year. No real action was taken, including failure to act on the offer of Web space; with the summer, postings dwindled—until a signal event at the beginning of August. More on that later.

➢ I tried to nudge things along by asking some questions and tossing out some possibilities, but also tried very hard to avoid "spearheading" or otherwise maintaining a leadership position. There are several reasons for that, but perhaps clear conflict issues will suffice. After all, *Cites & Insights* is a Web-based zine, but one with some tricky issues for indexing and access (given its PDF nature) and one where I'd prefer to move the whole operation to a COWLZ archive operation, since the methods I'm using to run it on my ISP's Web site are a little peculiar. There's also the simple "been there, done that" issue—I've been LITA president and on the LITA board for six years, and don't have an urge to be The Leader—and the likelihood that, as apparent leader, my own ideas would receive less critical assessment and improvement than if I'm just a participant.

➢ Then *NewBreed Librarian* posted its final issue. The Website's still there, but both the Weblog and the bimonthly issue archive are static, and there's a clear threat that the Website could go away. Suddenly, we had a current case of a no-longer-current publication. The COWLZ list started to pick up, albeit fitfully—and our resi-

dent problem-solver put together a trial application to enter COWLZ zine/newsletter information and, later, to harvest sites.

➢ But COWLZ still had (and has, as of this writing) no real structure, no clear definition of who we are, no leadership, no agreed home. After a week or two, one glance at the database convinced me that people were casting a net that I considered far too broad. I raised that issue and suggested that someone should really be working on proposing some structure and definitions. Marylaine and a couple of others expressed interest in commenting on the bylaws after I propose them…

➢ That, I believe, is where things stand. I've suggested that any COWLZ participant could go through the Topica COWLZ archives (not a neatly threaded approach, but not terrible) and garner enough suggestions to create a draft set of bylaws—and that I was too old, tired, busy, and conflicted to wish to do that. Perhaps someone else is busily drafting those bylaws and definitions. Perhaps spear-carriers are assuming I'll respond to prodding by doing it myself.

➢ I offered the informal suggestion that, if there wasn't a fairly clear picture by the end of Calendar 2002, it might be reasonable to suppose that COWLZ wasn't going to happen. We all have our own ways of nudging.

What's going to happen? I have no idea. Will I cave in and prepare draft bylaws? See previous answer.

Let's say that a writer publishes a 700-word essay on copyright in *American Libraries* and two 1200-word essays in *EContent*. Those commentaries will be indexed and abstracted in a fairly sizable handful of databases, with subject headings in some cases. Now let's say the same writer publishes 3,000 to 4,000 words every two or three months in a Webzine, with far more detailed discussions and lots of pointers to other materials. Those discussions won't be indexed and abstracted anywhere. Similarly, people looking for Marylaine Block's stuff in most a&I databases will see the *LJ* piece but not the *Ex Libris* piece with the same title that preceded it by several months and laid the groundwork for it.

Does that make sense?

Damned if I know.

Do you? More important [*hi, Donald H.*], do you have a way of doing something about it?

The Danger of Irony

Cross-placement followup ahead: If you don't read "The Crawford Files," you can skip this.

If you do, you might be one of those who read this as a joking statement in the August 2002 *American Libraries:* "I've had more fun testing OpenURL than I've had at RLG in years!"

I wasn't joking. Testing OpenURL against different campus link resolvers has been and continues to be fun, interesting, revealing. If you're at this year's Charleston Conference, you might get to hear my thoughts on serials linking, thanks to an invitation from Jim Mouw; it will be my first Charleston Conference. When I enthuse about OpenURL there, I won't be kidding either.

The Library Stuff

Minow, Mary, "Library digitization projects and copyright," *LLRX.com*, June 28, 2002. www.llrx.com/features/digitization.htm

Yes, this should be in "Copyright Currents"—or, rather, it should have been in the last one. Somehow the multipart printout made it into the wrong folder. Now that I've read it, I'm not willing to wait for the next "Copyright Currents." **Highly recommended**—not only because Minow (an attorney, former librarian and library trustee) does as good a job of explicating what libraries can and can't legally digitize and put on the Web, but because she's a first-rate writer.

When you get to the paper you'll find it's in six parts. Don't be intimidated. My print versions total 35 pages of well-spaced text and charts. She covers considerable ground with humor, clarity, and style.

Llewellyn, Richard D., Lorraine J. Pellack and Diana D. Shonrock, "The use of electronic-only journals in scientific research," *Issues in Science and Technology Librarianship* Summer 2002. www.istl.org.

First define "electronic-only journal." Then define "use." The authors here do a good job on both counts, making this a **recommended** piece even within the all-good "library stuff." As true refereed e-journals proliferate, more of them are being covered by the key a&I services and their articles are showing up in citation indexes. Today's access radicals might consider some of this article superfluous—who cares about *Chemical Abstracts* and the like when you can have full-text indexing? Experienced librarians know the difference, and it's good to see that more e-journals are being indexed as equals to print.

On the other hand, some once-free e-journals have been acquired by the big commercial publishers, leading to access charges; that's an unfortunate trend that reverses improved access.

A couple of items in a generally excellent article confused me a bit. "The use of ISSNs by publishers" is cited as a symbol of "the growing trend to 'legitimize' e-journals." Note the ISSN on the first and last page of every *Cites & Insights*; I'd say the growing use of ISSNs symbolizes (a) the sheer ease of getting an ISSN for a true e-publication, what with LC's electronic submission form, and (b) publishers being savvy enough to recognize that ISSNs are symbolic of planned ongoing publication. Similarly, while cataloging within WorldCat (or the RLG Union Catalog) symbolizes a form of legitimacy, I believe they should have broken "1-10 holdings" down to "1 holding" and "2-10," then checked the 1-holding records. I suspect most of those single holdings symbols are LC and represent ISSN cataloging—a sign that the publisher applied for an ISSN, not that any library chose to catalog the item.

Ebooks and Etext

Possibly the biggest news in ebooks for the past couple months went unheralded by the ebook Websites and most ebook aficionados. Rupert Murdoch forced Henry Yuen out of his management role at Gemstar TV Guide. That could mean that Murdoch will simply shut down the whole ebook division of Gemstar. Or it may not mean anything of the sort.

During this period, I also saw an REB ebook appliance advertised for the first time in almost a year—in a Staples flyer for $80, which looks to me like an attempt by RCA/Thomson to get whatever it can for its remaining stock of the appliances.

I believe that dedicated ebook appliances for the general market won't work now or in the likely future and the whole sordid Rocket/Softbook/Gemstar story has done more harm than good to the general ebook marketplace. Maybe abandoning the mess will leave room for ebooks where they might make sense, at least to some readers—which includes multifunction ebook/textbook appliances (maybe), ebook software for handheld and notebook computers (although I *still* regard reading lengthy text on a 160x160-pixel screen as close to masochistic), and of course PoD, the true success story of "ebooks."

This is all speculation, of course, encouraged by the lack of much hard news in the ebook field. There is one piece of "soft news," so far only from a source I don't fully trust. To wit, a French startup with a fancy ebook appliance has gone bankrupt—having sold a grand total of four dedicated readers. More

when I know more, but the demise is hardly surprising. Meanwhile, here's the usual mix of stuff.

E-Textbooks

The *Chronicle of Higher Education* (August 26) and CNN.com (August 30) both commented on college student use of ebooks, with very different slants. Scott Carlson's *Chronicle* piece is headlined "Students complain about devices for reading e-books, study says," and reports on the results of a Ball State study where 40 students used textbooks, 24 used REB1100 readers (I intuit from the copy), and 27 used color REB1200s. The study was part of a $20 million four-year grant, with Thomson/RCA providing the hardware and Gemstar the software. While all students performed similarly, the ebook users didn't like them. "Several students said that they thought the e-books adversely affected the amount of information that they absorbed, and some students switched from e-books to textbooks after they complained of eyestrain." The students didn't much chare about changeable font sizes and found navigation tedious. Lower reading effectiveness and eyestrain: Ball State has perceptive students!

Not so fast, though. Richard Bellaver, one of the lead researchers, shows a proper faculty member's regard for student opinions: "He still has high hopes for e-book technology, despite student complaints." The full report is available at publish.bsu.edu/cics/ebook_final_result.asp; it runs seven print pages. It's filled with excuses for student dislike of ebook appliances and despite everything concludes, "The current dumb eBook output device could be viable as a full screen storage medium for students."

The CNN.com story illustrates the difficulties with "e-book" as a term. The title is "E-textbooks clicking with colleges," but examples include an online student forum for an astronomy class and a downloadable introductory text read on laptops. For that matter, the professor using the downloadable introductory text didn't think the medium was "there" yet—"I think they will be a reality for students, 10 years from now." Then we have Allen Renear, chair of an Open eBook Forum working group, assuring us that "electronic reading is a revolution that is happening." The "pedestrian" problems Renear cites don't include legibility/readability issues. That disregard is standard for ebook advocates, who presume that such problems don't exist.

"The Other E-books"

That's part of the title for a year-old Roy Tennant column (*Library Journal*, 9/15/2001), following "Digital libraries." Roy pointed out that my "Silver Edi-tion" commentary on ebooks left out cases where libraries and universities are acting as publishers, producing new ebooks that are generally free.

