Internet Librarian International 2000: A conference with all the right elements
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Internet Librarian International 2000 was held March 20-22, 2000, at the Olympia 2 conference facility in London. This was the second in the new conference series from Information Today, Inc. and, with conference attendees from Asia, Europe, Africa, Australia, and the Americas, it truly lived up to the “International” label.

The conference coincided with the London Book Fair at the adjacent Olympia facility. Admission to the Internet Librarian International conference entitled you to free admission to the London Book Fair, a wonderful bonus for any bookseller or Librarian. In addition, the conference featured the LibTech 2000 Exhibition with a broad range of vendors, including many not seen at any American library conferences. [To check out the conference Web site, go to http://www.internetlibrarian.com/]

The conference program covered a broad range of issues that really dealt with the cutting-edge issues and problems that electronically savvy librarians deal with, or will have to deal with, facing the Internet in their libraries.

E-Books on the Brain
Richard R. Rowe, chairman & CEO, RoweCom, USA, the keynote speaker at the conference, discussed the technologies driving electronic collections and electronic commerce in libraries. He tried looking at where those technologies are heading and the impact on the information industry, libraries, and librarians. Librarians will increasingly manage the full range of media in an integrated manner. Rowe suggested that the concept of collection is changing, for example, in defining what should be “stored” locally and what should be accessed through the Internet. Do librarians really want to maintain their own music and video servers? How do we ensure permanent access to our collections? How do publishers ensure their rights and deal with digital rights management? How do librarians loan an e-book? Rowe predicts the range of functions of libraries will increase and in the future librarians will have titles such as market researcher, knowledge therapist, community developer, entrepreneurial publisher, network man-

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ager, digital museum director, and intellectual property controller.

Rowe spoke at length about e-books. He believes that the technology is still not very good. E-books have many issues yet to be resolved, including how to loan them. Publishers have nightmares over library lending policies for e-books. Do you try to block copying technologically? Will libraries have to charge for access? The ultimate publisher nightmare? You sell one copy, once.

Electronic publishing is shifting power toward authors, and publishers need ways to ensure the returns on their investments. A large variety of issues need resolution in the area of electronic publishing, including technical problems with digital rights management; key recovery mechanisms; storage requirements; the need to download content; social policy considerations; increased complexity of ownership; the effect upon the model of inquiry; and the impact of economic disparities. Rowe asked whether publishers today could be replaced by personal publishing and whether the great publishing brands will long remain relevant. Could refereeing be automated and broadened to include both experts and users?

Lynn Silipigni Connaway, vice president, Research and Library Systems for netLibrary, spoke about e-books and netLibrary in the context of traditional challenges to "brick-and-mortar" libraries, such as lost and stolen books, and of course the wear and tear on print materials. Print materials bear more costs than just the purchase price, e.g., processing, cataloging, available storage. Maintenance of a collection costs a lot more than just the original acquisition prices. Connaway believes that e-books will reduce these additional collection costs.

Of course e-books come with their own new issues, such as acquisitions and collection development; standards; specifications; current and perpetual access; training needs; digital rights management; copyright and fair use. When you acquire an e-book, how will you handle simultaneous use? Will you buy unlimited access or pay per use? Connaway believes in patron-driven acquisitions. Will libraries buy broad discipline coverage or subject specific e-book collections? The e-books will cause the aggregation and disaggregation of the monograph. Connaway believes the best case for e-books is for scholarly books, which may have become too costly to produce.


Blackwell's most recent revision to its collection manager system added a new feature, the ability to order electronic versions of some books via netLibrary. Blackwell saw the agreement with netLibrary as a new source of revenue that offered a competitive advantage and an opportunity to become a more serious player in the digital world. The agreement also gave Blackwell's the opportunity to obtain previews and in-depth subject analysis of published materials. Blackwell's felt the company had many advantages for its customers, such as a single source for books, no matter what the medium, more informed purchase decisions through previewing, and inclusion of e-books in announcement services and approval plans. The advantage to e-books and books printed on demand from Blackwell's point of view were a new revenue stream without the expenses of an extensive backlist inventory.

