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EDITORIAL

The worst thing about being the editor of a newsletter is having to fill the space marked 'Editorial'.

Ones pen/typing fingers immediately freeze, one becomes an intellectual moron and the file is saved and tucked away hoping for the day when inspiration strikes! Which it never does...

I know you won't believe me, but this newsletter was ready to go out at the beginning of June - and now it is the middle of August - all for the want of a paragraph to be written as the EDITORIAL - by which time the rest of the newsletter is out of date and needs rehashing!

So, in desperation, I am filling this space by saying that I don't know what to fill the space with.... just so that I can get this off to the printer before it is time to start thinking of the next one.....

PAST MEETINGS

"The Net Imperative: the emergence of the e-economy and the impact on global financial markets"

6 April 2000.

Lauren Liebenberg, Rand Merchant Bank.

We have all been inundated with information about the "e-commerce" buzz so it was very refreshing to get the inside track' of new developments and how they were changing the global economy.

THE LOVE BUG! (a most inappropriate name!)

By Reuters June 7, 2000, 10:15 am. PT

MANILA--Philippine authorities said today they had dropped a case against a bank worker suspected of involvement in the 'Love Bug' virus, which caused billions of dollars in damage to computers around the world. Senior state prosecutor Jaafar Dimaampao said there was no law that could be used to prosecute 27-year-old Reonel Ramones.

"As far as Ramones is concerned, the case is closed," Dimaampao told reporters. The prosecutor said the National Bureau of Investigation could not produce the extra evidence ordered by a court to allow a case against the man to proceed under the Access Device Act.

The act deals with illegal use of passwords for credit cards or bank accounts for money. Ramones was arrested by NBI agents after a preliminary investigation of the origin of the Love Bug led to a flat he shared with his girlfriend.

He was later freed by the Justice Department due to lack of evidence but was made to face criminal charges. Ramones claimed it was a case of mistaken identity. The NBI has identified other possible suspects, including computer school dropout Onel de Guzman. De Guzman's lawyer said his client may have accidentally sent out the virus. NBI and Justice Department officials did not say if they would bring any charges against other suspects.

The computer virus, which appeared in emails titled "I Love You," destroyed user files, stole passwords and passed itself on through the address books of affected computers. It hit major agencies around the world, including the U.S. Pentagon and the British parliament.

(Don't you think that there is something really wrong with the world if a person can cause so much damage and get off scot free...)

INTERNET CHANGING PEOPLE'S EXPECTATIONS OF LIBRARY REFERENCE LINES

PITTSBURGH (AP) -- Reference librarian Mary Long figured the Internet would put her out of business. If people could find information themselves, wouldn't need to call her, she figured.

She was wrong.

Long and some other reference librarians around the country say they are busier than ever.

For one thing, people's expectations of the Internet are so high that they no longer seem to accept the idea that some questions cannot be answered.

"We figured, 'We're going to be out of business in 10 years' because people can look up things for themselves at home," says Long, who supervises the Ready Reference call-in service at the Carnegie Library in Pittsburgh. "But people call us more now and they expect more because they figure we can just hit a button and -- blIIIIp! -- we'll get the answer."

Ready Reference fielded 138,000 questions last year, up from 120,000 in 1996.

"I had one today. A lady called and said, 'I want to know how my sister died.' And I asked, you know, 'Well, didn't your family tell you?' And she said, 'Well, can't you just punch in something and it will just come up?'" Long says.

Betsy Hoage, manager of InfoNow, the reference service of the Los Angeles Public Library, says many customers are overwhelmed when they go online and want help from someone familiar with computers.

"They know the information might be there, but they really don't know how to get it out, so they callus," she says.

John Kimball, head of the electronic resources and services section of the Library of Congress in Washington, says librarians are encouraging e-people to send email inquiries instead of telephone or written requests.

Telephone requests fell from 55,764 in 1995 to 36,770 in 1999. During the same time, e-mail requests jumped from 2,262 to 17,937 per year, Kimball says.

The New York Public Library is putting a premium on Internet-trained librarians.

"In the old days, people used to come in looking for information and say, 'I can't use the encyclopaedia', but nowadays kids come in and say, 'My teacher says I have to find this on the Internet,'" says Jean-Paul Michaud, co-ordinator of reference information services.

THE EASE OF ACCESS TO THE INTERNET THE QUESTIONS THAT PEOPLE ASK ARE ABSOLUTELY AMAZING!

These are actual questions e-mailed to the Olympics info line in Sydney, Australia.