He's right. I overlooked that piece of the ebook puzzle, although I've mentioned pieces of it. The National Academy Press posts the complete text of its books online and has done so for years; the publisher says the free texts have increased print sales. That's consistent with Baen Books' experience. Meanwhile, eScholarship (from the California Digital Library) and UC Press republished more than 50 titles, free, on the Web in July 2001 and is doing more since then. That's not the only effort of its kind; the University of Michigan has several ebook-publishing ventures underway.

As Roy said a year ago, "Despite what happens to the e-book market in general, there will be a growing legacy of free online content that libraries can make available to their clientele." He also noted that such online books exist and will exist *alongside* print books. Hard to argue with any of that—so I won't.

Short Items

➢ Two major ebook Websites, KnowBetter.com and eBookWeb.org, conducted a survey of ebook readers this spring, releasing the results in mid-August. The survey lasted three months, was widely promoted and drew 618 responses. Some of the results (www.knowbetter.com/ebook/surveys/, but you can also find it at the eBookWeb site) are interesting, tempered by the knowledge that voluntary Web surveys typically draw unrepresentative responses. Almost all respondents were experienced computer users. Most disliked the "digital rights management" (or, put another way, fair-use undermining) being used (one great comment: it's like buying a paper book "with all the pages glued together"). For all the daunted "kids these days" projections, only 14% of respondents are under 30. For a survey run by, taken by, and reported on by true believers, this one casts a fairly dim light on the market.

➢ Don't confuse that survey with the "industry-wide analysis of sales growth" by the Open eBook Forum, reported in the September 2002 *Information Today* and elsewhere. That analysis claims to "show solid growth in electronic publishing." But consider what's actually said. Apart from the Palm "180,000 ebooks in 2001" number, which is being repeated endlessly as proof of ebook success, all industry claims are of "growth" and of "percentage growth"—never, in any report I've seen, with

any base numbers applied to those percentages. If you sold 10 ebooks in 2000 and 15 in 2001, that's 50% growth. As usual, "ebooks" as used here almost certainly includes PoD.

➢ I may poke fun at the major ebook sites, but I also check them periodically—once a week is more than enough these days, given the dearth of activity. Bob McElwain posted a useful commentary at eBookWeb on August 6: "Never, ever release any of your rights to anyone." "Anyone" in this case being any Web publisher, bookseller, or distributor—because if you strike paydirt and someone wants to produce a real book from your ebook, that publisher will want those rights. It's an important point. As to the writing—well, McElwain's a novelist and I'm not, so who am I to criticize?

➢ The June 2002 *Librarian's eBook Newsletter* (from the University of Rochester River Campus Libraries) discusses new ebook products. Hope springs eternal, apparently. While the two-page "book-quality" Everybook never reached market (and, in my opinion, was not technologically feasible at realistic prices), the Estari 2-VU claims to offer something similar—two side-by-side 15" color LCD displays backed with a 20GB hard disk and Pentium 4M-1.6GHz. It's essentially a notebook computer with double screen and wireless keyboard, running Windows XP (or Windows 2000 for the retro crowd). The price? A mere $3,995, and the batteries might last two hours. A French company claims it will produce a back-to-back two-screen device. An Italian company has MyFriend, similar to an REB1200 but running Windows CE: essentially a big-screen pocket PC (but why the retrograde OS, once again?). $1,200—absurdly expensive for a Pocket PC, even with a 7.5" screen. The list includes the OQO brick PC, a Windows device based on an IBM design; even with a 4" screen (that is, 2.4x3.2" if it's a 4x3 ratio), it's really an overpriced transportable with no noticeable ebook strengths and a price "less than most notebooks." (Call it $1,400?) All interesting stuff; I've already made fun of the OQO elsewhere, and it's notable that only one of these supposed ebooks is a dedicated appliance.

➢ Paula Hane offers an interesting update on ebrary in the September 2002 *NewsLink* from Information Today. (The newsletter arrives as a list distribution; you may be able to find archives at www.infotoday.com.) Worth reading for the announcements ebrary is making.

➢ A personal item related to netLibrary (which offers two of my books). As lead Eureka analyst/designer at RLG and principal OpenURL evangelist (a nonexistent title) I've been testing how Eureka's OpenURL support works each time an institution signs up either to test OpenURL or to put it in production. That's nineteen sets of tests so far, since we began supporting OpenURL in late spring—and so far, of 19 different resolvers, I've seen at least a dozen different operational configurations. In early September, I ran into the first link resolver that checks netLibrary holdings as part of its initial scan (before the screen pops up that either offers full text or offers to search a catalog). As with most of the link resolvers I've tested, it's based on Ex Libris' SFX software, but none of the others did this. The result? Both of my ALA Editions books popped up immediately as "available in full text through netLibrary." Neat.

Summer Roses

Every Tuesday morning, there's a 2 a.m. Wired News posting from M.J. Rose on developments in e-publishing (and publishing in general). Always worth reading, perhaps the least biased voice in the whole ebook community. I probably give Rose more space than I should. Herewith, then, selections from July, August, and early September.

➢ On July 9, M.J. mentions the high traffic at eBookWeb and Glenn Sanders' take on the industry. Basically the same percentages and that one Palm number as you see elsewhere, with the addition of five million copies of Microsoft Reader (used on PCs and notebooks, not appliances). "It's just going to take some time to build the industry. But building it we are. No stopping us." True enough. Rose also notes the thesaurus included with the latest Mobipocket Reader software and, oddly, a new encryption technology that seems wholly unrelated to ebooks and publishing.

➢ July 16 brings discussion of Complete Review (a site posting graded book reviews, original and excerpted from other publications) and pdfFactory Pro1.5, a cheaper alternative to Acrobat for creating pdfs. In addition to discussing new book clubs and a multiauthor Website, the July 23 posting discusses growing acceptance of self publishing—specifically, a few authors whose self-published ebooks have been picked up by "real publishers" for significant sums. Sometimes, dreams do come true.

- AuthorsGuild.net is offering templated Web-sites for $6 per month if you're a guild member, according to the July 30 column. Also featured is Broadband Book Radio, an Internet station consisting entirely of book-related shows (and one Internet station not affected by the recent royalty decision) and Momwriters, a list for mothers who write.
- In addition to an odd item about poetry designed for PDAs and a funny one about book reviews on Amazon, the August 6 edition notes a fascinating project, the Vance Integral Edition. This project, involving 300 volunteers, has digitized all of Jack Vance's excellent science fiction and is now working to assure that the texts are all correct, with the cooperation of Vance, his wife and son. (Okay, it's digitized *all* of Vance's science fiction; I can't guarantee that it's all excellent, although all that I've read is at least very good.)
- How many zines last 15 years? M.J. Rose celebrates one on August 13: *fineArt forum*, begun in 1987 as a bulletin board service and now an online service with 85,000 readers.
- From Web to print: It's a formula that's kept some of *Suck* around, added sustenance to *Modern Humorist*, and served other sites well. But those cases are sites generating books. *The Readerville Journal* begins life as a print magazine in September as a new book magazine. The Readerville.com forum boasts 20,000 monthly visitors; that may provide a strong base for the new magazine. The transition didn't work for *[Inside]*, but that may have been a case of extreme ambitions and improbable operating budgets. This report appears in the August 20 Rose posting along with an "erotica to order" service—is service the word I want here?—and a new novel with loads of product placement opportunities, which the author is auctioning off (or has recently auctioned off) on eBay.
- A similar "product placement" theme in much different form appears August 27: More than 4,000 greyhound lovers bid to name canine characters in Cyn Mobley's first self-published novel. The big difference: Mobley was raising money for two charities that rescue greyhound puppies.
- It's not really an ebook and it arrives on a tablet PC, but if I was in Rose's shoes I'd include it too: the wine list at Aureole, a hot New York/Las Vegas restaurant with 550 vintages. (September 3.) If you check off your choice of entrée, software makes appropriate wine rec-ommendations; you can also get extended descriptions and winery histories. According to the New York wine director, someone requests the printed list about once every three days. Unlikely as it is that I'd ever eat at Aureole, I wouldn't be one of them: This seems like a natural and sensible application with just a little flair. (I think Aureole Las Vegas is the one with waitresses in harnesses flying around the four-story wine "cellar" to get your bottle.)
- Finally (for now), the September 10 column discusses a one-act play based on 9/11/01 and conceived on the Internet. We also learn that Recording for the Blind & Dyslexic now has 97,000 digitally recorded books on CD.

Two Longer Articles

Lonsdale, Ray, and Chris Armstrong, "Electronic books: challenges for academic libraries," *Library Hi Tech* 19:4, pp. 332-9.

This paper reports on three British research projects funded by JISC. The results argue "the reality of a slow acceptance of nearly all digital textual resources other than journals," among other things. Worth reading if you're interested in the very different British academic scene.

"Point of care to their palms…," final report for LSTA grant LSTA-02-0201-2060. pdagrant.osfsaintfrancis.org/shortfinal.htm.

This really isn't about ebooks; it's about using PDAs to deliver medical information as it's needed, a use of e-text that makes great sense but requires excellent design. The report is worth reading, even if it is presented in the mandatory (and clumsy) form required for LSTA reports.

disContent

Announcing Cubed: Media About Media About Media

A Note on the Following

Dated March 10, 2001—and apparently a draft version—the press release and attachment were found by an acquaintance in mid-May 2001, discarded somewhere in Silicon Valley. I've omitted the contact names and Web addresses because none of them seem to work. It's possible that the business plans changed somewhat abruptly.