Users and the Web

The always entertaining D. Scott Brandt of Purdue University gave a presentation on teaching the Web in 50 minutes, certainly a valuable skill.
for anyone in a university environment. He first suggests analyzing your learners. Who is your audience (skill level, type, experience, purpose for being there)? How will they use the information you plan to teach them? How will you address their ARCS: Attention, Relevance, Confidence, and Satisfaction? What prerequisites exist?

Make sure to define every term. Make sure to describe specific objectives. Try to determine how these learners will apply what you teach to their job or situation. Use a variety of methods and strategies to teach from demonstration, lecture, hands-on, and tutorials. Use a variety of materials such as guides, recipes, handouts, and exercises. Practice. Be prepared. Try to engage the learners with questions and stories. Focus on contexts and examples relevant to your audience. Think about their perspectives, mental models, and how they approach learning.

Brandt advocated one very important rule — persistence: try, try, try again. Client server interactions often result in interruptions or 404 errors, similar to busy line phone calls, so continue to redial and persist. Encourage your audience to point and click their way to expertise. Do like the experts do and check out the options on menus. Encourage exploration as a learning style. Click on everything and anything! Teach them to customize, empower them to personalize technology. Brandt encourages you to practice using the right-click menu until it becomes as natural as left-clicking. Right-click menus give context-sensitive short-cut menus for almost all software.

Warn the audience that anyone can and will put anything up on the Internet, so be cautious and wary. Tell your classes how to evaluate quality.

Peter Scott of the University of Saskatchewan spoke about how libraries can support programs by running affiliate, click-through, per-impression, and commission advertising on their Web sites, OPACs, and resources pages that make money. You can use Pay-Per-Sale or Event ideas such as Refer-It, Associate Programs, and Commission Junction. Using an Amazon.com example, Scott pointed out how you can save money if you coordinate buying; you can even make money. By linking to Amazon.com, you can earn referral fees when visitors click from your site through to Amazon.com to purchase items. Amazon.com handles all of the customer service, fulfillment, shipping, and tracking of sales generated from your site. You only have to decide how you want to link to Amazon.com. In addition there are Pay-Per-Impression options such as Amazing Media and Burst. Through Amazing Media, publishers earn significant revenue. Qualified Web sites earn revenue from the Amazing Media ad appearances, not just for click-throughs or consignment sales, as well as by referring others to the Amazing Media's network. Other pay-per-click options include Reporting.Net, ValueClick, and eAds.

If you think your library couldn't handle e-commerce, Scott pointed to a long list of libraries already doing it, including the Australian National University; Friends of Canadian Libraries; the British Library; Alhambra (CA) Public Library; San Bernardino County (CA) Library; Hartford Public Library; Chicago Library System; New York Public Library; and the Tacoma Public Library.

Amazon.com isn't the only potential partner. There are more commercial opportunities with virtual stores such as Affinia, FrontierStore.com, Ubrandit.com, and Vstore. Ubrandit.com claims to "instantly offer your Web audience a one-million-plus title book, music, video, and DVD store, and earn commissions on every item you sell...and, more importantly, continue earning commissions as we drive your customers back to your store [or in our case, library]!"

Elaina Nordlin and Patricia Morris from the University of Arizona Science Engineering Team spoke about the fact that the University of Arizona Libraries began building a serial review database in the 1980s. It was designed to provide a "one-stop" location of the historical data collected during a journal cancellation project. The library realized the data served far more than that one function and revived it. The complexities of managing science and technology serials stem from a variety of factors, including inflation, the need to keep collections dynamic, the new "onslaught" of electronic packages. All of these issues made it obvious to the Arizona librarians that they needed a handy, centralized tool to support journal collection decisions.

