Cites & Insights:
Crawford at Large

Volume 2, Number 3: February 2002 ISSN 1534-0937 Walt Crawford

The Year Ahead (and Behind), II

Last issue I discussed Bill Howard's predictions for 2001. The January 15, 2002 *PC Magazine* includes "What to expect in 2002," his new predictions. He does not expect watershed PC or notebook changes to make you wait before buying; he does expect widespread adoption of 802.11b—but not U.S. wide-area wireless, citing the "all-round uselessness of cell-phone browsers." USB 2.0 may hurt FireWire in the PC arena; cheap desktop PCs pretty much wipe out Internet appliances; flash memory takes off; we get some "in-car computing" (I can hardly wait for even more distracted drivers!); and the Palm OS and Pocket PC devices will coexist. Finally, he doesn't expect big success for the new tablet PCs (see "Trends & Quick Takes" this issue)—"I fear tablets are the answer to a question not enough people are asking"—and suggests waiting to midyear to switch to an LCD display, when he expects 17" units for $500. No more comments just yet (although I'll guess he's right on almost all counts); we'll look back in another year.

2001: A Failure Odyssey

That's the head on Joanna Glasner's brief roundup at *Wired News*, posted January 2, 2002. She looks back exactly a year. Joe Geek is finishing another day coding at home, connected by Excite@Home; the doorbell rings, with the Webvan man delivering groceries; Geek clicks over to Napster to grab some tunes, then checks the stock market. Well, Enron's down to only $80 and both Lucent and JDS Uniphase went down a bit—but we all know that Republican presidents are good for the economy, so it should be fine soon. Geek goes back online, checking CyberRebate.com. Then he leafs through *The Industry Standard* and, finding the TV schedule boring, calls Kozmo to deliver a video.

Need I say more?

We Interrupt the Technology Parade…

…to bring you predictions from "industry movers and shakers" in the so-called information industry. I didn't note *Information Today*'s 2001 predictions until the end of the year; this time, the Daring Dozen get their licks in early. "What's ahead for 2002?" (January 2002 *Information Today*) includes the following brief excerpts from a *long* set of predictions from "12 information industry gurus."

- Without commenting on Stephen Abram's set of predictions (Micromedia, Ltd.) I'll quote one appropriately guruvian sentence: "We've spent the past 5 years adapting to the Web juggernaut and the sad part is the Web is just an acorn from which the oak will grow."
- Stephen Arnold (Arnold Information Technologies) thinks the big money in 2002 will be selling content via mobile devices and providing "actionable, high-value content where and when it is needed" without searching. "2002 marks the year when the financial chickens begin to come home to roost for some traditional information companies." Note that "begin"—you can't be wrong with the right qualifiers.
- Matt Dunie of CSA (Cambridge Scientific) offers a sales pitch for CSA's pricing model and few real predictions ("increased linking from bibliographic databases to information sources at the object and data level" is one—and that's a pretty safe projection!).
- Susan Feldman (IDC) assures us "We are endlessly connected" and that we're converging on "enterprise information systems."
- Jay Jordan (OCLC) predicts consolidation on the Web, more use of Dublin Core ("the lead-

Inside This Issue

ing standard for resource description on the Web"), a "serious rethinking of cataloging," and more digitization projects.

- Allan McLaughlin (LexisNexis) touts XML and Web services, "sure to quickly penetrate the business enterprise." Here's an interesting sentence, but note that McLaughlin prefaces it with an indirection: "It has been said that corporate portals will eventually become the new desktop, replacing the Windows start button and a variety of commonly used applications."
- Allen Paschal (Gale) stresses the importance of sound business plans and "delivering what the customer wants from us."
- Karen Schneider (Librarians' Index to the Internet) steps away from the corporate drumbeat. She's optimistic, sure of more battles over free speech and filtering but believing that "a savvier public…will ignore pleas from Internet filtering software companies to purchase their simplistic programs, and will remain skeptical of the claim that pervasive weakening of our privacy will strengthen a democratic society." She dreams of seeing "the first truly intuitive content-recognition software," expects the collapse of the ebook industry to continue (and hopes for a true open-source ebook standard that seamlessly translates text to audio), predicts that "the Handspring Treo will take off like a rocket" (in a wonderfully amusing paragraph) and considers the possibility of a single government-funded Web presence "with the potential to create a public information infrastructure not seen since Carnegie built public libraries all over America."
- David Seuss (Northern Light) offers another set of jokes—but, given Northern Light announcements a few days later, one may not be such a joke. "In a shocking announcement late in the summer, consumer advocates will pronounce, 'Information no longer wants to be free.'" Tried using the free Northern Light Web search engine lately, as opposed to the paid corporate search service?
- Anthea C. Stratigos (Outsell) sees convergence everywhere.
- Roy Tennant (California Digital Library), the second "library person" in this corporate lineup, expects to see more "dot-bombs" including Yahoo! He sees that ebook appliances "continue to under-deliver on content and utility while over-delivering on expense and hassle" and notes that nonprofit publishing projects do just the opposite—but the press would rather write about the "stillborn e-book industry" than working nonprofit digitization projects. "Go figure." He expects continued reduction in storage costs along with increased demand for personal storage space and—I believe correctly—increased but "slow and incremental" adoption of XML. While I hope that Karen is right in projecting public rejection of filtering and privacy intrusions, I hope Roy's wrong in his expectation that today's unbalanced intellectual property laws will be unassailable thanks to political contributions and conservative judges—but I suspect he's right. Here's one where I can pretty much guarantee that Roy's right (based on experience, an understanding of Z39.50 limitations, and observation): As libraries look toward broader online collaboration, "they will discover that seemingly small problems such as local variations in cataloging practice will create large difficulties in creating the kinds of seamless user services they wish to provide." I might add that cataloging variations are nothing compared to database indexing-and-retrieval variations!

IDG's "8 Hot Technologies"

This Christopher Lindquist article showed up on an Excite news list, pointing to a CNN site. "These apps seem headed for the big time sooner rather than later." Security; electronic collaboration; peer-to-peer tools; fancy storage options; voice over IP; speech recognition; wireless LANs (802.11b), and XML. That's the short list, and the slightly longer set of arguments for these technologies (there's not one "app" in the list, but jargon has a life of its own) isn't hard to find.

PC World Predicts?

The January 2002 *PC World* includes a longer-than-usual story by Daniel Tynan, "20 products, trends, and technologies that will change PCs in 2002—and beyond." The assertion is that these products "*will* change how you work—and possibly even how you live" (emphasis added). That's a big assertion, particularly lacking "some of you" or other qualifiers, but there's a copout: "most of them will hit the scene within the next two years." In other words, as long as 10 of these 20 have *any* market presence by the end of 2003, *PC World*'s right.

The big 20 include 400GB hard disks next year thanks to antiferromagnetically coupled media using ruthenium and 1GHz Palmtops "to handle the high-speed cellular, Bluetooth, and other wireless technologies that will soon be standard on handhelds." These superhandhelds "should soon become power-

ful enough to handle natural-language speech input." OLEDs (organic light emitting diodes, thinner than LCDs and making their own light without backlighting) could replace LCDs—but not for years yet. "Next-generation instant messaging" will become "*the* mass-communication tool for the 21st century." [Emphasis added, but note the claim here, particularly since "mass communication" seems antithetical to IM.] Naturally, 802.11 everywhere.

Add XML everywhere, "hyper-threading" on Pentium-4 CPUs, the Arapahoe bus to replace PCI and AGP, mobile phones that "access the Internet at blistering speeds," business peer-to-peer networking with important files cached on various employees' hard drives, and computers where the circuitry is on the back of the LCD screen—not in the base, but literally on the back. Well, it's about time for a hot new replacement bus, and those who remember early incidents with overheating Japanese 3G phones could take "blistering speeds" literally.

There's more, of course. MRAM, magnetic memory that retains data without power; "presence technology" to let people know whenever you're connected—and "you may have to pay for the privilege" of *not* being accessible at all times(!); fuel cells as "endlessly renewable" power sources for portable devices, serious distributed computing, digital cameras with film-camera resolution (a safe bet, since they're on the market), "voice portals" (also already here), and "electronic wallets" storing all your personal and financial data—but backed by the proven security expertise of Microsoft! ("Your financial data is as secure as your Outlook address book!")

Here's the PC that you *will* own two years from now: 4GHz CPU with 512MB DDR and a 600MHz bus, 300-400GB hard disk, rewritable DVD (but also a plain old microdiskette drive), 3D graphics with 128MB RAM, an 18- to 21" LCD screen, Bluetooth wireless mouse and keyboard, and 802.11b (not 802.11a) wireless networking: $1,500 to $2,000. Windows, of course. Your Internet connection? "Cable or DSL broadband if you're lucky; 56-kbps modem if not."

