



Vol. 11 No. 2, January 2006

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Editorial

Introduction

'Open Source' and 'open access' are very much in the news these days and, while we can do nothing much in the open source arena, we are very much involved in the open access movement. Given the nature of the journal, it could hardly be otherwise. Most writers, however, are at pains to point out that 'open' does not mean 'free' and, of course, they are right. It costs you, the reader, nothing to read the journal but it costs a number of people significant amounts of their time and it costs Lund University Libraries something to maintain the server that hosts the journal.

However, it would be useful to have some income from the journal, so I'm cooking up a scheme that might result in sponsorship money from various sources. This would make very little difference to the journal in design terms, but, if the idea succeeds it might enable me to outsource some of the work I do. More of this anon—or, perhaps, only when there's something positive to report.

In this issue

Continuing the open access theme, I'll lead my account of this issue with a book review. The review is of John Willinsky's *The access principle: the case for open access to research and scholarship*. As I say in the review, from my point of view this is the best book I have reviewed in 2005. It is well-written, presents a very interesting argument and should be on every academic's bookshelf. Had I the money, I would send a copy to every university Vice-Chancellor, President, Rector, or whatever in the world, to draw their attention to an issue of which they seem, judging by what I see, to be totally unaware. The need for open access to the research literature is, on a global scale, a major economic issue for universities and yet the heads of these institutions appear to have no idea of the money they could save, collectively, if open access journals, subsidised by groups of universities, became the norm in scholarly publishing. This is odd when, particularly in the UK, the Vice-Chancellors seem to be driven by little more than economic issues, unless it is the question of where the next knighthood, peerage, or wardenship of an Oxford college is going. Perhaps if more of us keep shouting at them, the word will get through.

This is not to say, of course, that the other books (and software packages) reviewed here are not worthy of comment, but we can leave the reviewers to tell us their good points and their bad—if they have any.

As to the papers: we have the usual mixed bunch, both in subject and in geographical origin. First, in *User satisfaction with referrals at a collaborative virtual reference service* Nahyun Kwon from the USA explores the different kinds of referrals experienced by users of a collaborative, online 'reference desk' and concludes:

...the results of this study provide several implications for future collaborative virtual reference practice and research. First, from the practical perspective, the current study empirically demonstrated that generic reference questions, such as simple factual and subject-based research questions, are more effectively answered than locality-specific questions. These findings can help local libraries make

informed decisions on such issues as whether they go global or remain local in providing the service.

Next, from Spain, Víctor Herrero-Solana and Claudia Ríos-Gómez explore the productivity of Latin American researchers in librarianship and information science, as represented in the journals covered by the ISI databases. They conclude that the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México is the most productive institution in this respect, with scientometrics being the dominant research area across all of the countries. Of course, one reason for the low representation reported is the paucity of Latin American journals in the field in the databases, meaning that the authors must publish in English. Perhaps the existence of a journal like *Information Research*, which is happy to publish in both languages, may begin to change things.

Also from Spain, but in English, we have 'Constructing Web subject gateways using Dublin Core, RDF and Topic Maps'. The authors conclude that:

Technical problems were solved by using the topic maps paradigm to provide the information with semantics... This enables the search processes to be refined and adjusted, as they establish points of contact between the keywords which were ignored by the traditional process of treatment and retrieval of information used initially. In addition, the greater advantages obtained by incorporating a hybrid manager into the application has improved the speed of reply on the search engine.

From the UK, Lillian Clark and colleagues at the University of York, set out a method for identifying Web browsing strategies by combining ethnographic and clickstream data. The authors conclude that the combination of qualitative and quantitative methods has advantages over one method alone. However, our attention is drawn to problems with both methods and suggestions are made for their improvement in future research.

In the last of the papers Timothy C. Craven, from the USA examines 'Some features of alt texts associated with images in Web pages'. We advised to add 'alt' texts to images in the html code, primarily to assist readers with visual handicap and, generally, such texts need to be informative. However, Craven finds that the commonest 'alt' texts are simply attached to very common navigation features such as arrows and approximately 17% of images had no 'alt' texts at all. The study was carried out on pages randomly selected from the Google and Yahoo! directories: it would be interesting to see the findings on similar research carried out on academic pages.

Finally, in addition to the book reviews mentioned earlier, we have a couple of software reviews. One is for the latest edition of EndNote, which seems to go from strength to strength, while the other is for a Web capture program, Onfolio, which, by coincidence, is linked to EndNote and which Thomson ResearchSoft is promoting through a partnership.

This issue does not contain as many papers as I had hoped to include, mainly because of the pressure of other work: which means, of course, that I shall probably be overworked in putting together the April issue!

You may notice a small change if you click on the link to other open access journals.

And, almost a PS - don't miss the link to the Third Nordic Conference on Scholarly Communication on the contents page.

Professor Tom Wilson, Publisher/Editor-in-Chief
January 2006

How to cite this editorial:

Wilson, T.D. (2006) "Editorial." *Information Research*, **11**(2), editorial E112 [Available at: <http://informationr.net/ir/11-2/editor112.html>]

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