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24th Annual Conference Reports, Vision Sessions. What Color is Your Paratext? by Geoffrey Bilder

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President's Corner

Rick Anderson, NASIG President

This is the Coolest of Times

In many ways, 2009 is a scary time to be a serialist – but at the same time, I have to say that this is a really, really exciting time to be a member of NASIG.

We're coming into the home stretch of our 25th year as an organization. It's kind of mind-boggling to think about how much our corner of the scholarly information world has changed since NASIG was organized in 1985. Card catalogs, sending libraries massive printed renewal lists, Kardex files, doing all of our business by phone or by letter, looking up publishers' addresses in Ulrich's (in print, of course) – in a way all of those things sound like ancient history, but at the same time they seem to describe the way we lived just yesterday. As crazy as it is to think about how much our work has changed in the past 25 years, what's even crazier is to think about how much it will change over the next 25. If only we could see forward as clearly as we can see backward!

Since we can't, all of us who work in the serials information chain are trying to prepare for multiple

Carol Tenopir

Phase one, completed in 2008, consisted of a case study of one university to determine the return on investment of grants provided to faculty. Factors studied were faculty use of citations, grant success rate using citations from the library, and grant income. The goal was to determine what grant income was generated by using citations obtained from the library. Phase two tested the model used in phase one, which consisted of a narrow focus on nine different universities in eight countries. Problems with differences in terminology, variations in data that universities keep, differing fiscal years, variations in academic years, and language slowed the study. The results of the study should be released in late summer/early fall 2009. Phase three will branch out to look at grants and research, teaching, and student engagement. It will look at a variety of returns and finding ways to quantify these to show the administration the value the library provides to the institution.

This research goes a long way toward the goal of demonstrating that library collections contribute to income generating activities. An ROI calculator will be available to academic libraries as well as the formula used in the study. It will be made available through the Academic Research Libraries website and the University of Illinois digital repository. While this study focuses on electronic collections, individual libraries may want to change this or focus on print and electronic separately. The current results show that academic library collections help faculty be productive and successful. The library helps generate grant income, which increases the prestige of the institution. Electronic collections are valued by faculty and needed. Future studies will seek to tie measures to the mission of the institution; measure outcomes not just inputs; and provide quantitative data to show ROI and trends. Quantitative data tells a story and each library needs to narrate their story to their institution.

What Color Is Your Paratext?

Geoffrey Bilder, CrossRef

Reported by Andrée Rathemacher

Geoffrey Bilder is the director of strategic initiatives at CrossRef, a non-profit membership association of publishers. Their mission is to improve access to published scholarship through cooperative technologies such as DOIs (Digital Object Identifiers). Bilder discussed problems in identifying trustworthy scholarly content delivered via the Internet, and proposed CrossRef's CrossMark service as one solution.

Geoffrey Bilder

Bilder began by highlighting a problem that both publishers and librarians face: helping researchers identify trustworthy information in the online environment at a time of growing distrust of intermediaries. Publishers find their value proposition being questioned as their brands are hidden due to intermediation by Google; their content is cloistered behind pay walls; and the editorial services they provide are not readily visible. Likewise, the value added by libraries through the selection and organization of quality information has been brought into question by the prevalence of free search engines, and the shift from ownership to access, which often obscures the libraries' role as providers of scholarly information.

Bilder next compared the nature of trust on the Internet with scholarly trust using a framework developed by Kieron O'Hara in *Trust: from Socrates to Spin*. There is a problem with trust on the Internet as users confront spam, viruses, phishing, urban legends, and questionable content. Trust on the Internet can be characterized as horizontal, in that all users are equal and there is no way to enforce norms of behavior, and local, i.e., based on personal knowledge of what sites are trustworthy. Scholarly trust, on the other hand, is highly vertical, in that there are consequences for violating that trust, such as being denied tenure or being expelled from a professional society. Scholarly trust is also global, which means that it is distributed via proxy, such as what institution a researcher graduated from, where he/she teaches, and in what journals he/she is published. Given that Internet trust and scholarly trust are such polar opposites, how do they meet in the middle?

Within the context of the deprecation of publisher and librarian intermediaries and the problem of trust on the Internet, researchers as readers face a problem of their own. Researchers are spending more time reading, yet they are reading less of each text. This problem is accelerating as readers encounter blogs, wikis, and Twitter feeds in addition to traditional scholarly content. After posing the question of how readers and researchers can differentiate scholarly, credible content from the growing volume of information produced, Bilder introduced the concept of "paratext."