Well, no, that's a lie. Five paragraphs of this column are factual (right after "Media about Media"). Otherwise, think of it as a bad dream after reading a little too much content about content…

Coming soon to a newsstand, Web site, or cable channel near you: Cubed—media about media about media. Such media are long overdue, given the explosion of media about media. ThriceRemoved.com (a subsidiary of Triple Whammy Media) is building the true media of the future—media that take the next step in using distance to save time.

Media About Media

First, there were media—discussions and examples of real life but at one remove. In recent decades, there have grown to be so many media that life is something you do in between exposures.

Media about media—metamedia—add another layer of separation: You can think of them as media squared. These aren't new, to be sure. What newspaper doesn't include columns and reviews on other media—TV, books, movies, the Web?

Even media *wholly* about media go back decades. Consider *Variety* and *Broadcasting & Cable, Editor & Publisher, Publisher's Weekly,* just to name a few. *Columbia Journalism Review* and *St. Louis Journalism Review* are long-standing examples of critical media about media (or journalism about journalism).

The trend has grown in recent years—and there are new media to have media about media. *American Journalism Review, Publish!, Brill's Content,* even *EContent*; on the radio, "On the Media"; on TV, "Talk Soup" and 'serious' discussions of media elsewhere.

The Internet? Where to begin? In addition to the Web versions of print metamedia, there's MediaWeek.com, the *Online Journalism Review*, and of course the stunning success of [Inside].com. A whole new medium, Weblogging, has encouraged many more media about media, most noticeably Jim Romanesko's MediaNews.

The seemingly endless right-side link listing in MediaNews alone should hint that it's time to take the next step—and [Inside]'s brash leap from cyberspace to instant success in the print world seconds the motion.

Life takes too long to experience directly, and for many years there's been too much media to deal with life at one remove. Now, the flourishing band of twice-removed media are growing too popular, diverse, and complex to keep up with. We all need a way to cut through the forest.

Where Cubed Comes In

The best minds in today's metajournalism community came together to form ThriceRemoved.com. We can't mention the names in this press release, since the group is completing first-round financing for Cubed and related products and services. We can point out some of the ways Cubed will assure a huge, growing, motivated readership and viewership:

➢ *Cubed Magazine* will set the record straight about journalism about journalism, making waves, naming names, dishing dirt, and putting the reader further inside. You'll know which metamedia are too cozy with the media they cover; we'll summarize the best summaries and critique the media critics. We confidently expect to exceed *[Inside]*'s print circulation by the end of 2001, using a combination of controlled circulation and subscriptions.

➢ Cubed.com will offer weekly analyses of online and broadcast metamedia, up-to-date reviews of the latest reviews, and daily e-mails (by subscription only) pointing out the hottest media columns and sites. We'll provide enough free content to entice the vast audience for metacontent, then keep them with reasonable subscription rates to the rest of the site. If it works for Salon, it will work even better for Cubed.com!

➢ CubedLog will focus on metamedia Weblogs and will be updated whenever there's something to link to. Which disgruntled reporter just started a new blog? Check CubedLog (a premium service) daily to find out.

ThriceRemoved.com will expand activities as the market warrants. A cable broadcast highlighting the best of highlights and media analysis television shows? Look for it soon on MediaTV. Partnerships with e-publishing and audio-content distributors offer rich new areas for focused coverage of coverage of coverage, to save even more time for *Cubed*'s core audience.

Triple Whammy Media

As planning and development for *Cubed* progressed, the principals recognized the need for broader reach while maintaining the remove that makes *Cubed* vital. Triple Whammy Media will serve as an incubator for new possibilities in this area. Proposals will be entertained in the near future, as will second-round funding offers. Look for *Cubed* soon—it can't miss!

Mandatory note: This press release does not constitute an offer to sell stock in Triple Whammy Media. That offer can only be made by prospectus.

Excerpts from the Email

Attached to the press release above was an email printout, apparently sent from one principal of the fledgling company to another. I reproduce selected portions here.

This is great! We gotta think big here and move fast. Surely some clown on Sand Hill will spring for $100 mil or so, particularly when we explain that you need $50 mil to get a new magazine off to a good start and an equal amount to promote Cubed.com. Make sure we get financing lined up while [Inside] is on a roll: it makes our plans a can't-lose proposition.

Behind the scenes, we can keep the burn rate down pretty low (barring our own management salaries, of course). With one or two big names on board, we should be able to get interns to write the copy for next to nothing, or we can borrow from other sources and rewrite. That's worked for plenty of other sites and magazines!

The name is a stroke of genius. If we do it right, we have naturals for cheap promotional gimmicks. Say we have six departments in Cubed—we can come up with the right names later. We'll number the departments. What would be better to promote the mag than cubes with the departments numbered on the various sides? Here's the beauty part: we can get those cubes in bright colors, with the numbers expressed as groups of dots, for almost nothing—and for a little extra, we can make the point that Cubed will be #1 in its field by making the cubes so that, if you toss them, the #1 side will come up most of the time. What a great gimmick, particularly for conventions in Vegas! All we need to do is stamp "Cubed" under the dot on that side; we can explain to the casinos that they just *look* like dice, they're actually mementos. (For premium customers, we could even make big fuzzy versions of the cubes; people love big fuzzy stuff.)

Let's see that we don't get hung up on conflict-of-interest questions. We'll make sure that metamedia understand the importance of properly placed advertising and group subscriptions to assure appropriate tone and volume of coverage. And we can follow the model of all those media about media, which drop back to being direct media when it suits them: We should be able to grab ads like crazy from misunderstood media that understand the value of a sympathetic objective voice.

Hmm. Maybe you should keep that last paragraph to yourself. At least until we have the funding locked up.

This "disContent" column originally appeared in *EContent* 24:7 (September 2001), pp. 52-3.

Postscript and Update

I should do pure goofs more often, but as Jon Carroll told me many years ago at UC Berkeley, "Look, kid, you can't write humor." For that matter, this isn't *quite* a pure goof—at this point, it may be a reminder of how recently Internet foolishness ran rampant.

When I first wrote the column in spring 2001, it wasn't implausible. *Brill's Content* was supposed to be a hot item, circulating in the hundreds of thousands where *Columbia Journalism Review* always reached a small audience. *[Inside]* did indeed emerge from [Inside].com as a flashy new print magazine. All of the other examples—except Cubed—are real. And the set of links down the right side of MediaNews still seems to go on forever.

What happened here, of course, was that the mythical founders of Cubed.com rolled those loaded dice—and as any craps shooter could tell you, they came up snake eyes. (I don't shoot craps—too frantic for me—but you know how it is with deep cultural knowledge, memes, and all that jazz. You don't? Maybe some other month.)

The idea that journalism about journalism will interest millions of people seems to have faded away. That's encouraging. Navel-gazing may be calming, but gazing over navel-gazing gets a little bizarre.

If you're keeping track, the August 2001 "disContent" was an ebook update, perhaps useful as part of a "Moldy Oldies" feature but not worth reprinting on its own.

The Access Puzzle: Notes on Scholarly Communication

Maybe I should look at that rabbit and learn: "Run. Run away." (*Monty Python and the Holy Grail*.) Skimming through half a ream of recent postings, Web pages, and articles on the "scholarly communications crisis" (CreateChange.org's term), I see that better minds than mine are puzzling over these issues—and that some of them have The Solution.

I also see that my usual "on the other hand" style and my real sense that no single solution will suit all scholarly publishing will offend a few of those better minds (most of whom will never see *Cites & Insights*). One or two may claim that I'm damaging their cause by my ignorant naysaying. No, wait, that's happened—no point in worrying about it now. I see a near certainty that people whose work

I respect will wish I wasn't so conflicted about the whole situation.

My sensible course is to close this document, paraphrase it in "Bibs & Blather," redistribute some articles to other sections and abandon the "Access Puzzle" theme. But what fun would that be?

The Problem

CreateChange.org's two overviews (one for faculty, one for librarians) set out the problem as well as any brief discussion I've seen. The faculty version begins:

> **Your system of scholarly communication is under siege.** As a scholar, you are losing control of a system that has served you well but is now on the verge of collapse. The free flow of scholarly information, the lifeblood of scholarly inquiry and creativity, is being interrupted.

The discussion starts to get sticky right after that: "Fewer scholarly publications are available to scholars worldwide." That's not quite right without loads of clarification, much of which appears later in the document. Paraphrasing:

➢ More new scholarly journals keep appearing (which seems to negate the quoted sentence).

➢ Most scholarly journals are now published by commercial publishers with astonishingly high profit margins, and those publishers usually raise prices faster than inflation.

➢ That combination means most academic libraries are increasingly unable to acquire the journals their faculty and students need, and many libraries have slashed book acquisitions in a hopeless effort to keep paying for serials.

➢ Electronic access can make the situation worse, better, or both—but electronic access raises unresolved issues for long-term access.

➢ The result is that most institutions provide access to a smaller percentage of the scholarly literature than they should, or than they used to—and that percentage will keep shrinking. In that complex sense, the quoted sentence is right: Most scholars have less access to the literature of their field than they did in the past.

Most of you know this already—at least if you're an academic librarian you should. Enough articles have addressed aspects of this problem. I've written about it since the beginning of *Cites & Insights* and both the May 2002 "disContent" and November 2002 "Crawford Files" talk about the issues. ARL's supplementary statistics for 2000/2001, announced in late July, point up one financial issue: The 119 ARL libraries spent an average of 16.25% of their FY2001 budgets on electronic materials—five times as high a percentage as in FY93. That amounts to roughly $132 million, including more than $117 million for electronic serials—up from $11 million in 1994/95. Such a rate of growth can't continue for another decade, although even raising that as a possibility is silly (growth curves don't work that way).