What's really amusing is one of the quotations that appear in large type above this feast of technological wonders, but doesn't seem to dim the bright lights of Tynan and the editors. Quoting Jeffrey Torter of Softletter:

> For the past ten years, companies have talked about speech recognition, social interfaces, and software that understands more about what you want. And with incredible consistency, customers have rejected these things. They just want computers to behave themselves.

Thank heavens for Stephen Manes and his end-of-issue "Full Disclosure" column, "2002: what will not be." His "seven astounding predictions that won't come true anytime soon": new computers will usher in an era of incredible productivity, downloading movies at home will become a national craze, spam will disappear, cell phones will sound better than wired phones, customer service will reach new heights, privacy will matter more than mundane business matters, and Microsoft will stop overhyping products and misrepresenting its behavior. Read the whole column: it's only a page.

Technology and Law Libraries

LLRX.com operates at an odd intersection of librarianship and the legal profession. Although its name spells out as "Law Library Resource Xchange, LLC," the January 1, 2002 article by Dennis Kennedy discussed here never mentions libraries in the lead paragraphs. It consists of a dozen key issues for 2002, supplemented by predictions from "legal technology experts."

The dozen issues or trends include security, videoconferencing, problems with Microsoft, managing e-mail, personal knowledge management, improving your own Web sites, office PC upgrades driven by home PC use, the importance of intelligent technology decisions, outsourcing, technology that follows your work patterns, artificial intelligence in law, and growing use of Weblogs.

Some of the more interesting individual projections include increased convergence and use of portals, a "chip on a keychain" to replace your notebook computer, more widespread interest in copyright issues, an Internet renaissance focused on multimedia, more use of instant messaging, increased ease of use, cheaper cell phones and service (and law firms using cell phones as their only phones!) and "the year of the wireless LAN." Noting that many of these (and other) projections have little to do with libraries and much to do with the legal profession, it's an interesting set of notes.

Copyright Currents

Maybe "copyright" isn't the right term. It's too narrow in some ways, too fundamental in others. The set of issues surrounding copy protection, intellectual property, intermediaries in the chain from creator to consumer, "rights" management, fair use, balance, piracy…and on and on…get more complex all the time—and most of those issues have remarkably little to do with the

idea that the creator of new expressions should have some right to control the copying and distribution of those expressions, as a way of encouraging *new* expressions.

A sentence that long and ungrammatical signals that the whole discussion is about to go off-course. That's another symptom of the confusion caused by thinking too much about today's intellectual property issues. I could conceivably group close to a third of the topics discussed in *Cites & Insights* under the "Copyright Current" banner—after all, even most aspects of commercial ebook development and the STM journal crisis are directly affected by copyright issues. And that way lies trouble of another sort.

Which is an odd way to introduce a hodgepodge of events and articles that seem centered more on copyright issues than other issues. Don't expect consistency in future treatment. Do expect to see copyright issues pop up in "The Crawford Files" (*American Libraries*) and "DisContent" (*EContent*) with some frequency—that's a safe prediction.

Do I have a fully formed philosophy of how copyright should operate? Not likely. I'm no Lawrence Lessig (and I don't fully agree with the stance he's taken); I'm no Richard Stallman (see previous parenthetical comment); and I'm neither a lawyer nor a scholar. As this month's "Crawford Files" shows, I'm willing to suggest some radical possibilities, if only to keep librarians thinking about these issues in creative ways. Meanwhile, a lot's going on.

- Laura N. Gasaway discusses the TEACH Act of 2001 in the November/December 2001 *EDUCAUSE Review*. This act would expand the educational exemptions granted in the 1976 Copyright Act in ways that make distance education more practical. It's a good discussion of an important step toward balancing rights—but one that's only available to educators.
- A November 30, 2001 piece in the *Chronicle of Higher Education* discusses NetPD and its peculiar activities. NetPD has been sending letters of complaint to university officials any time it "sniffs out people who share copyrighted files" using "sophisticated technology." Think Napster and its successors, but also think nuisance letters and legal harassment—the University of Maryland at College Park received more than 100 such letters during the first quarter of this academic year. Do the letters have legal force? Well, the complaints don't follow rules set down by DMCA and most universities aren't actually storing the files (they're just providing networks)—but some campus officials can't be bothered with subtleties. They get The Letter, they hassle the students. I have no love whatsoever for Napster and its ilk—but I have even less love for using quasi-legal methods like The Letter to gain advantages.
- It's been an odd period for the Electronic Frontier Foundation and DMCA. Federal courts turned down a First Amendment case regarding the DeCSS DVD utility and bought RIAA's argument that the professor harassed by The Letter (a different letter) couldn't sue them because they didn't actually take him to court. (That's the charm of The Letter and why it's used to often in various law-related areas: If the recipient rolls over, you've won a cheap victory. If the recipient fights back, you point out that you didn't actually sue, you just threatened. It's nearly impossible to countersue against the *threat* of legal action. Note that I'm no lawyer, so what I just said may be total nonsense. I have had dealings with The Letter, however—and, in this case, no rollover occurred.) Meanwhile, Dmitri Sklyarov got out of jail as the DMCA-related charges regarding Adobe's eBook software were narrowed to his employer alone. The Russian company notes that their eBook-unlocking software is explicitly legal in Russia—and that it only works with legally-purchased ebooks—so they believe the case is fundamentally flawed. We shall see, if the case doesn't just go away. (*LLRX.com* has a good piece on these cases and related issues by K. Matthew Dames, posted December 17, 2001.)
- Comments related to the DMCA cases help show who's where in this area. Morrison & Foerster, better known as "mofo" for their Web address and perhaps their attitude, showed their hand with this statement from Jonathan Band: "We're dealing with a digital age and it's a dark and dangerous world out there on the Internet so we really have to be very protective of copyrights, and *if that means you lose user privileges, then so be it."* [Emphasis added.} In other words, "Screw fair use and first-sale rights: this is the Digital Age!" Charles Sims, who represented movie studios in the DeCSS case, made this interesting comment: "The DMCA simply prohibits the distribution to the public of decryption utilities. It's the difference between writing about gun control and handing someone a gun." Here's an alternative analogy: It's the difference between selling a felon a book on how to build a gun—or writing and publishing such a book--and selling a felon a gun. In the print world, the former activity is protected in cases where the latter is not. Remember that the person who wrote deCSS did

so because it was impossible to play his *legally purchased* DVD on his Unix computer—nobody's released licensed DVD software (with CSS decoding) for the Unix OS, or at least they hadn't at the time.

- Good old Jack Valenti of the MPAA wants to see "an end to copyright confusion." How? By passing SSSCA—and he predicts that Congress will do so. SSSCA will force the addition of digital rights management to every "interactive digital device" 'from personal computers to wristwatches,' as a December 18, 2001 *Wired News* piece puts it. That article includes a wonderful quote from Preston Padden of the Walt Disney Company, one that should be included with every Disney DVD: "*There is no right to fair use*. Fair use is a defense against infringement." [Emphasis added.] Savor those sentences; they certainly clarify Disney's attitudes toward its customers (or is that licensees?).
- Then there's the online music and copy-protected CD complex. RIAA is now claiming that Napster and its clones are "the primary reason for declining album sales"—certainly the Bush recession and the fact that already-outrageous CD prices seem to be rising couldn't have anything to do with it! Hilary Rosen says, "Many in the music community are concerned about the continued use of CD-Rs, and we believe this issue deserves further analysis." If you don't believe that translates to "and we're trying to prevent them from using CD-Rs," you're more trusting than I am. Various articles note that online music subscription services are starting out badly, partly because copy-protected CDs have given music-lovers a very bad feeling, partly because the services are absurdly restrictive and overpriced. Then there's the kicker, perhaps the most interesting new development in this whole nasty story, and worth its own bullet:
- As reported in a January 7, 2002 *Newsbytes* article, Rep. Rick Boucher (D-Va.) remembers recent legal history that the RIAA and others would like to forget. The Audio Home Recording Act of 1992 established a compromise, the reason that blank audio CD-Rs are more expensive than blank computer CD-Rs. It added royalties to the sale of digital recorders and digital medias. "In return…copyright owners may not preclude consumers from making a first-generation, digital-to-digital copy of an album on a compliant device using royalty-paid media." Whoops! In other words, copy-protected CDs may violate existing federal law. Boucher also wants to find out whether copy-protection technology compromises sound quality (almost certainly under some conditions) and "whether RIAA and IFPI member companies would support an independent test of the technologies." Boucher also introduced the Music Online Competition Act to assure that new online music distributors play under the same terms as the industry-owned MusicNet and Pressplay. Naturally, the recording industry wants "the market to decide" whether they can maintain oligopoly control—isn't that the new American way? (Oddly, they don't want "the market to decide" whether devices should have DRM chips.) Watch the Boucher and Audio Home Recording Act story: it's one of few rays of light in this miasma.
- Philips chimes in by suggesting that copy-protected CDs won't survive in the marketplace. Philips co-invented the CD, acts as lead agent for licensing, and opposes copy protection (which almost certainly violates CD standards). But the company's copyright office manager believes the discs will fail anyway. Says Gary Wirtz: "It's not going to work, because any hacker can still make copies. It's only going to affect legitimate consumers and we know there have already been considerable complaints." (From a January 11, 2002 *NewScientist.com* article.)
- Mike Godwin offers a tidy summary of "A year of learning limits" in a December 28, 2001 article at law.com (www.law.com). His summary covers some of the territory covered here and in previous discussions, but more coherently and from an expert perspective; at five pages, it's worth reading.
- Another fine article from Mike Godwin at law.com, dated January 16, 2002: "A cop in every computer." He discusses the SSSCA and related international efforts, including a modest claim from Michael Eisner as to the importance of SSSCA and related laws: "The future of the American entertainment industry and the future of American consumers" is at stake. That's true—with SSSCA, we as consumers will be entirely beholden to Disney and its compatriots. The article makes an interesting verbal distinction between the "content industry" and the software and computer industries—the former think of us as "consumers" while the latter think of us as "users." You work with your users toward mutual gain; you milk your consumers for every penny they're worth.