The serials review database began as a "data dump" from the acquisition part of the university's online public access catalog (OPAC) into a spreadsheet, then into Excel. Today it is an Access database containing 5,129 titles, and 60+ data fields. The six data tables in the database cover the following: Local ISI citation data (LJUR); Journal Citation Reports data; historical cost data; Top Ten Survey results; Inter-Library Loan (ILL) data; and current periodical room usage. This database helps the university library to maintain accountability and to centralize and organize quantitative, qualitative, and trend data.

Access Plus (AKA Access 2000) was a project in the library charged with redesigning the library's Web presence. It was decided that the library should customize its own "usability testing" to make changes on the Web site. After several rounds of usability tests, the library Web site was completely changed. Getting customer feedback made it easier to justify making changes and moving forward. So you need both qualitative and quantitative data in order to make decisions. When you talk to people and something is obviously wrong, don't spend a year getting endless numbers to prove that fixing it was their advise. If your spending a year designing a survey, finding a hotshot to analyze it, and figuring out the results...it's 9 months too long!

The purpose of the University of Arizona's Digital Library Initiative is to build on the existing base of digitization
plans for implementation of the OED Online. Claire Hart, president of Factiva, spoke about Factiva's role in partnering with customers on practical applications for corporate library users, whether on the Internet or intranet. Factiva works with its customers in rolling out data to everyone's desktop in the company. Clients have included PriceWaterhouseCoopers, Bain & Co., and British Telecomm.

Searching Trends

Danny Sullivan, the author and editor of Search Engine Watch, gave a keynote in which he discussed the bigger-versus-better models of search engines. While size of the Internet covered remains a marketing component that reporters can easily understand, users want relevancy that many search engines just can't supply yet. Inktomi learned this after losing to HotBot. Search engines continue to go after size for marketing reasons. While Yahoo! has long used humans to catalog and organize the Web, Lycos just switched to humans. Six out of the top 10 search engines are human powered. Yahoo! remains by far the most popular search service, and the trend remains toward more human-powered search services, with less emphasis on comprehensive crawling.

Mary Ellen Bates of Bates Information Services spoke about the trends she sees in online searching. She thinks lines are blurring between traditional and Web searching. There are many more added value sites on the open Web, such as Hoover's, EDGAR, and company annual reports. Searching is changing, with more portals and verticals (vertically integrated portals) pushing corporate users toward intranet portals instead of the broad public search engines.

The biggest search engine on the Web still only captures 40 percent of the Web pages out there. Bates talked about the different types of search engines including Google, which ranks results by popularity, and Northern Light, which uses its custom folders. Bates also pointed to specialty search engines such as Deja News and REMARQ for newsgroups. Meta search engines, according to Bates, have some drawbacks, such as losing power search features and the ability to do in-depth searching. She did like meta search engines for quick surveys, however. Overall, Bates advised searchers to keep their searches simple and focused. Build only a modest bookmark file and remember internal sources. The reference interview remains critical, particularly when your clients need analysis and not just search results.

A Trip Worth Taking

The Internet Librarian International conference truly covered the vast expanse and important issues facing librarians using the Internet today and the issues that will confront them in the foreseeable future. Several of the presentations I attended proved immediately helpful in deciding several issues currently under discussion at my library. The conference offered a truly outstanding array of wonderful, notable, entertaining, and enlightening speakers. There are not many opportunities in one conference to hear Stephen Abram, Mary Ellen Bates, Miriam Drake, Claire Hart, Cindy Hill, Richard Hulser, Greg Notess, Richard Rowe, Peter Scott, and Danny Sullivan.

As an extra bonus, the weather in London actually cooperated, with lovely spring days, even though London is not always noted for good weather in April. If you can at all manage to attend, I'd highly recommend the next Internet Librarian International Conference [March 26-28, 2001, again at the Olympia 2 Conference Center in London]. If you can't swing "crossing the pond," remember Internet Librarian 2000 in Monterey California on November 5-9, 2000. Jane Dysart, the conference planner for the Internet Librarian International conference, plans that conference as well, so you can expect a wide range of interesting speakers there as well.*