The bullets summarize the scholarly-access problem (and it sure could use a sexier term!). They don't point up my problem in splitting out access-related issues as a separate section—but I covered that problem in the lead Perspective in *Cites & Insights* 2:9, "Scholarly journals and grand solutions." You could think of that perspective as the first edition of The Access Puzzle, and I'm not going to cover that ground again.

I didn't believe in monolithic solutions then. Since that issue appeared, some wise people have explained to me in considerable detail why they're not *really* proposing monolithic solutions. They're *only* proposing single solutions for a tiny bit of all literature: Namely, scholarly communications where the author doesn't expect payment. That essentially covers all refereed journals, and the single solutions seem posited on conversion of that entire tiny bit to the preferred method. That, to my mind, is a monolithic solution—and after all the explanations, I still don't believe in monolithic solutions. I'm frequently wrong, but there it is.

I **recommend** the Create Change site for its clear overviews of the issues and range of suggestions for solutions. I'll do my part here, every few issues, grouping related articles and communications much as I do in other topical sections.

For a much longer and more thorough examination of the issues, I **strongly recommend** "Seizing the moment: Scientists' authorship rights in the digital age" by Mark S. Frankel, the report of a study by the American Association for the Advancement of Science. It came out in July 2002. As usual for a PDF printout (35 pages total), I don't have the URL but you should have no trouble finding it. It's a solid report with no axe to grind. Read it.

PubSCIENCE:
Going, Going, Gone?

The Department of Energy is proposing to discontinue PubSCIENCE, its free index to more than 1,200 science journals. PubSCIENCE began in 1999 and appears through public/private cooperation. DoE says that freely searchable indexes from private sector providers now provide adequate coverage—Scirus and Infotrieve cover 90% of the literature covered by PubSCIENCE.

According to Peter Suber's cover note when he copied the DoE announcement to fos-forum, "Kill-

ing PubSCIENCE and other government funded FOS has been the lobbying mission of the Software & Information Industry Association (SIIA), a trade association of commercial electronic publishers."

Marydee Ojala covered the situation in an August 19, 2002 "NewsBreaks" article on the Information Today, Inc. Website. She notes that Scirus is owned by Elsevier and powered by FAST, while Infotrieve is an independent document delivery company specializing in science, technology and medicine (STM). "The long-term viability of both can be called into question" for reasons Ojala explains. Infotrieve's CEO says they weren't consulted about the shutdown—but "we're pleased that the government recognized we have a better value proposition than they do."

Ojala's story notes that 80% to 90% of U.S. scientific R&D is government-funded, making PubSCIENCE a plausible taxpayer benefit (modeled after PubMed)—and "the private sector never saw it that way." SIIA calls it "an ongoing example of the inappropriate role of government in providing access to non-government information." There's more to her article (including some questions as to PubSCIENCE's use levels); take a look.

ExLibris 151 (August 16, 2002) takes on this proposal, and the headline makes Marylaine Block's opinion clear enough: "The assault on the public's right to know." It's a tricky article; she accuses the *entire* private a&I industry of "pricing products out of the reach of most small libraries and colleges," an accusation that hits me right where I work. The essay goes on to note other Bush-administration attacks on public information.

I had never heard of PubSCIENCE before early August—but I'm not a scientist and don't read the scientific literature. I regard good indexing as important, whether full text is available or not. And I think the public-vs.-private issues here are complicated, but not when the current administration makes the call: "Public bad. Private good. End of discussion."

Open Access/Open Archiving

I may have misnamed BOAI, the Budapest Open Access Initiative, in a recent article—using "Archives" instead of "Access" for the third word. That's a natural mistake, since OAI is the Open Archives Initiative and the two seem interlinked to a confusing degree.

An FAQ for BOAI, available at www.earlham. edu/~peters/fos/boaifaq.htm the last time I looked (but eventually to be at "soros.org"), is worth reading if you're trying to understand what this is all about. It's mostly well done, although it doesn't satisfy me that the BOAI approach is a workable Grand Solution. I won't try to summarize the FAQ—after all, it's an FAQ and it's only 13 pages long. There's no question as to the basic philosophy here and behind FOS: "When authors do wish to give away their writings, then readers should not have to pay access tolls to read them." A simple statement that covers considerable complexity.

I'm not sure why the anonymous FAQ creators feel the need to snipe at authors of scholarly monographs, but snipe they do: "Most authors of scholarly monographs hope to make money from them, regardless of the true sales prospects."

About halfway through the FAQ is one of those dangerously simple statements. "Open access does not require the infusion of new money beyond what is already spent on journals, only a redirection of how it is spent." Does "redirection" mean stripping away the money that libraries spend retaining runs of print journals and the librarians that deal with the serial literature, as well as the "voluntary" abandonment of print journals? Those are the details, and they are devilish indeed.

Given the sweep of that simple statement, I must take issue with one question and answer near the end of the FAQ:

What is the intended impact of BOAI on journals that do not offer open access to their contents?

Journals that do not wish to provide open access have nothing to fear from BOAI except competition…

But "redirection" implies pressure—from somebody, if not from BOAI itself—to abandon print subscriptions so that the money can be spent supporting this competition. A later answer to a question about impact on libraries is disingenuous in the extreme:

We do not call on libraries to stop acquiring or curating priced literature of any kind. We do not call on libraries to change their serials policies… The BOAI is about a particular kind of access to a particular body of literature. It is entirely compatible with other kinds of access to other bodies of literature.

But of course, it's that body of literature—scholarly articles—that bring library budgets to grief. BOAI does, in effect, call for priced scholarly journals to go away—and necessarily, if indirectly, calls on those who fund libraries to "redirect" funding away from libraries in order to pay for author fees. I don't see that statement anywhere, but where else will the money come from?

I also find the final Q&A a bit unlikely:

What is the intended impact of BOAI on initiatives to make scholarly literature affordable rather than free?

We hope these initiatives succeed, because their success will make scholarly literature more accessible than it is today. However, we believe that the specific literature on which BOAI focuses, the peer-reviewed research literature in all disciplines, can and should be entirely free for readers.

Noting that SPARC and related initiatives are directly and almost exclusively concerned with peer-reviewed research literature, this answer is self-contradictory. I consider this an entirely fair paraphrase of the two sentences: "We hope these initiatives succeed…but we believe they should fail because we have the only proper solution."

Recommended as the clearest statement of what BOAI purports to be about. Maybe you won't find the questions and contradictions that I do.

Caveat: The Self-Archiving FAQ

There's one big caveat with that recommendation. The "Self-Archiving" section refers you to "our Self-Archiving FAQ." I downloaded that one as well, from www.eprints.org/self-faq/

It's anonymous, but the writer has adopted the most annoying aspects of one known writer's style too perfectly for comfort. I can't recommend this FAQ except as a way to be turned off by the whole self-archiving movement (in all its "optimal and inevitable" glory).

The equation of self-publishing with "vanity press" is a slap in the face to all legitimate self-publishers and reflects total misunderstanding of the publishing world. Vanity press publishing is specifically *not* self-publishing. It is, instead, publishing heavily subsidized by the author where the publishing company primarily exists to gain such subsidies rather than to publish and promote works. It's not a subtle difference.

And, of course, self-archiving a "preprint" is *precisely* self-publishing until and unless the article is accepted and published. It's not vanity publishing unless you pay a publisher to include your article in…oh, but wait, the whole idea of this Grand Solution is that authors pay to have their works published. Just like vanity publishing. But I would be wrong to equate BOAI with vanity publishing, just as this anonymous writer is dead wrong, offensively so, to equate self-publishing with vanity publishing.

The refrain that digital archiving isn't an issue is also a familiar one, with such rhetorical excess as "biases and superstitions" to dismiss RLG, OCLC, the Library of Congress, and anyone else who worries about digital archiving.

The whole style of this FAQ is to belittle anyone who doesn't buy into the anonymous writer's absolute assurance, with oddly worded straw-man questions, sneering answers, and a litany approach that assures us that nothing poses a "rational deterrent to immediate self-archiving." The author can't distinguish between scholarly literature and serials in general, giving us this astonishing 100%-certain statement: "The serials literature is all going on-line anyway." Since there's no timeline attached to that prediction, there's no way to disprove it, but there's also absolutely no evidence that print *magazines*—the bulk of the "serials literature" in terms of overall copies, if not in terms of titles—are all going online.

Are you surprised that a.w. (anonymous writer) demeans librarianship? You shouldn't be. He/she/it also takes a whack at societies that underwrite other activities through journal publishing—after all, some of their "good works are not essential," and thus ready for the scrapheap of history. Of course the virtues of browsing runs of print journals are dismissed, and we learn that online browsing "can be every bit as serendipitous as on-paper analog searching and browsing." Evidence? A.w. don't need no stinking evidence; he/she/it is right in all he/she/it says.

"I worry about the self-archiving FAQ because it will turn thoughtful, reasonable people against the kind of supercilious know-it-alls who write such trash."

A.w. does considerable damage to his/her/its movement through the appalling tone of this FAQ. Maybe that's the intent: Maybe A.w. is a plant, paid by the big international publishers to undermine BOAI and its ilk. I don't believe that for a minute, but it's the best explanation I have for this sub-FAQ (which is almost twice as long as the parent FAQ).