- Scott Carlson has a Tasini-related article in the January 25, 2002 *Chronicle of Higher Education*, which I was able to download earlier in January from http://chronicle.com/free/v48/i20/20a2901.htm. Some professors are finding holes in the online record because publishers have been so quick to remove freelance articles. Unfortunately (in my opinion) Stanford's David M. Kennedy and other historians such as Ken Burns signed briefs favoring the publishers—a particularly odd position for Burns, who must gain significant income from his pop-history efforts. Other historians recognize that creators should have rights too, and also that there are other ways to do research besides LexisNexis. Stanley Katz from Princeton supported the writers and says "We did the right thing…I think that had *The New York Times* taken a more responsible position and come to a settlement that was offered by Tasini and his group, it could have been solved at reasonable cost." Carlson quotes ALA's legislative counsel and two ARL directors regarding the ALA and ARL support of Tasini. And there's Dick Cooper from Knight-Ridder's Philadelphia Newspapers with an absolutist, public-be-damned statement. The company has permanently purged one-third of its 2.5 million articles. "Unless there is a change in the law, that is going to be lost from our public file. We're not going to be renegotiating any past work." If some newspapers are in trouble, attitudes like that may be one reason why.

Following Up

Corrections, amplifications, apologies, sequels and other *small* direct additions to essays and other topics from previous issues.

Vinge, Not Vigne

PC Magazine runs corrections in tiny type, but they do run them. The October 30, 2001 issue notes, "we misspelled the name of an important computer scientist at San Diego State University. The correct spelling is Vernon Vinge." Well, not exactly; it's *Vernor* Vinge, two Rs, one N.

Broadband Nonsense

I'm confused. A December 17, 2001 item by Marty Beard at *Media Life* says that "the number of people opting for high-speed internet connections is growing at a healthy clip, outpacing the growth of internet use in general." This report, based on Nielsen/NetRatings "data," says that there were 21.3 million residential broadband users in November 2001, up 90% from November 2000.

You could call this a "correction" to the "Gizmo Fatigue?" item in "Trends and Quick Takes" (*Cites & Insights* 1:13), where I assert that nine percent of households have broadband access this fall—the same percentage as in the spring (but up from five percent the previous fall). That report was from Knowledge Networks/Statistical Research. But, looking back, I see that the earlier report came from…*Media Life*, more particularly Marty Beard, as of November 1. It was part of a generally dour article on "America losing its lust for media gizmos."

Maybe both of them are right. Maybe they're both wrong. The "hot adoption rate" report does seem puzzling given the rate at which broadband suppliers are going under. Maybe people adopted broadband like crazy between last fall and this spring and then stopped (but didn't disconnect), and it's possible that 21.3 million and nine percent of households can mean the same thing (one is "users" and the other is "households").

Dirt-Cheap Name Brand PCs

Last issue I noted Dell's $599 SmartStep 1000, which isn't made by Dell and can't be configured but has that sensational price tag. A review appears in the January 2002 *PC World*; at three stars, it's mixed. It's the slowest Windows XP system *PC World* has reviewed, the monitor isn't anything to write home about, and that price includes a mere 90 days warranty and tech support: upgrading to a year costs $50 extra. The review suggests that Dell's $799 Dimension 2100 might be a better value.

Text-e: Monophone Comments on a Trilingual Econference

Rather than describe Text-e to you, I'll point you to the Web site: www.text-e.org. That site includes explanations of the whole idea, the agencies involved, and how this series of virtual discussions was scheduled and is proceeding. Briefly, each two-week segment begins with an article (or, as they grandly call it, an "ebook") from a Notable Person on some aspect of reading, publishing, or dissemination in a "digital age." That article (or, in one case, a transcribed conversation) is posted in Eng-

lish, French, and Italian, available in Acrobat ebook reader, Microsoft reader, or HTML form.

Then, people who have signed up for the conference comment and expand on the paper—posting in any of the three languages. Some people respond to comments forming organized threads; each thread appears as a separate document. At the end of two weeks, the original author typically offers summary comments and a moderator offers conclusions.

I'm not in the august community of international text scholars and wannabe experts represented here and haven't signed up for the conference. I have been printing the articles and most commentary threads (those predominantly in English), considering them as a package after the two-week segment.

While I've programmed in several computer languages, I (sadly) find myself resolutely monophone when it comes to human language. (Not something I'm proud of. My brain seems to resist any attempt to acquire additional languages. It certainly didn't help my GPA in high school and college!) So I haven't read *all* the commentaries—and, in some cases, I'm not sure I got the most out of articles written in French or Italian.

These comments aren't definitive and don't lead to an overall judgment of the worth of the exercise or its meaning for future developments. Text-e is an interesting process. I found some articles and commentaries interesting—and, as you'll find below, find one author more impressive than I've ever found him in the past. I found other articles and commentaries confusing or nonsensical by my standards; I scrawled "garbage" across the top of one article, which is probably an overreaction.

The conference is not complete as I write this. I'm publishing a partial set of notes so that you can decide whether to visit text-e on your own—as one never knows just how long something like this will stay available once it's completed. I'll add notes on the later sessions in a later issue.

As always, I encourage interested readers to go to the original documents and make up your own minds. I've been thinking about these issues for so long that I bring a complex set of biases to my reading. Each of you brings a different set, which may allow you to find worth that I'm blocking.

Roger Chartier:
Readers and Readings in the Electronic Age

Chartier discusses reading modalities and the "death of the reader and disappearance of reading," a prediction he notes *others* have thought of as "the inevitable consequence of the civilization of screens, of the triumph of images and electronic communication." He notes the "disappearance of the book" as an "obsessive theme"—one he doesn't subscribe to. He looks at history, the emergence of the codex, the likelihood that print-published and electronically distributed text will coexist for (at least) decades, and "new ways in which fields of knowledge will be constructed" using "electronic books."

Chartier suggests that electronic texts question the very notion of "book" as they eliminate linear narration and make possible a "virtually unlimited number of connections between texts." Links become the key, with fragmented textual units joined together at will. So far, this is the stock "wondrous future of post-linear text" sermon, although you'd have to read it quickly to miss the doubts inserted along the way. Then, four pages into a 10-page article, I hit this wonderful paragraph:

> Even without imagining this still hypothetical future, one may wonder whether the electronic book in its current form will be able to attract or produce readers. The long history of reading clearly shows that revolutions in the order of practice always lag behind, and are often slower than, revolutions in technology. New ways of reading did not follow immediately from the invention of printing. Similarly, the intellectual categories which we associate with the world of texts will endure with the new forms of book. It might be useful to remember that, after the invention of the codes and the disappearance of the scroll, the 'book'—here meant as ordered discourse—often corresponded to the textual matter previously contained in a scroll.

Chartier goes on to suggest that the "electronic revolution" can *deepen* inequalities (paperbacks are available incredibly cheaply in third-world nations—but not ebook appliances or computers). He notes that most of us still read in a linear fashion (and may prefer that), just as I've always wondered where all those wondrous hypertext manuscripts were. (The one I've looked at was unreadable and impossible to "follow," but maybe that's me.) He notes that electronic representation "radically modifies the notion of context…and the very process of the construction of meaning"—you can't just move a book to an appliance without consequences.

There's a lot more. He discusses libraries in the digital age, noting their many essential tasks even in the (improbable) future of universal electronic access to every text ever written. He notes the problem of authority and librarians' role as guides. And so on…

An impressive amount of revealed thought (with more questions than answers, which is as it should

be) in a relatively brief space. **Highly recommended**.

