2007 Fiesole Collection Development Retreat

Conclusions, Issues
   and Predictions

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We began by saying we would talk about the following Issues

- What is the significance of the English language upon publishing?

- Will Open Access free scholarship from the tyranny of big commercial publishers or free readers from the information monopoly previously enjoyed by libraries?

- The consequences of Google Print providing Sally Joe in Dubuque, Iowa in the US, and Zhang Mei-li in Qingdao, China with 17 million e-books.

Conclusions Reached/Issues Identified

1. It takes less effort to find useful information via Google, which is free to the reader, than to get it information out of our costly library collections. We must solve this.

2. There is a lot of digitization going on: A commercial focus on STM and the Social Sciences to a lesser degree. Local efforts focus more on Humanities information. How can we get this into the aggregation services where our users live and spend their time?

More Conclusions/Issues

3. Who is going to take curatorial responsibility for all of this digitized material so that readers 100 years from now will have the same quality of access to materials collected by our predecessors 100 years ago.

4. Over the past couple of hundred years, academic libraries evolved cataloguing systems to organize the information they collected. What do we do now that the amount of potentially useful information has grown by several hundred/thousand fold? MARC21?

More Conclusions/Issues

5. Can the "wash my hands" model of publishing, vending, and collecting model continue to survive? Publishers publish - and wash their hands; vendors vend - and wash their hands; libraries select, purchase, catalogue, and preserve and have forever dirty hands. Or are we all just moving deck chairs on the Titanic?

6. Libraries have much more information <u>than is</u> used by anyone. Can this model continue? Will we as sacred cow breeders, sellers, and buyers continue to prosper or will funding agencies say there is another way?

More Conclusions/Issues

7. While the dominance of English is a reality in STM, it isn't so much in the humanities. In STM, topics of interest to the buyers of expensive journals are sacrificed so as to be attractive to those able to buy expensive journals.

8. English language publishing substitutes for local language scholarship but local readers would still like to be reading it in their own language.

9. While it is true the acquisition of non-English language materials by academic libraries is falling (publishers need large markets to survive, the big problem is mono-lingualism and the effects of this problem are many.

More Conclusions/Issues

10. While the issue of libraries not having sufficient funds to pay for journals is real, the amount of money needed to solve the problem – compared to the overall university budgets is next to nothing, e.g., the amount of money that might be saved by putting in campus wide motion detector light switches.

11. If the goal of OA is access to information, two solutions present themselves: Governments could follow the model of Japan – buy the information and give relevant researchers access; OR everyone stops writing, especially the Chinese, and then the problem will evaporate.

More Conclusions/Issues

12. OA embargoes can't be one size fits all.

13. Publicly funded research should be available to all – but until the journal issue is bought, the public has not paid for the value added work done by publishers.

14. Publishers and librarians fight each other for dwindling dollars which are not growing as fast as the number of scholars or the size of the literature they are producing. Vendors get squeezed by publishers and libraries.

More Conclusions/Issues

15. Journal impact factors are used in Asia by funding agencies to apportion out research funds and rewards.

16. Overlap between collections is highly over rated.

17. We do need each other if we are to meet all needs. Google aggregates materials produced by people who don't even know each other. Why do librarians who know each other fight to keep their resources separate?

More Conclusions/Issues

18. New technologies are adopted if they save time/are better.
19. Studies show that engineers in the US want content from colleagues/trade/ trusted sources but they are quite willing to change formats/modes of delivery. Engineers in India use more formally published information – but in general geography doesn't make big differences.
20. Electronic backfiles are being used.
21. Real work is done f2f or in other personal settings -- email is for formalizing communication.

More Conclusions/Issues

22. Medical researchers multi-task, they want full-text, they need a range of types of materials depending upon what they are doing, e.g., catch up on lit, research a problem.

23. Different types of researchers need different types of images – and need indexing help to find them.

24. Brill has put their digital content up to be mined. But many (40%) do come directly. They have put their content into Google's Book Search – now to facilitate sales, later to facilitate readers buying access (.5 M visitors). This enables them to provide the world with access to their materials and a new revenue stream on older materials long given up as $ generators.

More Conclusions/Issues

25. Google generates so much information that old fashioned filtered/published information has become attractive again at least to some. But will this continue?

26. A survey of librarians showed that librarians see too much to do, not enough time, staff, or budget to become to the kind of library they see they need to be.

27. Would like a seamless integration of all their content, that works wonderfully, that makes them better than Google. Want someone else to do it at a good price.

28. The academic library is/has lost its value added to the research enterprise niche. They have super content, expensive, hard to use, and users expect us to pull it all together.

29. Librarians want help defending their niche/turf/role.

More Conclusions/Issues

30. Most content money is digital. Most staff costs are print related. Continue?

31. At least initially, some book vendors want to sell e-books like printed books. This is familiar and comfortable for many publishers and vendors. Deck chair rearranging?

32. Publishers will perhaps have a choice: sell their content via a Google to millions, or, to librarians to thousands at a time.

More Conclusions/Issues

33. Librarians should see themselves as curators of ideas and free ourselves from our buildings/stacks/etc., irrespective of format.

Predictions Heard

1. While in the past researchers had to build their information gathering activities around the library's workflows; to survive, libraries today must build their services around user workflows.

2. To survive, publishers and vendors must figure out how to help libraries -- or skip them as unneeded links in the information chain.

3. We (everyone) had censors in the past, we have them now, and we will have them in the future.

4. Where governments invest more in the support of research, they will ultimately demand to be shown how their investments are paying off.

Predictions Heard

5. Interest in OA isn't universal; but it is growing for a variety of reasons.
6. Publishers require money to publish. If OA triumphs, the money being spent in libraries to pay publishers will move to the university units paying the OA charges.
7. Non STM, non-English publishing will continue to grow but for domestic readership reasons.
8. While Asia is now a net consumer of research, the numbers suggest that this will not always be the case – China particularly will have more scholars, more research funding, and more research results that any other nation.

Predictions Heard

9. Google Book Select will give publishers a way of selling older materials. Earlier ideas of going it alone may end.

10. Google and Microsoft may provide publishers with a choice: sell their content via a Google to millions, or, to librarians to thousands at a time.

Dsoi Gin/Dzai Jian/Goodbye

Best wishes on your journey home!