Access-Related Articles

Kling, Rob, Lisa Spector and Geoff McKin, "The guild model," *Journal of Electronic Publishing* 8:1 (August 2002). www.press.umich.edu/jep/08-01/

Here's an interesting "small solution"—"guild" publishing as an alternative to peer-reviewed journals. The more general case is that "scholars will have a better chance to use Internet resources to improve their communications if more publishing models…are available for new projects." That's a "small solutions" approach that makes great.

The specific model is that of research manuscript series, for example the technical report series issues by many computer science departments. "A guild is a

formal association of people with similar interests"; academic departments and research institutes contain or constitute such guilds.

On first reading, I was troubled by the "rich get richer" aspect of guild publishing: It pretty much excludes independent scholars. But then I reread the beginning and realized that I'd been reading too many Grand Solution papers. Kling, Spector and McKin are *not* proposing that "guild publishing" should be *the* model for scholarly publishing. They are suggesting that it offers *one more* way to improve scholarly communications. They say that clearly. I just read it badly. **Recommended** as an interesting small solution.

Turk, Ziga, Bo-Christer Björk and Bob Martens, "Towards open scientific publishing—the SciX project," *Cultivate Interactive 7* (July 2002). www.cultivate-int.org/issue7/scix/

What's SciX? In some ways, it's an OAI-related European initiative—and it's got a healthy subsidy, a million Euros (somewhere around a million dollars, depending on when you ask) to get started. There are some oddities in the paper—for example, a table lists the existing CuminCAD (or CUMINCAD—it varies) database as being "free"—but the screen shot clearly shows that only certain privileged folk are able to see the papers themselves, and you have to register to see abstracts. I suppose "free" means different things in different cultures. I wonder about this comment:

> The Internet represents a threat to traditional publishers. While some years ago, the Internet was a first resource for obtaining scientific information, today it is becoming the only resource, particularly with young researchers.

The "first resource" assertion is footnoted—but to a self-citation in a non-refereed journal (the *Journal of Electronc Publishing*, which I admire), hardly the strongest proof. If the latter assertion is correct, it's a sad day for the future of science.

I'm also surprised by what appears to be an attack on standards organizations and, separately, attacks on electronic journals and preprint archives. It's always disturbing when people pushing one "solution" find it necessary to undermine other steps toward improving access. But then, this is a European paper in a British (government-funded) e-journal, so I'll put it down to cultural differences. **Recommended** for a European perspective, with considerable caveats.

Riel, Steven J., and others, "Perceived successes and failures of science & technology e-journal access: A comparative study," *Issues in Science and Technology Librarianship* Summer 2002. www.istl.org.

This report comes from a committee of ACRL's Science & Technology Section, which used a Web survey to "identify perceived strengths and weaknesses of current access methods to peer-reviewed electronic journals in the fields of science and technology." In this case, we're talking about access to the journals themselves—not to articles within the journals. Note also that "electronic journals" here means "journals available as online full text," *not* e-journals as such. Thus, one common access technique is to add an 856 field to the cataloging record for the print serial, a record that won't exist for a true e-journal.

It's an interesting article, well worth reading, but the survey itself doesn't prove much for several reasons. First, only sixty questionnaires were complete enough to be used; that makes conclusions highly tentative—as the writers acknowledge. Second, the field is changing rapidly in ways that make the choice of access less significant as long as it's possible to go directly to an article from an OpenURL. That rules out the least useful of the five "techniques"—where you get dumped at the doorway to an aggregator rather than directly to a journal or its articles. Third, none of the access methods received whole-hearted endorsement. The "most preferred" method, Web lists of journal titles, excels only in that it had equal "preferred" and "not preferred" scores—while for all of the others, "not preferred" outweighed "preferred."

I'm not saying anything that the committee doesn't recognize—and for all its weaknesses, this survey provides the first data point in an ongoing set of investigations. **Recommended**.

Trends & Quick Takes
Patent Nonsense

Strange times for strange patents—or maybe they're just a bit more obvious these days. *EContent* (August 2002) informs us that ExitExchange is claiming patent rights to pop-under ads. I have no idea whether their claim is legitimate or whether prior art existed. My immediate reaction was that this was comparable to patenting methods for producing a flaming bag of excrement, but maybe other people just *love* cleaning up after all the PU ads from a Web session.

Meanwhile, U.S. District Judge Colleen McMahon made short shrift of BT's claim that it had a patent (referred to as the Sargent patent) covering hyperlinks as used on the Web. Remember the February comment from BT's chair? "Everyone sues all

the time in the States, anyway." In March, the judge tossed out many of BT's claims. On August 22, McMahon took up Prodigy's motion for a summary judgment of non-infringement—a finding that "as a matter of law, no jury could find that Prodigy infringes the Sargent patent, nor that Prodigy contributes to infringement of the Sargent patent, nor actively induces others to infringe the patent."

In a detailed 27-page memorandum and order (readily available in PDF form; look for 00 Civ. 9451 if "British Telecom vs Prodigy" doesn't get you there), she grants Prodigy's motion in a manner that should preclude other attempts to enforce this patent. The patent covers terminals connected to a single central computer; the links described constitute complete addresses and are not themselves intended for display; and each link addresses one block of information. Sound to you like an ISP's operation, or the Web, or anything related to the Internet?

Judge McMahon didn't think so either, and while the opinion may not be the rich narrative of the recent CIPA decision, it's well argued, shows considerable understanding of the technology involved, and manifests disdain for BT's overreaching, couched in the politest possible language. The judge certainly never says, "What do you take me for, a fool?" but somehow that comes out. (Some background material from Matt Loney's August 23, 2002 article at News.com.)

OLED: Closer to Market?

OLED, Organic Light Emitting Devices, make up one "LCD alternative" that's been interesting for a while but with no clear path to market. According to the September 3, 2002 *PC Magazine*, prototype displays now exist, including a PDA using a flexible OLED (or FOLED) screen and a cell phone with a 2.2" color phosphorescent OLED (PHOLED) display. OLEDs emit light directly and can theoretically offer excellent resolution and be laminated onto thin flexible surfaces.

Handspring Treo 270

The concept makes some sense for connectivity junkies—a combined PDA and cell phone with BlackBerry-style thumb keyboard. But Handspring's first Treo had some problems, according to some reviewers. According to Bruce and Margie Brown in the September 3, 2002 *PC Magazine*, the new Treo 270 "is worth the wait." It's $500 plus service fees, but it adds a color display and backlit keyboard. Same size (4.2x2.8x0.8") and a feather heavier (5.2oz.). The display only displays 4,096 colors— but that may be better than claiming 16-bit color

without delivering! Defects: No expansion slot for removable media and no dedicated key to get to the Palm OS home screen.

More Wireless PDAs

You know what I mean. If you prefer PocketPC to Palm OS and don't need cell phone capability, the same reviewers (on the same page of the same issue) think you'll like Toshiba's $600 Pocket PC e740. It uses a 400Mhz Intel CPU, pretty speedy for a PDA, and 802.11b (Wi-Fi) networking is built in. That leaves expansion slots free for other uses. The 3.5" screen "looks good indoors and out" and the 4.9x3.1x0.6" unit weighs 6.5oz.

Virus Calm or Panic?

I don't understand, and maybe that's the point. A two-page article in the September 2002 *PC World* alerts me that the Klez virus "continues to wreak havoc" and represents a horrific ongoing threat; the article seems to suggest that you can't really defend your computer against it. I've seen similar (if less frantic) warnings elsewhere.

But I've also seen stories noting that virus creation activity (outside the labs of antivirus companies) seems to be declining, with very few interesting new threats. And I see Norton deleting Klez variants every week or two at work, with no apparent difficulty—but almost nothing else these days.

Which is it? Are we all doomed or have things calmed down somewhat? (The answer may be "a little bit of both," but that doesn't make attention-grabbing magazine headlines.)

DVD and Digital TV?

An August 12 *Wired News* article by Brad King, "DVDs could spark digital TV sales," manages to drop a fair amount of misinformation into a single page. "Forget Washington politicking, the 30 million people who own DVD players will be the ones who cast the deciding votes on the success of digital television." Why? Because "without a high-definition TV, DVD owners might as well watch a VHS tape, because the picture and sound quality are limited." But with the right TV, "DVDs deliver everything DTV promises—from theater-quality pictures to Internet interactivity…"

Hold on right there. Anyone who believes watching DVD on a high-quality analog TV is equivalent to watching VHS is either blind, has never seen a high-quality analog TV, or just doesn't much care. DVD delivers pictures that are just slightly better than S-VHS (but there never have been many prerecorded S-VHS cassettes), or roughly

twice as good as VHS. On any properly built TV with an S-Video input.

How much more actual picture information do you get from DVD on a high-definition TV (HDTV)? Zero, nada, rien. There is no more information on the disc. A progressive-output DVD player manipulates the information to provide greater apparent detail—but a good HDTV has internal "line doubler" circuitry to do the same thing with *any* video input that isn't high definition.

DVD is a great medium. A good HDTV with the best input looks absolutely incredible. Two different things. The somewhat-misguided government push for HDTV and retailer anxiety to boost their profits seem to cause confusion. It's surprising that *Wired News* would add to that confusion.

Now UCITA, Now You Don't

Sorry, I apologize, but the National Conference of Commissioners on Uniform State Laws approved a bunch of changes to UCITA to make it less unpalatable to people who believe in fair dealing, freedom of speech, and other such nonsense. For example, you'd be able to criticize software products without fear of retribution from software makers. What a concession! In some cases, software makers might not even be able to disable your software remotely.