Commentaries on Chartier

Fred Wilf believes in the Internet as Universal Medium "with relatively little loss of the information conveyed" and drops in a form of the Kids These Days argument. In his world, Internet access costs $10 to $15 per month—I guess I need to find Wilf's ISP! Al Magary seems to dismiss doubts, argue that "right now!" is all that matters, and insist that we "Just do it"—although I can't see what "it" is. José Luis Guijarro says that "we" have all become multitaskers, carrying on twenty conversations at once but with attention spans so short that we "have difficulty at having a complete chat" while we visit "almost every bar in town to have a drink in each." (That latter in Spain, apparently, which either has very few bars or one horrendous drinking problem!) It's not clear whether he mourns a "loss of depth" in humanity, but seems to think it all leads up to "human individuals with no mental depth at all, so that real thinking might be abolished and a new era will finally begin." Hokay.

In another thread, Michael John Gorman (note the middle name) offers a pointed note: "In this carefully crafted electronic forum, how many of us actually read Chartier's text on the screen?" He didn't and suspects others didn't either. Cory McCloud posts a seemingly endless single paragraph that seems to argue the importance of publishers, but the more I read it, the less I could glean from it. (There's something about endless streams of unbroken text…)

Stevan Harnad begins a thread with a posting almost as long as the original article—because he managed to double the text in the process of sending it. He argues that the online age restores the interaction of human mind to those of the oral tradition, where interactions occur "at around the speed of thought." This is part of Harnad's long-running "skywriting/skyreading" fixation. His posting is richly footnoted—with *every footnote* leading to another Harnad document. He finds himself unable to follow (or, I guess, accept) much of Chartier's argument—and I find his posting much less understandable and coherent than Chartier's paper. My guess is that, because Harnad regards some issues as irrelevant (e.g., the destruction of context), he fails to understand them (or admit to understanding them). Harnad trivializes the role of libraries and librarians in assuring quality: "quality-tagging" is the only way. (This gets tricky: as you'll find later on, I was—to my surprise—*favorably* impressed by Harnad's own article, which engendered the richest discussion to date.)

Chartier offers a cogent set of responses in closing comments. The moderators note that eight thousand people visited text-e in the first two weeks—but "more than a thousand" downloaded Chartier's text, resulting in some sixty comments.

Roberto Casati:

What the Internet tells us about the Real Nature of the Book

Perhaps there were problems translating Casati's paper—or perhaps I'm incapable of appreciating the subtlety of his perspectives. "The subject of this piece is the metaphysics of the book. I shall look at the way in which the Web frees it from our inadequate conception of it." As I look at the article and my scribbled notes, I once again get a headache.

To my simple mind, this is mostly nonsense. Casati delights in two-column tables demonstrating the differences between object and concept—but many of his distinctions don't play out. He makes much of the difference between the "mental-book" (the text of a book) and the book as object. But he goes on to say, "When I say that I have read a book or remember it by heart, I am talking about the immaterial content." False and true: when you read a book, you are reading an *instantiation*, most commonly a physical object, and for many of us it's nontrivial to separate the text from that object. Some people may remember the object by heart, but he's generally right on the second count.

"If I sing a song to you, neither text nor music leave me when they reach your ears. For this reason it is difficult to understand how one can sell a song." But of course one can and does sell a *performance*, the singing of a song. What's difficult to understand about that?

Casati's simply wrong on one distinction—where he claims that your rights in buying my book are more limited than your rights in buying a chair I have made. "When you buy my chair, you can do whatever you want with it. In particular, you can resell it." You can also resell a book you buy from me. His distinction? "You cannot make copies of it and sell it in your turn." That's not a distinction. Making precise copies of a designer chair you've purchased (label and all) or, say, a Vuitton handbag and selling them will likely land you in jail. He claims that "the invention of the copyright has turned the sale of an abstract product into that of a concrete product," but that's nonsense. The *publication* of the "abstract product" turns it into a concrete

product. The transfer of rights in the sale of a printed book is *precisely* the same as the transfer of rights in the sale of a designer chair or a PopTart.

He discards the notion that books have an intrinsic value because, if we were all illiterate, they would no longer have much worth. If you change that to say, "If a product of any sort is entirely useless and uninteresting within a culture, it's not worth much," it becomes clear that the lack of worth has *nothing* to do with cultural content vs. manufacture. Try selling light bulbs in a nation without electricity or CD players in a culture without music.

Casati claims that cultural content prices have no connection to the free market, and says "think of your bookseller's reaction if you were one day to return a book to him, demanding reimbursement because its contents had disappointed you." But Barnes & Noble has promotions for new authors and genres that do precisely that—your money back if you don't like it. Similarly, record stores and new recording artists: this is not at all unheard of.

Casati compares apples and anteaters; he confuses book-related issues with the problems of scientific articles; he seems to say that popularity is a sound basis for judging scholarly papers; and he seems to think that *arriving* at a Web page constitutes endorsement of content *one has not yet read.* He says *explicitly*, "Journal reading committees are obsolete as soon as the texts published on the Web are judged by the readers, who create links to the papers they like." *Likability* as the basis for scholarly merit: what a concept! Psychics and fortune-tellers must be eagerly awaiting the honorary PhDs and other honors incumbent on having the most likable spiels around. (Hmm. *Cites & Insights* is read many times as often as the average dissertation or scientific article. Where's my tenure?)

It should be no surprise that Casati ignores the real objections to discarding print books and trivializes his own set of "boring objections." He conflates ebooks in general with ebook appliances. He tells us the ebook field "has been electrified by the sale of a few bestsellers," which almost absurdly overstates the case. Later, he seems to say that people will choose free ebooks by unknowns over modestly-priced ebooks by Stephen King and the like, concluding that "contents must be free if they are not to disappear." Doom for all authors; that's just the way it is. I can't summarize his library-related discussion with a straight face, so I'll just note that he proposes annual reader's fees to help out those poor publishers and authors.

That's not a coherent summary or commentary. Words fail me. And, of course, if Casati is right, my words will all be worthless in the near future. **No recommendation offered**: I hated it, but what do I know?

Commentaries on Casati

Again I am hampered by my English-only brain. Sometimes I wonder about English. Jack Kessler just *loves* ebooks, as he tells us in one of several comments I found as bemusing as Casati's article. (My scribbles on Kessler's comments are denser and much more abusive than those on Casati. I am astonished by the sloppiness of his factual statements and assertions. He claims that PC hardware has migrated away from the U.S.—a claim that Dell and Gateway might dispute—and that "Even 'software' is moving out," which Microsoft may find remarkable. He claims that semiconductors abandoned the U.S. but that Andy Grove "succeeded in tempting these back." I forgot those years in which Intel wasn't producing semiconductors at ever-increasing rates; maybe I was asleep at the time.)

Ulysses Alvarez had the same problem I did in determining the "inadequacy of our conception of the book" and pointed out that many self-help and instructional books also come with money-back guarantees if you're not satisfied. Alvarez believes "the book will become a multimedia interactive and immersive 'text,'" to which I would respond *some* texts have already been turned into multimedia extravaganzas, but many texts work just fine as text. Chris Armstrong, in one of several long one-paragraph postings, redefines books themselves so as to exclude physical relationships—demonstrating that, once you control definitions, you're always right. Dario Taraborelli finds it revolutionary that you can index an e-text; if only we could have indexes in print books!

Then there's Harnad. An *eleven-page* posting, 20% briefer than the original article, complete with 11 references. Guess who appears as an author or coauthor in 100% of the references? And yet, and yet—I found Harnad's commentary ("The metaphysics of thought (written, oral, or mental)") *by far* the most sensible commentary on Casati's article. Not that I agree with all of it, but at least Harnad makes critical distinctions between scholarly articles and literature in general, between writing for money and writing for scientific reward, and between popularity and scientific merit. He understands that there is much worthwhile writing that simply won't happen if content is free. He appreciates the usefulness of being able to make a living (and does not rule out creative work as being worth a living return). Finally, undermining my key criticism here, Harnad admits to being guilty of solipsism in his commentary.

Harnad's post receives many responses, and an odd lot they are. Chris Armstrong suggests (wrongly) that there hasn't been any research on the use of ebooks. Jack Kessler suggests (even more wrongly) that research would be pointless until there's a single standard and until ebook use is much more widespread; he also asserts that the "general market debut" for ebooks came in 2001, a remarkable assertion. I would have to say that the most reasonable follow-on postings in this lengthy stream are, in fact, Harnad's additional commentaries.

Which brings us to the next fortnight:

Stevan Harnad:
Skyreading and Skywriting for Researchers: A Post-Gutenberg Anomaly and How to Resolve it

Bias is a terrible thing. I use *ad hominem* as a filtering device, knowing full well that it's a logical fallacy. Harnad's beloved "skywriting" sets me off immediately as an annoying turn of phrase and I find him far too ready to abandon traditional publishing in too many areas. Harnad favors "inevitable" as a description of his favored outcomes, a term that always kicks my skeptical instincts into high gear. I was ready to trash this article before I started reading it.

