

Purdue University  
**Purdue e-Pubs**

---

Charleston Library Conference

---

## The Tower and The Free Web: The Role of Reference

John Dove  
*Credo Reference*, [johngdove@gmail.com](mailto:johngdove@gmail.com)

Phoebe Ayers  
*University of California at Davis*

Casper Grathwohl  
*Oxford University Press*

Jason B. Phillips  
*New York University*

Michael Sweet  
*Credo Reference*

*See next page for additional authors*

Follow this and additional works at: <https://docs.lib.purdue.edu/charleston>

 Part of the [Library and Information Science Commons](#)

An indexed, print copy of the Proceedings is also available for purchase at:

<http://www.thepress.purdue.edu/series/charleston>.

You may also be interested in the new series, Charleston Insights in Library, Archival, and Information Sciences. Find out more at: <http://www.thepress.purdue.edu/series/charleston-insights-library-archival-and-information-sciences>.

---

John Dove, Phoebe Ayers, Casper Grathwohl, Jason B. Phillips, Michael Sweet, and Sam Linthicum, "The Tower and The Free Web: The Role of Reference" (2010). *Proceedings of the Charleston Library Conference*.  
<http://dx.doi.org/10.5703/1288284314808>

This document has been made available through Purdue e-Pubs, a service of the Purdue University Libraries. Please contact [epubs@purdue.edu](mailto:epubs@purdue.edu) for additional information.

---

**Presenter Information**

John Dove, Phoebe Ayers, Casper Grathwohl, Jason B. Phillips, Michael Sweet, and Sam Linthicum

that notable numbers of researchers and educators worldwide employ these sites in the course of their academic work. On the day after an extensive online survey on the use of social media in scholarship was completed, Nicholas outlined the scope and purpose of the CIBER's 2010 contribution to the Charleston Observatory. Rowlands went on to share freshly tabulated data that demonstrates how scholars fit generic online tools, such as Skype and Google Docs, into their workflow at nearly every stage of research. The perceived benefits were around speedy dissemination with wider audiences and without the access restrictions of alternate media. Wamae presented data showing that, for these scholars, utility will determine adoption. The group concluded that libraries and publishers alike must adapt to these trends and collaborate in order integrate academic services and products easily into preferred mainstream social media. Slides from this and other Charleston Conference presentations can be found online at <http://www.slideshare.net/event/2010-charleston-conference>.

## **THE TOWER AND THE FREE WEB: THE ROLE OF REFERENCE**

**Speakers:** *John Dove* - President, Credo Reference; *Phoebe Ayers* - Wikimedia Foundation / University of California at Davis; *Casper Grathwohl* - Vice President and Online and Reference Publisher, Oxford University Press; *Jason B. Phillips* - Librarian for Sociology, Psychology, Gender and Sexuality Studies and American Studies, New York University; *Michael Sweet* - CEO, Credo Reference

**Reported by:** *Som Linthicum* (s.linthicum@yahoo.com) - MLIS student at the University of South Carolina

*Previously published in Against the Grain, v. 23 #3, June 2011*

This large plenary session explored the changing – and, some might argue, vanishing – role of reference in a web-dominated information universe. By forging creative partnerships among publishers, aggregators, and librarians, the speakers hoped to identify opportunities to re-assert the role of an interpretive guide in the process of resource evaluation in order to overcome the onslaught of indiscriminate information overload often experienced by online researchers. Among the possibilities discussed were the embedding of authoritatively vetted hyperlinks within Wikipedia and other collaborative, but unmediated, information vehicles; the creation of proprietary alternatives to Wikipedia with greater authority controls; and the development of online reference services that redirect and reconnect web-based research queries to library resource providers. Speakers emphasized that any such vehicle would need to be discoverable, contextualized, and seamlessly integrated with other relevant resources. The session concluded with a call for innovation, collaboration, and integration among libraries, vendors, and aggregators.