But mean ol' ALA, in the person of Miriam Nisbet, doesn't think the changes go far enough (according to an August 21 *Chronicle of Higher Education* story by Andrea L. Foster). "It's still a very confusing and difficult law to understand, and really needs to be reworked." Maybe that—and fairly constant opposition from library and consumer groups, the American Bar Association, and most state attorneys general—explains why only two states have adopted UCITA in three years.

"SatireWire Has Landed"

That's the headline on an August 29 posting at SatireWire, Dot.Com.Edy. "Citing creative differences, SatireWire's founder and sole employee, Andrew Marlatt, announced that as of today, the site will no longer be updated." It's a wonderful little piece—and, unfortunately, it's quite serious. SatireWire began in December 1999; in July 2002, the site had about a million visitors—and it makes money, between advertising and the book (mentioned last issue) as well as sales of items to print publications. But this piece was the final new posting.

Marlatt's bored. "It has ceased to be fun. My heart is not in it. My head is not in it." He notes that it's ridiculous to abandon the site just as the related book has come out. "But I run an Internet site for a living. What do I know from intuitive?"

SatireWire never tried for the daily updates that seem to have brought ModernHumor to its knees, maybe because there's only one of them/him. I've seen some good work there. It's still there. Read it while you can. Or don't; Marlatt would prefer that you buy *Economy of Errors* anyway.

The Good Stuff

Daily, Geoff, "In medias res," *EMedia* 15:7 (July 2002), pp. 24-35.

DVD-R, DVD+R, DVD-RW, DVD+RW, DVD-RAM. Confused yet? If not, maybe you haven't been paying attention. This article lays out the history, the players, and some of the issues for the five different writable DVD formats. Well, actually, six: Turns out there are two different DVD-R formats, the "Authoring" version for projects that will wind up as published DVDs, and the "General Use" DVD-R for the rest of us.

It's probably the most complex issue in current digital media, and it's one that may not have a single winner. You may not be ready to write 4.7 gigabytes at a time, but many libraries could have future uses for writable DVDs. Daily's article doesn't clear the air, but it does provide solid background.

Rizzo, John, "Make peace with PCs," *Macworld* 19:9 (September 2002), pp. 84-7.

If you're a Mac user in a PC world—or if you're a PC LAN administrator with users who prefer Macs—this information-heavy article is well worth reading and saving. The two platforms get along better than ever, but some items still require attention.

"The future in gear," *PC Magazine* 21:15 (September 3, 2002), pp. 88-127.

Regular *PC Magazine* readers who aren't hot about pseudo-*Wired* approaches may be disappointed, since this blockbuster wipes out group reviews and other editorial features. Instead you get "15 remarkable prototypes that will whet your appetite for technology." The claim is that all of these ideas are "slated for availability in one to five years."

It's an interesting group, more deserving of examination than scorn. Hybrid nanorod-polymer solar cells (I see Zippy saying that repeatedly) from UC Berkeley may make flexible solar cells possible, cheap, and more reasonable as real-world alternative energy sources. Manhattan Scientifics is trying to bring fuel cells down to the mobile-device level,

while Philips wants to make 3D possible without special glasses. I've mentioned InPhase's Tapestry before (holographic storage, 100GB on a DVD-size disc); it's worth noting that this enthusiastic writeup claims the asserted 50-year storage life is "30 more than that of a CD or DVD," which will surprise the heck out of 3M and some other companies (given hundred-year life expectations for CD media). That's just a sampling. I'm skeptical of some, hopeful for others, and could throw in a few zingers about some of the discussions. On the whole, it's an interesting article, worth half an hour of your time. I do wonder just what problem Sony expects to solve with the SDR-4X, a "pure entertainment" 23" humanoid "robot" expected to cost as much as a luxury car. The article says it's a potential household companion. That's just sad. Oh, and MIT Media Lab has us wiring *everything* in our homes to the Internet, light switches and all, and eventually painting our walls with "computing dust." Which, with any luck, will use its power to flash foot-high letters saying GET A LIFE.

Kandra, Anne, "Where have all the PC makers gone?" *PC World* 20:9 (September 2002), pp. 49-52.

An interesting "Consumer Watch" column that may overstate the case: "The consolidation of the PC market could be bad news for consumers." Yes, the market has consolidated; that's obvious every time I do "PC Values," with so few "other" makers advertising in *PC* and *PC World*. And it's probably true that prices have bottomed out—but I'm not sure that consumers actually gain when prices are so low that makers go out of business or have to cut corners and eliminate most service.

It's worth reading if you're not aware of the shrinkage. Where I believe she overplays the game is when she basically says she could only come up with five vendors when she was looking for a Pentium4 system: Dell, Gateway, HP/Compaq, IBM and Sony. I'm surprised to see IBM, since their desktop line is mostly a few business-oriented leftovers, but that's not the point. In the same issue of *PC World* I see ads for ABS, Sleekline, Alienware, and Systemax desktop PCs, and the "top hundred" listings continue to include makers such as Polywell and Micro Express. I wonder why a consumer advocate couldn't find these: Are the ads and reviews *all* fraudulent?

Stafford, Alan, and the staff of *PC World*, "2002 buyers' guide," *PC World* 20:9 (September 2002), pp. 88-136.

I get it. September issues of PC magazines are edited in early July, when everyone really wants to be on vacation. What better than a blockbuster, one big article to replace five or six smaller articles. Thus "The future in gear" above—and this "complete guide to what to buy and where to buy it." It's not complete (it can't be); in fact, it's woefully incomplete, with five of this and three of that offered as exemplars. Some of the advice needs to be viewed skeptically—for example, a "decision chart" says that you *need* a 2.4GHz P4 or better if you're going to rip music, which is a little like saying that you *need* a Corvette if you're going to drive on Interstate highways. It then says your hard disk should be 40GB or larger. Hmm. The difference between a 2.4GHz PC and a 2.26GHz PC is likely to be at least $100, which should more than cover the difference between a 40GB and an 80GB hard disk. I know which choice I think would make more sense, but what do I know? Still, this 17-part feature, followed by a nine-page section on the "best" online stores, includes a fair amount of good information.

Landry, Julie, "Is our children learning?" *Red Herring* 116 (August 2002), pp. 36-41.

Yes, I've started reading *Red Herring*, and this article's already causing buzz in the educational technology community. How *dare* a business magazine suggest that most of the $5 billion spent annually on classroom computers is wasted? Kids are learning to use PowerPoint "but they have no idea what the content means"—but heck, at least PowerPoint is a job skill, right? Apple gets 26% of its revenue from educational sales; that's disturbing on its face.

The article includes Edison's great quote that books would be made obsolete in schools by 1923, since you could teach "every branch of human knowledge through the motion picture." Oakland's technology director says that "technology is probably the only way, because we haven't been able to provide a consistent quality of instruction across the schools"—which is another fairly disturbing quotation. You can't get decent teachers, so give the kids PCs instead?

Is Landry right? I have no idea. The ferocity of some responses ("neoluddite" is the kindest term) suggests that she's on to something. "Students who are engaged are not necessarily learning to think." She suggests that training and hiring additional teachers, though clearly more expensive, is likely to be more effective in the long run. What a notion!

James, Geoffrey, "Out of their minds," *Red Herring* 116 (August 2002), pp. 50-4.

I've seen a few angry responses to this article, too—from what's left of the AI crowd. James' subtitle reads "Here we go again…pundits can't stop hyp-

ing the business opportunities of artificial intelligence." Sure enough, and there's Ray Kurzweil continuing to make silly predictions. AI techniques do work in narrow applications, to some extent; that's one reason OCR software works better than it used to. But I believe James is right in his overall assessment: the science just doesn't add up. And when Kurzweil says "We're going to reverse engineer the human brain," I remember his *LJ* columns confidently predicting the death of print. Remember those? It's been a while—long past his projections. Now he says that "virtual personalities" will be "ubiquitous" by 2010. Sure, Ray—just as Japan's Fifth Generation Project helped that nation take over the computer marketplace in the late 1980s. A good article, although I'm astonished that it's even needed. Don't people ever learn?

Arms, William Y., "Quality control in scholarly publishing on the Web," *Journal of Electronic Publishing* 8:1 (August 2002). www.press.umich.edu/jep/08-01/

"When the Web was young, a common complaint was that it was full of junk. Today a marvelous assortment of high-quality information is available on line, often with open access." That's the lead for an interesting article about the difficulties of distinguishing high-quality information from the quantities of junk that still populate the Web.

Arms asks "three interrelated questions":

➢ How can readers recognize good quality materials on the Web?
➢ How can publishers maintain high standards and let readers know about them?
➢ How can librarians select materials that are of good scientific or scholarly quality?

Don't expect final answers, but do expect some worthwhile commentary—including the caveat that peer review by no means guarantees quality. "There are said to be 5,000 peer-reviewed journals in education alone. Inevitably the quality of papers in them is of uneven quality." (OK, so that sentence could use editing.) His recollection: "Thirty years ago, as a young faculty member, I was given the advice, 'Whatever you do, write a paper. Some journal will publish it.'" That's a more personal version of the rule I've always used (I know I didn't originate it, but don't recall the source):

Peer review does not determine *whether* an article will be published, but only *where*.