How, then, to account for my reaction to this article—a scribbled "<good!>" at the top of the front page? Because I agree with everything Harnad says? Not for a minute. Because he's such a refreshing change from Casati? Perhaps. Because his radical solutions for the crisis in access to scientific articles make a lot of sense to me, even as they ignore some nasty realities? Ah, there it is.

Harnad focuses on refereed scientific and scholarly research papers—the stuff of STM journals, if you will. Setting aside the cuteness of the "Post-Gutenberg Galaxy" and "skyreading," Harnad's key dividing line is "give-away work" vs. "non-give-away-work." Which is to say: Refereed scholarly articles are economically anomalous in that the authors gain from the widest possible readership rather than from actual sales of the article. The gain is indirect: the authors seek impact on the field, not direct monetary compensation.

In my faulty memory, Harnad did not previously make the distinction this clearly—and that distinction makes an enormous difference in how his approaches play out. He considers "give-away work"—which he estimates at two million papers per year in more than 20,000 refereed journals—a small piece of the media landscape; "non-give-away" work—where the author or performer hopes to reap direct financial gain through publication—is a much larger sector. Almost all books, newspaper articles, and *magazine* articles are "non-give-away"—and the model of such publishing doesn't work very well for scholarly articles.

He distinguishes between the two types of literature, between income from sales and impact from use, between copyright protection from plagiarism and from piracy, between self-publishing and self-archiving of refereed work, and between preprints (inherently not refereed) vs. postprints (refereed). It's a good set of distinctions, even if I take issue with his equation of self-publishing with vanity press. (They're not the same thing, although on the Web the lines can be blurry.) The "plagiarism vs. piracy" distinction is key: Scholars shouldn't care about piracy of texts they're not being paid for anyway, but certainly want to be protected from plagiarism (which he calls "theft of authorship").

Given those distinctions, he proposes the "optimal and inevitable" future—which, like most other "inevitabilities," may be desirable but is by no means assured. Harnad is a little fuzzy on financial issues and the costs of maintaining and globally indexing these self-archives, and *more* than a little fuzzy on the issue of reducing the mammoth international publishers to certification agencies. He does suggest a way to deal with journal publishers that won't allow self-archived distribution of published papers; I'm not sure the method is entirely workable, but it's an idea. (Basically he proposes archiving the preprint version with a set of corrections required to prepare the final version.) I get the sense that he shares Odlyszko's view that libraries serve no other purpose than providing scholarly articles to researchers—e.g., "librarians are also eager to establish a new digital niche for themselves, once the journal corpus is on line." Perhaps I'm overinterpreting. He also calls for governmental mandates that make me seriously uncomfortable.

It's a good, thought-provoking piece that focuses squarely on the most troubled aspect of print publishing and, if nothing else, offers one model of the way things could go. **Highly recommended**, but read it with several grains of salt.

Commentaries on Harnad

The e-skies opened and the comments rained down, with considerable thunder and lightning. I have 76 dense pages of printed comments, far more than for earlier papers. For one thing, Harnad engages the discussions much more frequently (and at *considerably* greater length) than earlier authors. For another, Albert Henderson (formerly of *Publishing Research*

Quarterly) jumps into the fray, predictably attacking any scheme that would threaten the current journal publishing empires. Peter Suber of the *Free Online Scholarship Newsletter* gets involved; earlier authors enter the fray; at least one poster convinces me that, on the Internet maybe we *do* know when you're a dog (or at least a fool).

How to begin? One writer raises the question of proper citation of a quotation from within a self-archived e-paper and other issues related to proper credit. Another nudges at payment for peer review and the autonomy of journals; part of Harnad's response is that most referees are unpaid anyway.

In one exchange, Harnad admits the nasty reality of refereeing: *Everything eventually gets published somewhere* unless the author's pride causes abandonment along the way. I've rarely seen this stated so baldly, but I've never doubted the statement. One participant urges the joys of solipsism, the "just-for-you journal" that has "only and all the day's articles that will interest me."

Albert Henderson informs us that "library spending is targeted for elimination" and says that "Stevan inundates us with rhetoric, myth, and innuendo" while Henderson consistently, maddeningly, conflates self-archiving of refereed papers and self-publishing. In a long and remarkably shrill message entitled "Dreaming impossible dreams," Henderson includes these two uplifting sentences regarding the possible mixture of *labeled* refereed papers with *labeled* unrefereed preprints: "Like dumping swamp water into the punch, the mixture of unrefereed drafts with journal articles sullies the entirety" and, later, "Mixing swill with the refined ingredient does more harm than help." Henderson has the same "understanding" of libraries as Odlyszko: "Freeing libraries from the 'tolls, etc.' leaves journals with no income and libraries with no need to exist." Remember that as you think about your library's services: your *only reason for being* is to purchase, shelve, and distribute scholarly journals. Isn't that sad?

Harnad does indulge in some maddeningly bad numbers as to the costs of running a workable Eprints archive: Just buy a $1,000 Linux server and a little start-up time. After all, the Internet is free, power is free, pipelines are infinitely broad, indexing will take care of itself—and maintenance couldn't be an issue. Right?

I can't summarize all this. I've left out entire threads, some of them probably more important than the items noted here. If you read Harnad's paper you should also read at least some of the commentaries. I'd be surprised if you find yourself in total agreement with either Harnad or any of the combatants—oops, sorry, contributors. But it's a fascinating set of e-discussions!

Bruno Patino:

Transmitting, reacting, remembering: Journalism on the Internet

Did text-e participants run out of steam after the vigorous Harnad fray, or is Patino's topic too arcane for most of them? Whatever the cause, this brief article (eight pages plus notes) raised few responses.

I presume that I'm missing the elegance of Patino's original by reading a translated version. He objects to the tautological definition of a multimedia journalist as "a journalist who has mastered the technical tools of multimedia"—but how much farther can you go, unless you require that each posting *use* all those tools? (I think "multimedia journalist" is a silly term—as is "online journalist," for that matter. A journalist who practices his or her craft in digital media is a journalist.)

Patino wishes to deal with that "form of journalism which is specific to the Internet," but I'm not sure I understand the specificity. I *certainly* don't understand this sentence: "The Internet is probably unique in that, for the first time, a new medium was created without generating a new language." The special vocabulary of the Internet seems far more extensive than that of, for example, CDs as opposed to LPs, DVDs as opposed to videocassettes (as opposed to movies or TV). Is it a necessary language for users? No. But then, neither is any other medium-specific language of journalism. There are few linguistic differences between newspapers, magazines, journals, and television news that concern the reader or viewer. He confuses me by claiming, "the type of file, which was initially used on the Web, was PDF." Really?

There are problems with the paper that *must* be linguistic: The consumption of information on a website is "sedentary" as compared to the "nomadic" reading of a newspaper. Digital technology has the effect of "dividing the cost of television broadcasting by six, through satellites." "Little by little, surfers [Patino's universal name for all Web users] 'manufacture' their own media content, focusing either on single themes ('I only want sports articles') or on a selection from several sites ('give me all the front page titles of the following media')." We're all solipsists? I don't believe that.

"The Web has shattered the inviolability of the written text which from now on can, and perhaps must constantly evolve. This might transform our civilization." If the Web somehow wiped out all pub-

lished media instantly, and could not be archived under any circumstances, this might *still* be an extreme claim. Are you surprised that, two paragraphs later, Patino says (after noting that "the notion of the single author fades away"), "this trend is no doubt inevitable." [Here's my new motto: "Inevitability is the last refuge of a weak argument."] I think there may be interesting arguments within the paper, but I found them difficult to discern from statements that struck me as improbable but not challenging. **Recommended with caveats.** I'm not quite sure what to make of the paper.

Commentaries on Patino

I find little to note in a very small set of comments. One participant, naturally enough, raises the KTD (Kids These Days) argument: "Readers' habits are also changing, faster in the younger generations, but also quite surely in the overall population." (This as part of the—well—inevitable movement from newspapers to Internet journalism.)

Another participant sensibly says that it's not either-or: "For the time being, one may say that it is good that newspapers are here, so also that the internet is here. Both need to be written for and both need to be read." But then, where's the fun in that simple truth?

The royal Robert Casati observes, "We always felt that the newspapers may be a bit too quick, and magazines a bit too slow" in arguing for a "day-after-the-day-after online journal." (Sorry, cheap shot, but "We" as part of an online direct comment seems grandiose.) Nogo Arikha suggests that such magazines already exist and points to a fine example: *Slate*. Arikha also, sensibly, argues the coexistence of online and print magazines.

In wrapping up the discussion, however, Arikha (one of the moderators) offers the possibility that the lack of debate might suggest a "consensus on the matter of Internet journalism." I'm not sure that follows; maybe the text-e community just doesn't care as much about journalism.

But Wait! There's More!

These notes cover less than half of the text-e symposium. The process is not yet complete, and this installment is already far too long.

