Against the Grain

April 2011

Under the Hood -- New To You

Xan Arch

Reed College Library, archx@reed.edu

Follow this and additional works at: https://docs.lib.purdue.edu/atg

Part of the Library and Information Science Commons

Recommended Citation

Arch, Xan (2011) "Under the Hood -- New To You," *Against the Grain*: Vol. 23: Iss. 2, Article 38.
DOI: https://doi.org/10.7771/2380-176X.5815

Under the Hood — New To You

Column Editor: **Xan Arch** (Collection Development Librarian, Reed College Library) <xanadu@reed.edu>

Libraries are still buying a lot of books. In a world where **Google** is available for the satisficing of our users, how do we make sure all these books are used? Students, who may not yet be tapped into academic networks, need to learn about new resources in their field. In the age of the electronic resource, print material is still valuable for learning and research. We are buying books that the students and faculty will need and use right now. The challenge is making sure they know what we are providing as soon as it's available to them.

One way libraries address this problem is by offering a list for patrons to view new materials purchased by the library in the last week or month. This could be a great way to put our acquisitions in front of our users, but most of us aren't doing a very good job at this feature. In many cases these lists are data dumps from the catalog, organized by **LC** class. Because the list is often run from the ILS backend, it usually can't take advantage of the additional features (like book jackets or reviews) that are present in next-generation catalogs. Often, possibly due to the difficulties of formatting these lists attractively, the new materials list is hidden on a secondary layer of the Website. Some of these lists include the ability to set up new material notifications through RSS, but most of the lists are static and view-only. The new materials list is too valuable for this kind of treatment. A basic new materials list, dumped from the catalog, organized by **LC** class, then hidden on a library Website is pretty near useless to accomplish the goals of pushing our new content to our users.

It isn't easy to create a new materials list using just the library database software, so why isn't there a vended solution to the new materials list? A vendor could take care of the details of creating this list every week, leaving us the time to find new ways to reach our users. It could be offered by an ILS company, but there are other vendors that know as much about the new materials we acquire as we do. One possibility is the library's main monograph vendor. They would be able to provide a library with a new materials feed that could update at the very point when a book reached the library. The list could incorporate reviews, book jackets, and other supplemental material that the vendor already provides to aid ordering. It could also include electronic books ordered by the library. eBook discovery is still a problem in many libraries, and this would be another avenue that these materials could be surfaced to the user.

Even more exciting, a new materials list supplied by a monograph vendor might be able to include electronic or print books from a patron-driven acquisition plan. These would be books that the library does not yet own, but will own if a user indicates interest. It seems almost counterintuitive to the idea of a new materials list, since the materials have not yet been acquired, but it could provide one more way to present these potential acquisitions to the library patrons and possibly drive additional use.

The downside to a new materials list coming from a monograph vendor is that it would not include the universe of new materials acquired by a library. While many libraries use one main monograph vendor for a large percentage of acquired titles, there are always other materials coming in from other sources, whether secondary vendors, non-print sources, or gifts. It might be possible to supply an ISBN load to the monograph vendor that would allow these additional new items to be included in the list.

Another possibility is **OCLC**. Many libraries set their holdings in **WorldCat**, so **OCLC** has a good idea of what we own. They also have supplemental material about each book that they could feed to the library, such as book jacket images. An advantage to **OCLC** is that their list could encompass most new materials acquired by a library, regardless of origin or format. It could include purchased eBooks, though items available through a patron-driven plan would be more difficult to include. If the new materials list was combined with **WorldCat Local**, a user could place a hold or check the available copies quickly from the list itself. One possible problem would be any delay between the arrival of a new book in the library and the upload of holdings to **OCLC**.

If we had an easy way to get the new materials list data, we would be able to think about the best ways to provide this information to our patrons, based on our environment. Instead of just offering an RSS feed, we could provide a variety of output options for the new materials that would fit user workflows. Another example would be making the new materials list compatible with library mobile sites, since this would be a natural addition to the basic mobile catalog offered by many libraries. Finally, a user-friendly list could also be pushed outside the bounds of the library Website to appear on library social media sites or academic department sites for the school.

The new materials list is an important tool for libraries to highlight their acquisitions and promote usage of these items. This tool deserves more than to be created hastily and pushed to the lower levels of the library Website. If a vendor can help us make this list easy, attractive, and flexible, we can spend our time working with our users instead. 🌴
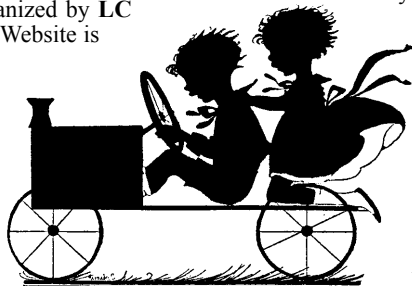
The Challenges of Bibliographic ...
from page 1

publishing, in the direction of open access. With this framework he discusses how peer review, and to a lesser extent copyediting, will remain the only valuable functions that publishers will have reason to charge for in an OA environment. Reflecting on his long experience as an STM journal copyeditor, **Joe Fineman** follows with an honest assessment of what kinds of service copyeditors can usefully continue to provide in an online publishing environment and what kinds may no longer justify the expense of providing. Building on these contributions, but focusing more on journal publishing in the humani-ties and social sciences, **Sanford Thatcher** reports the results of a collaborative effort by several university press copyeditors to assess the adequacy of Green OA versions (what in JAV's terminology would be called "Accepted Manuscripts") posted on **Harvard's** DASH repository, comparing these as feasible with the final versions as published (JAV's Versions of Record"). One perhaps surprising result of this exercise is that much editing traditionally done for print-based journals, especially formatting to conform with house style, is unnecessary in an online environment, whereas types of editing not typically now done for reasons of cost, such as checking of citations and quotations for accuracy, will become cheaper to perform and more important as contributions to scholarly integrity. 🌴

Rumors
from page 12

Wake Forest University. He says he thinks he's actually going to be able to (at least try to) do what he wants at **Wake**, which is give faculty (and students) a chance to publish their "stuff" online (for free), as opposed to the traditional way (for increasing fees). He is planning on offering a tossed salad of self-publishing, open source, course materials, with some HTML5 dressing on the side. **Bill(y)** says he'll be working for the computing center and not the library, but libraries are likewise increasingly becoming content suppliers, and not just collectors. So, he says he will still