Arms, currently part of the National Science Digital Library team at Cornell, uses some great examples. For example, the first page in the "science" section at about.com is the astrology page. "How would young students know that astrology is not science?"

I **recommend** this piece not only because Arms offers useful insights into difficult questions but also because he does so with style and honesty. In some fields (but not all), the "primary literature" is no longer the supposed first-rank journals; the in crowd relies on preprints. Quite a bit of "good stuff" arises outside peer review, and some journals mix (and have always mixed) refereed and non-refereed material, a "distinction [that] may be important to some authors, but is irrelevant to almost all readers." Next time you're reading *Information Technology and Libraries* (you do read it, don't you?) and wonder why the labels used for various sections don't always correlate with length or importance, remember that things labeled "article" in that journal are peer-reviewed—and that the rest of the material isn't. Do you care? Should you?

Krause, Steven D., "Where do I list this on my *CV*? Considering the values of self-published Web sites," *College Composition and Communication Online* 54:1 (September 2002). www.ncte.org/ccc/2/54.1/

"This essay explores the question: 'Given the high value that most institutions put on scholarship that appears in refereed journals or in books produced by well-respected presses, how are innovative, intellectually valuable, well-researched, self-published Web sites to be counted in the processes of promotion, merit, tenure, review, and recognition?'"

In 17 well-written pages with four example Web sites, Krause makes the case that such Web publishing *should* play a role. **Recommended** as a thoughtful argument for expanding the "respectable corpus," and a good reminder of how delighted I am that I don't work in academia.

Some activists in the e-journal arena habitually conflate self-publishing and the vanity press, sneeringly dismissing any possible scholarly worth from the former by stamping it with the disreputable label of the latter. That represents sloppy thinking (to be charitable) on their part, but at least they'd know how to answer Krause's question: "Such self-indulgent blather should not be counted at all." If you believe that to be correct, then don't bother reading this paper. Krause makes a good argument, but it's not enough to open closed minds.

Manjoo, Farhad, "Meet Mr. Anti-Google," *Salon*, August 29, 2002. www.salon.com/tech/

"A crusading webmaster says the popular search engine's page-ranking algorithm is 'undemocratic.'" Or, maybe, a conspiratorialist is upset because his Website doesn't pop up at the top of Google

searches. "In Brandt's ideal world, if you searched for "United Airlines," you would see untied.com—a site critical of United—before you see United's page. And if you searched for Rumsfeld, you'd see Name-Base's dossier on him before the Defense Department's site on the 'Honorable Donald Rumsfeld.'"

Brandt also says that Google and other large search engines "ought to be thought of as public utilities." But public utilities that are required to *favor* alternative sources over mainstream sources: Now there's a democratic notion.

Recommended because we all need a break from clear thinking now and then.

Brooks, Terrence A., "The Semantic Web, universalist ambition and some lessions from librarianship," *Information Research* 7:4 (July 2002). (InformationR.net/ir/7-4/)

I'm not going to attempt to summarize this thoughtful essay. If you're interested in Tim Berners-Lee's "Semantic Web," I **recommend** that you read Brooks' paper and think about it. Quite apart from the unanswered question of why everyone would actually add semantically rich XML tagging to all their Web documents, Brooks raises other serious issues. I don't believe the Semantic Web makes sense. Brooks adds depth to my disbelief in a well-written essay.

PC Group Reviews
Desktop Computers

Delaney, John R., "AMD ships the Thoroughbred but can't top the Pentium 4 and faster memory," *PC Magazine* 21:13 (July 2002), pp. 34-6.

"Thoroughbred" is AMD's code name for their new CPUs using 0.13-micron manufacturing, in this case the XP 2200+. This mini-roundup compares two systems running 2.53GHz Pentium 4s with two running the XP 2200+. The AMD systems are cheaper, the Pentium 4 systems more powerful. *PC* likes the Dell Dimension 8200 best of the lot.

Digital Cameras

English, David, Eamon Hickey and Michael Shapiro, "Discount digicams," *Computer Shopper* 22:9 (September 2002), pp. 106-13.

Late summer must be the time for lower-end digital photography. Here's a review of five two-megapixel cameras costing $300 to $400, to accompany the *Macworld* review and even lower-end *PC*

Magazine roundup below. As in *Macworld*, the choices are difficult in this range. Canon's $400 PowerShot S330 Digital Elph gets the highest rating at 7.8, but it's also the heaviest camera (at 10oz.)—perhaps why the writeup cites a "sturdy feel." Minolta's $400 Dimage X just trails at 7.7 points; it's incredibly light and compact (5.5oz, only 0.8" thick and an odd near-square 2.8x3.3" shape) but picture quality is a little inconsistent. A sidebar summarizes higher-resolution cameras, including two Editors' Choices, both "big brothers" to these two: Canon's $469 3.2megapixel PowerShot S30 and Minolta's $487 4megapixel Dimage S404—both of which are more conventional in appearance.

Grotta, Sally Wiener, "Mini digital cameras," *PC Magazine* 21:13 (July 2002), pp. 178-9.

The six cameras in this "After Hours" review don't offer the highest resolution or the most flexibility; instead, they're tiny and cheap. That's all relative, of course: With two exceptions, these low-res wonders cost more than a small, light, high-quality Canon Stylus Infinity 35mm camera, but that's a film camera and thus beyond the pale. Oddly, the Editors' Choice may not belong in this roundup at all: Panasonic's $400 SV-AV10 e-wear, an odd little camcorder that "can record up to an hour of video" on its 64MB of memory. That's video at 142 kilo*bits* per second, which means either incredibly high compression, very small pictures, few frames per second, or some combination. Hmm. The review says it can also store 2,000 640x480 still images; that means a compression rate of 230:1, which is indeed aggressive. (But 4,000 half-frame video images spread out over an hour still come to just over one frame per second.)

I'd probably look for the second-rated unit, another oddball: SiPix $40 StyleCam Blink, "about the size of a soda cracker" with 8MB of RAM. From the description, the bundled software is worth more than the camera.

Keller, Jeff, "2-megapixel point-and-shoot digital cameras," *Macworld* 19:8 (August 2002), pp. 47-8.

Another in Keller's ongoing series of mini-comparisons, this time three $380-$400 cameras, each one fairly unique. The highest-rated Fuji Fine-Pix 2800 Zoom looks like a squatty camera and has a 6x optical zoom lens; the other two stand out mostly for unusual shapes and sizes. The Minolta Dimage X is tiny, squared off and thin, with its zoom lens mounted within the body of the camera, but doesn't take great pictures. The Nikon Coolpix 2500 is small, looking "more like a fashion accessory

than a camera," but the flash is so close to the lens that red-eye is a problem.

Displays

English, David, "Flatware for your desktop," *Computer Shopper* 22:8 (August 2002), pp. 114-17.

Those who prefer LCD displays tend to go overboard in describing their virtues, and this roundup of four inexpensive 15" LCDs is no exception. English trots out that worn-out nag that "unlike CRTs, [LCDs] emit no potentially harmful radiation." Today's CRTs meet safety standards so tight that the most significant form of radiation is *precisely* the one also emitted by LCDs: visible light. Then there's an editing problem: that same list says that "LCDs are also brighter" than CRTs—but a sidebar notes that "LCDs tend to be less bright than CRTs." My own take? I like today's LCDs—but unless you're running Windows XP, I still wouldn't use one for everyday business. Why? ClearType. Although it certainly doesn't provide book-quality typography on the screen, it does get rid of the stairstep effect on text that my wife and I both find so annoying on LCDs. With ClearType, we both find LCDs acceptable; without it, not.

If you have XP or if you aren't as bothered by the little squares making up each letter, you may find this mini-roundup interesting. If you know *Computer Shopper*, you may find it unusual. Of four units, two rate Editors' Choices—the two name brands and the two most expensive units, NEC's $399 MultiSync LCD1550V and Samsung's $429 SyncMaster 151S.

Filtering/Antivirus Appliances

Janowski, Davis D., "Plug-in protection," *PC Magazine* 21:13 (July 2002), pp. 128-40.

I'm not entirely sure of the connection between antivirus and filtering, except that both involve tracking communications and sometimes blocking it. The connection particularly troubles me when the article starts by talking about security threats. But never mind; you don't have to enable the filtering to use these hardware protective measures.

This new class of device typically sits behind your network firewall and serves either as a gateway or a relay. Most serve as relays: To the outside, the box looks like the final destination; after it scans email and Web traffic, it routes it to the rest of the network. I don't fully understand the distinction between that and gateway operations, but intended customers probably will.

Two products share Editors' Choice honors. The Aladdin eSafe Appliance ($999 for the hardware plus $2,800 in other first-year costs for 25 users) is a cereal-box-size device that offers a wide range of services, including detection of viruses in encrypted email. The McAfee e500 also provides broad protection and control; the 25-user e250 runs $2,816. Notably, neither one of them shows any significant impact on simulated email traffic speed. A third unit, Symantec Gateway Security, received the same high rating as the other two but has so many more features (and is so much more expensive) that it's reviewed separately; figure $11,790 for 50 nodes, the smallest configuration. It includes firewall protection and intrusion detection, making it a much more comprehensive package.

Internet Browsers

Spanbauer, Scott, "IE alternatives: three new contenders," *PC World* 20:9 (September 2002), pp. 68-9.