Gary Frost offers comments on some of the text-e "position papers" at FotB (www.futureofthebook.com), although he seems to have skipped over the Harnad and Patino papers. Given Frost's concentration on reading modes and books themselves, that's sensible. It's another perspective worth reading.

Trends and Quick Takes

Video on Demand—or Not

What a difference two days make—or maybe it's the difference between an industry-oriented outlet and the Associated Press. On December 18, David Everitt tells us that video on demand is reaching critical mass (in a *Media Life* story). "In all, six million basic-cable subscribers should have access to the service by the end of the year"—and, of course, business analysts say this will lead to all of us *insisting* that we get VOD or we'll go somewhere else. Part of this new "success" is "subscription video on demand," where you can, for example, bring up a particular HBO series any time you want it if you pay an extra $4 a month.

Two days later, Gary Gentile reports a Jupiter Media Metrix estimate that the VOD market will grow to $642 million *by 2006*—a puny market compared to prior projections, and most of that will be a shift from current pay-per-view, so it's not even new money. Jupiter doesn't see hot growth partly because digital cable tends to be expensive and already offers too many content choices, without paying more for particular choices (the heart of VOD).

In this case, there's really no inherent contradiction except for the rosiness of one's glasses. The first story is projecting *availability*; the second, *demand*. Suppose you gave a VOD and nobody came?

DVD Keeps Gaining

That's a pointless headline, since at this stage DVD must either be gaining or starting to fail—but the news is stronger than I expected. Estimates are that 36% of U.S. households now have DVD players, with one guess that penetration might pass 50% by the end of this year. Blockbuster scrapped 25% of its VHS inventory to make more room for DVD rentals. DVD rentals are some 30 percent of all rentals.

Here's the astonishing item. Last year, DVD (disc) *sales* surpassed VHS sales! (Source for all of this: a January 3, 2002 Reuters story, but I've seen the same figures elsewhere.) Which makes more sense the more you think about it. DVDs are more compact; new movies now come out immediately at reasonable prices (instead of the old VHS $99-for-a-year, then maybe $20 scheme) and offer extras that you don't get on VHS, in the theater, or on broadcast movies; heavy discounting of older movies is well under way. Add one more factor: Reasonably-priced complete collections of TV series in compact packages, making them desirable for fans of the series. Loved *The Avengers*? There's a box with every "Emma Steed" episode. Another box of 10 DVDs for

$150 has every Monty Python episode. *Sex in the City* and *The Sopranos* are coming out in season-by-season boxes—and the great first season of *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, with all the episodes on a total of three discs, just came out for $30.

Very few people would tolerate 16-18 VHS boxes for a season's worth of episodes, particularly at $15-$20 per box: apart from the price, that's too much space to devote to a TV series. And if you put two or three episodes on one tape, it's a hassle to watch any episode except the first one. DVD solves those issues. TV shows use a lot less bandwidth than movies so more time can fit on a layer; a two-layer DVD (probably the most common version these days) should hold four to six hours of TV; and, of course, access to any segment is immediate.

Will the great PBS and BBC series that fill so many library video shelves be reissued on DVD? Time will tell—but mastering is getting cheaper and more pressing plants are coming on line, so capacity is there. DVDs don't cost much more to produce than CDs; why wouldn't PBS and BBC become as aggressive as A&E in mining their treasures?

Which Wireless?

Still haven't caught up with 802.11a, the higher-speed successor to the 802.11b wireless networking standard? Here comes 802.11g, according to the January 15, 2002 *PC Magazine*. It offers data rates as fast as 54Mbps and compatibility with both 802.11a and 802.11b (which aren't intercompatible).

Tablet PCs: On the Way?

Maybe. Microsoft has big plans for Windows XP Tablet PC Edition this summer (love those short names); meanwhile, ViewSonic is jumping the gun with the ViewPad 100 SuperPDA. It runs Windows CE 3.0, so it can't use most Windows applications. Otherwise—well, read the review in *PC Magazine* (January 15, 2002, p. 34). The pad weighs 2.5 pounds; it has a 10.4" color screen with 800x600 resolution, a 206MHz processor, 128MB RAM, and a bunch of software. You pay $1,240 for the privilege of being an early adopter.

The Google Effect?

Dan Gillmor offers an interesting perspective at *SiliconValley.com* (downloaded January 14, 2002). You don't need to register every possible variation of your personal or corporate name so that people can find your Web site. If it's a worthwhile site pointed to by a number of other sites, "let Google do it."

As I think about it, he's right. I almost never "try the name" in a URL any more—you know, typing "www.thiscompany.com" to reach a company's site. Instead, I open Google, key in the name I'm looking for, and see what happens. He uses the example of Via Technologies. "www.via.com" won't get you there—but Google shows the needed site (www.viatech.com).

Sure, there are still reasons to register domain names—but not as many, and the need isn't as clear. As Gillmor says, this is a Good Thing: it helps eliminate domain-name speculation and reduces the need to pay registration fees for temporary sites.

The Good Stuff

Machrone, Bill, "No danger to Spielberg," *PC Magazine* 21:1 (January 15, 2002), p. 57.

I couldn't resist this "Extreme Tech" column. Machrone discusses the trials and tribulations of helping his teenage son edit a video book report. (I don't think Machrone thinks much of "video book reports" either, but that's not the issue.) Machrone's a Windows PC user. Can you say "not smoothly"? It's a remarkable little tale of tribulation, although they finally managed to produce the report. And, for the 5%ers out there, I'll quote the final paragraph (with no trace of derision or disagreement on my part):

> I've come to the conclusion that last week's video software is about as useful as last week's newspaper. My wife, bless her heart, asked, "How do *normal* people do this?" Drew and I answered in unison, "They buy a Mac."

Wood, Christina, "Privacy and the wearable computer," *PC Magazine* 21:1 (January 15, 2002), p. 151.

Here's Steve Mann, self-proclaimed cyborg, author of *Cyborg: Digital destiny and human possibility in the age of the wearable computer*, and enthusiast for "reverse surveillance." We all wear our computers, including sunglass-like devices that mediate between our eyes and what's out there. "If a man walked up to you wearing a police officer's uniform, your glasses could scan for his face in [a potential database] to see whether he is really a policeman." You could record what you see and upload it to the Web.

Wood comments that Mann displays "the delightful naïveté of a scientist who has spent much of his life among university researchers." She's not thrilled with the idea, and offers a few reasons why. It's a good read—although I suspect that Mann is on such a fringe that mass personal surveillance is not a great danger.

Block, Marylaine, "My rules of information," *Searcher* 10:1 (January 2002), available at www.infotoday.com/searcher

Marylaine Block jotted down "four rules of information" some years ago and has since expanded that list to seven—and she states up front that she didn't invent the rules, she merely codified them. "Codification—another one of the things that information professionals routinely do when people ask them questions." It's the discussion that makes the rules worthwhile, and Block is a good writer; I could probably quote the seven rules themselves without stepping on the article too badly.

But I won't. She starts with "Go where it is" and ends with "Ask a librarian," but that's a bit like saying that *Shrek* begins with a studio identification and ends with credits. I particularly love the second rule: "The answer you get depends on the questions you ask"—and I would take issue with the wording of rule five, although not her discussion. She gives the rule as "Information is meaningless until queried by human intelligence." I'd restate that as, "Facts require human-supplied context to become information." (OK, my wording is incredibly clumsy, but you see the point.) Go read it: **Highly recommended**.

Davis, Chris, "The Red Menace in Memphis," *Memphis Flyer*, January 10, 2002. (Viewed at alternet.org)

Have you heard about that dangerous phrase "Workers of the world, unite" appearing as part of an artwork outside the new Memphis Public? As this hard-hitting piece of investigative journalism makes clear, that's just the beginning! Why, inside the new library there's an *entire book* by Adolf Hitler—not to mention works by Aleister Crowley and evil books that take the name of the Bible in vain—e.g., *The Roof Framer's Bible* and *The Investor's Bible*.

Chris Davis tells all in this lovely brief piece. **Highly recommended**.

Kutz, Myer, "The scholars rebellion against scholarly publishing practices: Varmus, Vitek, and venting," *Searcher* 10:1 (January 2002), available at www.infotoday.com/searcher

I have mixed feelings about this lengthy discussion of current trends in STM journal publishing. On one hand, it offers a good discussion of what's happening from an insider's perspective, with loads of quotes from various participants (all publishers, some society, some for-profit). On the other, Kutz has a consistent bias: every time he mentions wildly-inflating commercial STM journal prices, it's *presumed* to be based on increased page count due to the demand for more articles.

There are other peculiarities. Kutz suggests that librarians had not previously involved scholars in their coping strategies. He dismisses document delivery "with its uncounted expenses"—but libraries are *acutely* aware of the expense of document delivery. He says, "While publishers have been reluctant to criticize their customers, those same customers—librarians—have not been shy about criticizing publishers. Some critics have seemed so strident at times." Aww… Too bad publishers aren't in some mythical business where sellers feel perfectly free to criticize their customers as much as their customers criticize them!