Paratext is anything outside of a text that sets expectations about that text. Examples include illustrations, cover design, or publisher brand. When we interact with printed information, we use deeply ingrained heuristics such as where we found the text – bargain book store or library, glossy magazine or scholarly journal – or if a book or article has footnotes. Many of these heuristics are not applicable in the online environment, yet in the context of too much information, heuristics are essential in filtering content and determining what is worth reading and what is not.

Publishers have known about the importance of paratext for a long time. In the early days of printing, anyone could pay a printer to print their text. There was a great deal being printed with minimal quality control or editing of content. Early publishers emerged in order to guarantee quality in the publishing process. Paratext in the form of publisher logos and journal brands became a proxy for trustworthy content.

To signify quality scholarly content on the Internet, Bilder proposed using paratext in the form of a "meta-brand." Meta-brands are industry-sponsored marks which differentiate credible players in an industry from others, for example "USDA Organic," "Fair Trade Certified," and "Dolphin-Safe." Meta-brands serve to certify the processes by which goods and services are produced.

As an example of a meta-brand certifying scholarly content, Bilder introduced CrossRef's "CrossMark" logo. As envisioned, a CrossMark logo on an online scholarly text would indicate that it was the version of record. By clicking on the CrossMark logo, the reader could access additional information about the text, such as the fact that it was peer-reviewed, edited, and checked for plagiarism. CrossMark information could also include funding sources, any errata, or even if an article or an article cited had been retracted. If publishers and librarians can create meta-brands such as CrossMark, we can reassert our roles in guaranteeing the

trustworthiness of scholarly information, whether or not researchers access the material through a library gateway or publisher website. In addition, readers will be able to quickly and easily identify trustworthy scholarly content within the overwhelming volume of information available to them.

Strategy Sessions

Collaborative Tagging: Traditional Cataloging Meets the Wisdom of Crowds

Scott R. McFadden, Ball State University; Jenna Venker Weidenbenner, The Career Center

Reported by Marie Peterson

Scott McFadden (his co-presenter was unable to attend due to illness) began this presentation with an overview of bookmarks and tags and their role in finding information online. As sites began to proliferate on the Internet, and the number of users began growing as well, users began to develop methods for keeping track of websites they might want to find again. How could this vast, growing universe of information be "cataloged"? Was there any way to organize and provide user access to so much information?

One answer, albeit a limited one, involved creating bookmarks which were stored in a restricted way in folders on the hard drive. A serious disadvantage to this method was that these bookmarks were only available on the individual computer used at the time they were created.

Users eventually figured out that tagging the information, the digital object itself, or the site itself, would provide a way of searching for and finding that information again. Tags are metadata elements attached to an object that describe an aspect or attribute of it. They can be created from anywhere and applied to anything digital. McFadden added that electronic tagging has gone beyond digital, and is now being applied to physical objects.

Tagging is an ultimately social endeavor; many if not most users are tagging resources not only to organize their own information, but especially in order to share resources with others.

Tagging is ubiquitous now. It is used on social bookmarking sites such as Delicious; on blogs, personal, news media, political and professional; on commercial sites, such as Amazon; photo websites, such as Flickr; and on collaborative book cataloging sites such as LibraryThing and goodreads. These are simply the tip of the iceberg for tagging applications.

The advantages of tagging include their ease of use. Natural language is used rather than a prescribed thesaurus of accepted terms; there is no intimidation involved. However, because of its ubiquitous use, there is no authority control, no controlled vocabulary, and no hierarchical structure. Similar terms may end up causing confusion for the user.

Should collaborative tagging replace a structured cataloging schema? There is, after all, more flexibility of vocabulary in folksonomies than in Library of Congress Subject Headings. Rather than choosing one or the other, using social tagging alongside traditional cataloging provides an effective way to enhance research.

McFadden discussed four library systems, one public, and three academic, and their use of tagging while continuing with traditional cataloging practices.

Ball State University includes user-created, librarian-monitored tags in their online subject guides. Tags are seen at the top of the subject guide page, and as a tag cloud at the side. Users may supply tags, but only editors may add them to the page. This results in a somewhat controlled vocabulary rather than a completely user-created folksonomy.

The University of Michigan's catalog is enhanced by tags created as a result of patrons' saving and organizing information for their projects. Their saved interactions are mined for tags, per Ken Varnum, web systems