Three new contenders? You could say one and a half, but that would be mean. This review includes Mozilla 1, Netscape 7 Preview Release 1, and RapidBrowser XP. But Netscape 7 is Mozilla 1 with loads of AOL/Netscape "extras" such as instant messaging thrown in and, of course, a few bugs—and RapidBrowser XP is a $30 Internet Explorer overlay. Perhaps appropriately, slimmed-down Mozilla 1 gets the best rating (4.5 stars). I'm clearly not in the market demographic for RapidBrowser XP (the review would scare me off even if they paid *me* $30); if Mozilla 1 is finally stable, it may be worth a try. (But I get along very well with current versions of IE, and just love it at home when that little icon shows up indicating that IE6 has rejected some third-party cookies on my behalf, using default security settings.)

Linux Software

Lipschutz, Robert P., and Dave Lopez, "New products impart momentum to Linux," *PC Magazine* 21:13 (July 2002), pp. 26-30.

"Is it finally time to implement Linux and open-source software?" This "First looks" discussion doesn't answer that question but does look at some prominent open-source releases. An interesting group of reviews if you're considering or using Linux. The strangest offering is Microsoft Windows Services for Unix 3.0, a $99 (per seat) system that lets you run a full-fledged Unix subsystem on top of Windows and provides some other services. It gets

four dots, as odes SuSE Linux 8.0, a strong $40 personal or $80 professional version.

Notebook Computers

Bruzzese, Stephanie, and others, "Desktops to go," *Computer Shopper* 22:9 (September 2002), pp. 122-9.

What does it mean for a notebook computer to claim "desktop-replacement" status? It's a great way to sell eight-pound portables, and reviews typically suggest that power and equipment are now at "desktop levels" or that you're no longer paying much of a portability premium, or both. I'm not sure that this five-notebook review proves much of anything in this regard.

The Editors' Choice is Gateway's $2,549 600XL (although it didn't get the highest rating), noted for being fast, with a large, bright screen, good battery life, and a reasonable price—but it's also "huge and heavy." The screen is indeed large, 15.7" at 1280x1024 resolution, and the system is well-equipped: 1.7GHz Pentium4-M, 512MB RAM, 40GB hard disk, 64MB display RAM (ATI Mobility Radeon accelerator), combined DVD/CD-RW drive—and 8.7 pounds. It also has a full set of connections, including FireWire, S-Video, and digital audio—and Wi-Fi (wireless networking) is builtin, as are a modem and Ethernet.

So far so good, and this is a fair price for a very potent notebook, even if it's big and heavy. Dell's Latitude C840 got a marginally higher point score, but it's not quite as well equipped and costs $500 more. (It also has the 15" 1600x1200 pixel LCD that Dell and IBM use on some notebooks. That's wonderful display density but may require some Windows tweaks to look right.)

Here's the rub. If you configure a Gateway Profile 4 (their new all-in-one computer) similarly—very slightly smaller screen and no Wi-Fi—it costs $1,499, not $2,549. That's a 70% premium for the 600XL. Or, if you don't need an all-in-one configuration, you can spend $1,599—still less than two-thirds as much—and get the Gateway 500X, which as I write this comes with a 2.4GHz Pentium4, 512MB RAM, 80GB 7200RPM hard disk, a DVD-RAM burner as well as a CD-RW burner, higher-end graphics (nVidia GeForce4) with 128MB RAM, and a three-part speaker system. In other words, roughly 40% more CPU speed, twice the disk space (and faster disk to boot), DVD burning, twice the graphics RAM, and two-thirds the money.

If you're cramped for space, buy the Profile or an iMac. At least you can still separate the keyboard and keep the screen at a better distance and angle. If you really need to cart data back and forth between work and home, consider a removable hard disk (you can make any hard disk removable with an inexpensive conversion package). If you want portability, get an "ultralight" or a midrange portable, something that weighs 6 pounds or less. And if these "desktop replacements" sound great to you, just don't believe you're getting some sort of bargain.

PDAs

Arar, Yardena, "Colorful calls and contacts," *PC World* 20:8 (August 2002), pp. 50-1.

This odd little review includes two Handspring Treo models, both with color screens and little keyboards, and a $730 Pocket PC equipped with "high-speed" wireless data modem and cell phone. The latter, a preproduction Audiovox Thera, seems a bit pricey, particularly given the mandatory $35 to $300 monthly service charge—and high speed in this case means roughly V.90 data rates (that is, up to 56Kbps). The reviewer likes the $299 Treo 90 for its weight (4 ounces), but the transflective color screen is "just about unreadable when used outdoors," while the $499 Treo 270 appears to have a better (albeit slightly smaller) screen along with built-in cell phone.

Printers

Fraser, Bruce, "Color laser printers," *Macworld* 19:9 (September 2002), pp. 38-9.

This roundup of (can you guess?) covers five printers costing $2,200 to $2,400, all of them compatible with Mac OS X and OS 9. HP's Color Laser-Jet 4600 gets the highest rating (four mice) for the best-looking output. It also has the heaviest duty cycle of the bunch: 85,000 pages per month (that's a lot of color!). Honorable mention goes to the Minolta-QMS Magicolor 3100DN: at $2,400, it's the cheapest duplexing color laser printer available.

Stone, M. David, "Color printing hits the fast lane," *PC Magazine* 21:15 (September 3, 2002), pp. 30-4.

Apparently September is National Color Printer Month and I didn't get the message. Here's another roundup of color laser printers, this time five of them priced from $1,500 to $2,600 (but configured more robustly than *Macworld*'s printers, in some cases), with sidebars for a $910 office-quality inkjet and a $700 photo printer. The sets of reviewed printers here and in *Macworld* don't overlap that well, partly because this review includes a color LED printer and a solid-ink printer; the criterion for in-

clusion is that these are all single-pass printers, making them much faster than earlier printers. (Until very recently, most color laser printers actually ran the paper through four printing passes, one reason they've been so slow and clunky.)

Editors' Choice, however, is the same: HP's Color LaserJet 4600, although it does *not* have the best output quality in this group. It was fastest on most tests and easiest to set up and administer—but the two Xerox printers produce better output.

The Canon N1000 costs a lot for an inkjet but seems well designed for office use, with supply costs comparable to color lasers and decent output quality. The Epson Stylus Photo 2000 is an odd duck for special jobs: it's pricey for an inkjet ($700) but uses seven different inks and can print "simply stunning output" on pages as large as 13 by 129 inches, using roll paper. This printer uses Epson's UltraChrome inks for claimed print lifetimes of 80 years on some papers, 44 years on others. But it's slow. (The September 2002 *PC World* gives the Photo 2200 a rave 4.5-star review and says it's the "first printer that employs…UltraChrome inks." It also says it's a successor to the 2000. Something's wrong here, but in any case the current Epson $700 Stylus Photo with roll-feed paper and UltraChrome inks sounds like an expensive, slow winner.)

Scanners

Jantz, Richard, "Souped-up scanners," *PC World* 20:8 (August 2002), pp. 99-104.

This review covers ten flatbed scanners—seven "small-office" models costing $79 to $300, three "corporate" units costing $399 to $400. As usual, there's an arbitrary single "Best Buy" in each category: Microtek's $150 ScanMaker 4900 in the inexpensive range and $400 ScanMaker 6700 where money's less important. I see nothing other than price to distinguish "home office" from "corporate." This set of tests suggests that the speed of USB2.0 and FireWire may not matter much for scanning. Note that both Microteks include transparency adapters and offer 2400x4800dpi optical resolution, enough to make slide scanning plausible.

Yang, S. Jae, "Scantastic!," *PC Magazine* 21:14 (August 2002), pp. 124-36.

A dozen scanners in the most popular price range--$100 to $200—show how far scanners have come these days. Some CIS scanners now provide image quality just as good as CCD, a breakthrough, and most inexpensive scanners offer 1200dpi and 48-bit color depth. The first USB2.0 scanners are significantly faster for high-resolution scans. Editors'

Choices go to Canon's $150 CanoScan N1250U for value and HP's $200 ScanJet 5400c for overall performance—it scans at up to 2400dpi and yields balanced scans, although OCR quality is only average. A sidebar covers one very inexpensive scanner and three medium-priced units, noting that the $400 to $1,000 scanners do offer better quality for certain jobs. Even the $60 unit gets a decent rating.

Utility Software

Keizer, Gregg, and Ken Feinstein, "PC defenders," *Computer Shopper* 22:9 (September 2002), pp. 138-41.

Another antivirus roundup with another thoroughly predictable result. Looking for excellent antivirus protection, a clean interface, fast scanning and minimal operating overhead? The Editors' Choice here, as almost everywhere, is Norton Antivirus. McAfee VirusScan 6.0 scores a weak second—but you do save $5 a year on virus updates.

Spector, Lincoln, "New compression software: zip it good," *PC World* 20:9 (September 2002), p. 79.

Two new versions of commercial compression (zip) software: PentaZip 5.1 ($50 to $60) and StuffIt Deluxe 7.5 ($25 to $40), particularly useful when you have Mac-using buddies. Neither one rates as high as WinZip. I found one comment peculiar. Spector notes that PentaZip carries an excellent file viewer—"a useful feature I haven't seen before in a compression program." Well, yes and no: PowerDesk, the superb Windows Explorer replacement that I've used for years, costs about half as much as PentaZip, includes file viewing capabilities as part of its full-featured file management capabilities—and includes zip/unzip capabilities as well, with inherent recognition of zipped archives as directories. I suppose PowerDesk doesn't count, since file compression is such a tiny part of its capabilities.

The Details