Despite Kutz's publisher bias, he includes fascinating items. After quoting the executive editor of the *New England Journal of Medicine*, assailing the E-biomed initiative as likely to weaken journals and maybe destroy them, he notes: "A *New York Times* article on the controversy said that *NEJM*'s annual profit has been estimated at over $20 million.")

Here's a great quote from Susan Knapp of the American Psychological Association: "The idea that editorial boards and publishers will voluntarily—and for free—provide editing and peer review for articles submitted to E-biomed is not likely to be viable." How much do you think editorial boards get paid for peer review? To the best of my knowledge, *$0*: I've never heard of a scholar being paid for peer review. (Editing and *facilitating* peer review are different issues, and thought-out proposals for radical change include ways to support them.)

Speaking of great quotes, here's one from the then-president of Nature Publishing on why E-biomed is a bad idea: "Too much information is the bane of working scientists. They need well-selected materials and context from trusted sources." Of course, the constant refrain of the big international publishers is that there are *so many great articles* that they need to keep increasing prices and spinning off new journals. Which is it?

One big commercial publisher denounces page charges—"that's not the way we do it." But later Kutz notes "publishers I spoke with recently are divided on the subject of page charges." One publisher suggests that journals with page charges are vanity publishing (as, presumably, do all free online journals, no matter how tough the review process.)

Kutz realizes that the STM journal process is a peculiar economic model: Scholars drive it by their publishing choices, but libraries pay the bills—and many (I'd guess most) STM research grants don't include line items to support libraries. That's a broken system, but you won't read that here.

Apparently, some publishers think that every aspect of their operations is a direct benefit to schol-

ars. How about this quote: "When should stuff be made available to the world? That's still a role for publishers." Not *what* stuff should be available—that is, which papers pass critical review—but *how long the publishing lag should be*. Huh?

For a 2002 article, it's bizarre to read this sentence: "It is also time for the STM publishers…to recognize that libraries' financial position may now be getting tenuous…" *Now?* You mean because some academic libraries still buy a book or two and haven't had to fire all their staff? He goes so far as to say, "Even the moderating of price increases and a resulting moderating of profits might have to be considered…" Shocking!

I put this article in "The Good Stuff" rather than "Cheap Shots & Commentary" for a reason. Once you recognize Kutz' bias (and it's hard not to) and appreciate that he's *only* talking to publishers, this article provides a valuable perspective.

PC Group Reviews

Desktop Computers

Behr, Mary E., "Family values," *PC Magazine* 20:22 (December 26, 2001), pp. 108-21.

What can you get for a kilobuck? As this ten-machine roundup shows, a lot more than you might expect—even from big-name vendors (Dell, Gateway, HP, Compaq and Apple are all represented). Compaq's review systems surprise me, but if you can get the same Editors' Choice-winning Presario 5000 configuration in a store, it's an incredible value: $998, Athlon-1300, 512MB DDR SDRAM, 80GB 7200rpm hard disk, DVD-ROM *and* CD-RW drive, nVidia GeForce2 MX graphics with 64MB SDRAM, and a 14"-viewable CRT. Sound is on the motherboard and there are no speakers.

Three other machines also earn four-dot ratings: the low-end $999 Apple iMac, Dell's $999 Dimension 4300, and Micro Express' $999 MicroFlex 14A—which also includes both DVD-ROM and CD-RW drives as well as an 18"-viewable display.

Digital Music Devices and Software

Perenson, Melissa J., "Digital music: the player's the thing," *PC World* 19:12 (December 2001), p. 74.

The introduction notes, "portable MP3 players used to be pretty much alike" and offers these three units as examples of today's variety. Sonicblue's $180 RioVolt SP250 is a second-generation MP3 CD player; it includes an FM tuner and earns the highest rating here. But a full-size CD requires a fairly large player; CMC Magnetics' $130 ShellStar CM220 gets around that by using miniCDs, 8cm discs that hold 185MB (as compared to 700MB for 12cm discs). While almost any CD or DVD player can accommodate 8cm discs (that's why the tray has an indented portion), the small CD-Rs are uncommon and expensive.

If you *really* care about size, consider Intel's $150 Personal Audio Player 3000, the size of a small pager. It's tiny but has design flaws.

Displays and Projectors

Rupley, Sebastian, "Light show," *PC Magazine* 20:18 (October 30, 2001), pp. 130-42.

How portable does a digital projector need to be? This roundup groups projectors by weight, with seven coming in at 5.5 pounds or lighter while six others weighed 7.5 to 10 pounds. The two lightest weigh just over three pounds—lighter than most notebook computers. With one exception, all units run at 1024x768 native resolution. Three very lightweight units use DLP technology; the others, including both Editors' Choices, use LCD panels.

As the length of the article may suggest (there are three pages of interspersed ads), you get useful background and detailed descriptions of each projector. *PC* knows how to run objective tests and it shows—and, as you might expect, most companies offer optimistic numbers for brightness. Editors' Choice among the very lightweight units is NEC's $3,800 MultiSync LT156: brightest among the under-six-pound group, handles both digital and analog signals, and can show a PowerPoint slide show without a computer. If you can handle twice as much weight in return for a lot more brightness, consider Epson's $4,750 PowerLite 810p Multimedia Projector. It weighs 9.4 pounds but offers exceptional brightness and reasonably good noise levels.

Photo and Graphics Hardware and Software

Aquino, Grace, "Pop 4 megapixels into your pocket," *PC World* 20:1 (January 2002), pp. 50-1.

Here's an unusual mini-roundup: three cameras from three major names, all with exactly the same price and resolution: $799, four megapixels (two-thirds the resolution of 35mm film). Each comes with a 16MB memory card and editing software.

You can shoot short video clips, with sound, using Canon's PowerShot S40 and Olympus' Camedia D-40 Zoom (but you can also buy a cheap digital videocamera for that price). If you want rechargeable batteries for the Olympus, you're out an extra $50. There's no clear winner herel—the Canon offers the best image quality and most versatility, but the Olympus is smaller. Pentax' Optio 430 is the "best looking" but the image quality wasn't quite as good.

Dahl, Eric, "High-performance 3D-graphics brawl," *PC World* 20:1 (January 2002), p. 54.

What do you get when you pay $300 or more for a PC graphics card? In this case, a tied four-star rating for two very different boards. VisionTek's $350 Xtasy 6964 offers the fastest 3D graphics around because it's based on NVidia's newest, the GeForce3 Ti500; it comes with 128MB RAM. (That's just for your display!) ATI's Radeon 8500, also with 128MB RAM, is cheaper ($299), a little slower, but more versatile: it includes multimonitor support and generally has more features. Either one is incredible overkill for most library and business applications, of course.

"Photo software," *PC Magazine* 20:20 (November 27, 2001), pp. 121-4.

What's the best software to accompany your digital camera? That depends on the work you plan to do. This roundup awards an Editors' Choice to the $609 Adobe Photoshop 6.0 for professional work, but that's overkill for most users. Adobe's $99 Photoshop Elements gets the award for hobbyist use, while Microsoft PictureIt! Photo Premium ($54) and Ulead Photo Express 4.0 ($49) share novice honors. Finally, if you need to manage lots of images, your best choices appear to be ACD's $49 ACDSee 4.0 and the $50 iO Intermedia Organizer 2.0.

Notebook Computers

Howard, Bill, "Ultrauseful ultraportables," *PC Magazine* 20:20 (November 27, 2001), pp. 36-40.

Under four pounds, decent power—and a few compromises. That's the picture for this set of five lightweight notebooks. For touch typists, one compromise may make these machines nearly useless: the keyboards are all just enough smaller than standard to throw off your typing. (My wife and I have both used Sony VAIO subnotebooks at RLG and find them maddening for this reason.) Additionally, while you get high-resolution screens, they're small: typically 1024x768 on a 12.1" screen. Also, most of these use external optical drives—the weight has to come from somewhere!

Editors' Choices are the Dell Latitude C400, $2,835, and IBM ThinkPad X22, $3,100. Did I mention that you pay dearly for light weight? The Dell comes in just under four pounds and may be Dell's best portable to date; it's fast and well equipped. The ThinkPad weighs 3.5 pounds, comes closest to a full-size keyboard, and offers typical ThinkPad quality.

Operating Systems

Ulrich, Bill, "Choosing Linux," *PC Magazine* 20:19 (November 13, 2001), pp. 120-8.

Here's a forceful reminder that "PC" and "Windows" aren't synonymous. This article includes good background on Linux and whether it's a reasonable choice (yes for servers, maybe for the desktop), along with detailed reviews of six Linux distributions. A scorecard details the target audience for each distribution along with other comments, and the article notes that every one has strong points.

No real surprise as to the Editors' Choice: Red Hat Professional Server 7.1. But SuSE Linux 7.1 Professional (better known in Europe than in the U.S.) earns an identical four-dot rating—and you can get it on one DVD (rather than seven CDs for SuSE, eight for Red Hat) to make installation considerably simpler. For a home PC, Mandrake Linux ProSuite Edition 8.0 may be the best choice—and if you're a "kernel hacker and general Linux fanatic" or just plain cheap, Debian GNU/Linux 2.2 (Potato) may be your best bet. It's free (if you have fast downloading); others cost $70 (SuSE) to $200, except for the $599 Caldera OpenLinux Server 2.1, specifically targeted at enterprises and including e-commerce and secure-server software.

You're always paying for the extra software, the packaging and documentation, and support: Linux itself is by definition free.

Optical Drives

Poor, Alfred, "DVD+RW: he who ships last ships best," *PC Magazine* 20:22 (December 26, 2001), p. 44.

The race is not always to the swift. Of three different rewritable DVD formats, DVD+RW is by far the last to arrive; smart money may have already written it off as a contender. But DVD+RW discs will work in almost all DVD players and DVD-ROM drives, offering better back-compatibility than the competitors. Right off the bat, DVD+RW offers

4.7GB per side; because the drives were late, they didn't go through an awkward 2.6GB phase.

Who will win? Maybe nobody, maybe everybody. Meanwhile, the first two computer DVD+RW drives are here, both using Ricoh drives; each costs $600 and gets a positive review. Poor liked the software bundle with HP's dvd-writer dvd100i better, awarding that rare fifth dot; Sony's DRU110A/C1 gets a solid four dots.

Printers

Littman, Dan, "Why choose between great photos & crisp text?" *PC World* 20:1 (January 2002), pp. 80-8.

How I wish *PC World* would scrap its useless "top hundred" monthly roundup, use the space for *complete* roundups when they've already done the work, and reform their system so price isn't quite so dominant. (Oddly, it isn't always: some of their "top" charts have wide price ranges.) This roundup is an extreme case. The text makes it clear that HP's Cp1160 offers the best print quality—"its output for text, photos, and graphics was by far the best" of all printers tested. I suspect it's also the fastest printer and has "attractive features." But I can't tell you the actual speed or what those features are—because *PC World*'s ridiculous methodology means that the Cp1160 is omitted from the features comparison and individual writeups! Why? Because it costs $399, twice as much as the "top 10" printers.

To put it as bluntly as possible: these are *not* the top ten inkjet printers, period. These are the top ten *cheap* inkjets—at least in initial price. As *PC Magazine* demonstrated, total cost of ownership over several years might be a very different thing. But *PC World* knows better: they've decided that you shouldn't pay more than $179 for an inkjet, no matter what the long-term costs and benefits. Arggh.

The two "best buys" among the printers that are listed are Epson's $179 Stylus C80—a fine printer by any measure—and Lexmark's $130 Z53 Color Jetprinter. Note that two printers much lower down on the top ten list, Epson's $99 Stylus C60 and HP's $149 Deskjet 940c, earn the same four-star rating as the two top units—but there's not always much correlation between star ratings and "overall rating." Maybe it will all make sense to you; it just gives me a headache.

Poor, Alfred, "Ink again," *PC Magazine* 20:22 (December 26, 2001), pp. 124-38.

"The ink jet printer is the toaster of the computer world." Not a bad image—and as with toasters, it may not make sense to buy the cheapest model. New models don't come out as often these days; this roundup includes a dozen printers from the five significant brands. (Only four significant *manufacturers:* Lexmark builds Compaq inkjets.)

The reviewers did some real-world testing of how long ink lasted on real-world documents to arrive at total cost of ownership for each printer, assuming that you'd print roughly 50 pages a week and roughly half of those would be color graphics. The results (calculated over a three-year lifetime) are fascinating, with TCO ranging from a low of $505.77 (Canon's $150 S500, one of the Editors' Choices) to a high of $1,297.83 (Compaq's $100 IJ650). Except for HP, whose three printers clustered tightly in TCO, the cheapest printers were *consistently* more expensive over three years than their more expensive brandmates.

Surprisingly, HP didn't get an Editors' Choice, although the $400 cp1160 earned a five-dot rating, offers the fastest performance, includes duplexing, and offers great print quality. The problem is that $400 price; the cp1160 is a small-group printer more than a personal printer. The second Editors' Choice is Epson's $180 Stylus C80; it is, perhaps not coincidentally, the second-cheapest printer in the long run. It also takes the most durable inks in the inkjet industry and uses individual color cartridges. How durable is the DuraBrite ink? Someone left the print out in the rain—for half an hour, fresh out of the printer. "Print integrity was maintained. The paper was wet, but the text was legible." Imagine that two or three years ago!

Scanning Software

Mendelson, Edward, "Recognizably good scanning software," *Computer Shopper* 21:11 (November 2001), p. 98.

With more powerful computers and cheaper scanners, you'd expect more development in OCR software, but this is the first "roundup" I've seen in a while—and it covers all of two products. (Has OCR software already reached the modest limit of accuracy available without "voting" systems?)

OmniPage Pro is the king of this particular market but it's pricey: $500 for the full package. Version 11 offers high accuracy and can convert directly to PDF; it also offers batch processing. That earns it a good rating—but not as good as FineReader 5.0 Pro, an unknown from Russia. FineReader won't do as well with mediocre scans, lacks batch processing, and has a cruder interface—but its editing window is better and overall performance seems comparable. The kicker? FineReader 5.0 costs $99. That price difference justifies the Best Buy rating.

Shareware and Freeware

Aquino, Grace, "Darn good software, doggone cheap," *PC World* 19:12 (December 2001), pp. 149-58.

Technically, this isn't a comparative review—but it seems to be a carefully-chosen set of "software gems." The criteria make sense: they excluded demoware, programs that expire after a few uses or 30 days, programs with particularly obtrusive ads, and ones with too many "nag notes" to update or pay up. Some of these do carry a small price, never more than $30.

A fine sidebar notes five tips for "hassle-free downloads," the first of which is to beware of "spyware"—programs that track your Web usage for advertising purposes, sometimes without your knowledge. Yes, there's a program to find such hidden tricks (tricks used by most Napster replacements, for example): Ad-aware, a freebie.

Too many programs earn four-star reviews to summarize. Only one does better than that: ZoneAlarm, a consistently highly rated personal firewall, gets 4.5 stars. If you have broadband, you need a firewall. You may want to pay for the Pro version to get ad blocking and cookie management.

Utility Software

English, David, "One-stop repair shops," *Computer Shopper* 22:1 (January 2002), pp. 133-5.

This comprehensive review of utility suites that run under Windows XP includes *both* of them: McAfee Office, generally the least of the trio, is gone. The introduction notes that Norton SystemWorks 2002 has significantly reduced its operational overhead, making it a good upgrade. (Some other reviews had suggested that it wasn't an important upgrade if you don't have XP, but they didn't take overhead into account.) SystemWorks holds a slight edge over OnTrack SystemSuite, with more thorough real-time virus scanning and a more integrated interface. One oddity is a claim that Norton's One Button Checkup is new. It isn't: I've been using it ever since SystemWorks 2001 came out. Notably, OnTrack continues to include "CrashProof," even though XP shouldn't need it and such crash-resisting utilities have generally turned out to work badly. Norton dropped CrashGuard in SystemWorks 2001; I had learned to remove it in earlier versions.

Karagiannis, Konstantinos, "Archive utilities survive XP," *PC Magazine* 20:20 (November 27, 2001), pp. 55-6.

Take off your librarian hat: "archive" in this case means Zip compression and bundling. Do you need Zip with today's huge hard disks? Possibly, if only because network bandwidth keeps getting saturated and Zipped archives offer some conveniences for organization.

I can't speak to any of these five programs (who knew there were five?); I use the Zip/Unzip features integrated into PowerDesk, including its treatment of a Zipped archive as a subdirectory. Editors' Choice goes to PentaZip 5.0, $50 downloaded or $60 on CD; it includes a file viewer and some conversion capabilities as well as support for less popular compressed formats. PKZip comes in second.

Videoconference Software

Ozer, Jan, "The next-best thing to being there," *PC Magazine* 20:19 (November 13, 2001), pp. 32-4.

CuseeMe—now a commercial product, albeit an inexpensive one—isn't the only game in casual Internet-based videoconferencing. This review includes the latest version of CuseeMe (5.0, $39.95) and three alternatives, one of them free (Microsoft NetMeeting). No program earns a full five dots. Four tie for second place with so-so three-dot ratings. Editors' Choice and the sole four-dot rating goes to Fly Conference Suite, a newcomer from the UK (www.flyonthewall.tv). It's cheap (25 Euros per user) and offers multipoint capabilities, the best video quality in the group, and a shared whiteboard. Setup is a little complicated (you have to choose your own codec) and there's not much documentation—but it works well and the price is right.

The Details

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