I have a question about a famous annual in Australia, but I forget its name. It's a kind of bear and lives in trees. (USA)

- Does it ever get windy in Australia? I have never seen it rain on TV, so how do the plants grow? (UK) (Upwards, out of the ground, like the person who asked this question, who themselves will need watering if their IQ drops any lower...)
- Will I be able to see kangaroos in the street? (USA) (Depends on how much beer you've consumed...)
- Will I be able to speak English most places I go? (USA) (Another intellectual giant...)
- It is imperative that I find the names and addresses of places to contact for a stuffed porpoise. (Italy) (I'm not touching this one...)
- Which direction should I drive - Perth to Darwin or Darwin to Perth - to avoid driving with the sun in my eyes? (Germany) (Excellent question, considering that the Olympics are being held in Sydney)
- I want to walk from Perth to Sydney - can I follow the railroad tracks? (Sweden) (Sure, it's only 4,000 km, so you'll need to have started about a year and a half ago to get there in time for this October...)
- Is it safe to run around in the bushes in Australia? (Sweden) accomplish what?)
- Are there any ATMs in Australia? Can you send me a list of them in Brisbane, Cairns, Townsville and Hervey Bay? (UK)
- Where can I learn underwater welding in Australia? (Portugal)
- Can I bring cutlery into Australia? (UK) (Why bother? Use your fingers like everyone else...)
- Please send a list of all doctors in Australia who can dispense rattlesnake serum. (USA) (No rattlesnakes in Australia, sport!)
- Which direction is north in Australia? (USA) (Face north and you should be about right)
- Can you send me the Vienna Boys' Choir schedule? (USA) (Americans have considerable trouble distinguishing between Austria and Australia.)

- Are there places in Australia where you can make love outdoors? (Italy) (Yes. Outdoors.)
- I was in Australia in 1969 on R+R, and I want to contact the girl I dated while I was staying in Kings Cross. Can you help? (USA) (You should keep quiet about that)
- Do you have perfume in Australia? (France) (No. Everybody stinks.)
- Do tents exist in Australia? (Germany) (Yes, but only in supply stores, peoples' garages, and the national parks...)
- Can I wear high heels in Australia? (UK) (This HAS to be a blonde...)
- Can you tell me the regions in Tasmania where the female population is smaller than the male population? (Italy) (Yes. Gay night-clubs.)
- Do you celebrate Christmas in Australia? (France) (Yes. At Christmas.)
- Can I drive to the Great Barrier Reef? (Germany) (Sure, if your vehicle is amphibious.)
- Are there killer bees in Australia? (Germany) (Not yet, but we'll see what we can do when you get here.)
- Can you give me some information about hippo racing in Australia?(USA) (What's this guy smoking, and where can I get some?)
- Are there supermarkets in Sydney and is milk available all year round? (Germany) (Probably another blonde?)

NEED TO MARKET YOUR LIBRARY?

Marketing Treasures: Ideas & insights into promoting Library and Information services.
<http://www.isolson.com/marketingtreasures>

An online newsletter that is published four times a year. Freely available and includes a collection of Library Clip Art. Chris Olson has also set up a "Library Marketing Village"? which started this year. Right now it's a small group of people "villagers", because it hasn't been publicised but will be announced at the SLA conference this month

To have a preview, look at <http://www.vicinities.com/librarymarketing>

WANTING TO TURN YOUR LIBRARY INTO A COMMERCIAL ENTERPRISE? WRITE A MARKETING PLAN FIRST

In recent years, libraries of all types have found it necessary to compete for both money and clients as major changes have occurred. Corporate librarians have realised that they must show management why they are useful and how they contribute to the bottom line. Public libraries face stiff competition for funding. Additionally, the Internet brings a whole new dimension of competition that public, academic, and corporate libraries are facing daily. Whereas budget problems have been around for some time, the recent competition from the Internet can translate into fewer users, despite the fact that the Internet is also a crucial tool used by librarians for research and marketing.

In an interview for this article, Suzanne Ward (author of Starting and Managing Fee-Based Services in Academic Libraries, JAI Press, Inc., 1997) told me that "students are no longer a captive audience" because many do their own research using PCs (and at the beach at that!). She says that both students and faculty are seeing less value in the library infrastructure, and this is creating a need for more proactive strategic planning and marketing to keep libraries from being discounted even more

One approach to library services during the past 15 years has been to develop fee-based information services that are geared toward businesses, local governmental agencies, or other target markets beyond what basic budgets can otherwise support. Fee-based services in libraries enhance institutional image and prestige, make contributions to the community not possible before, create more opportunities for interaction, and have the potential for making money and diversifying revenue. Without question, fee-based services require a business and marketing plan, since, as Ward explains, "starting or managing a fee-based information service is very much like starting and running a small business."

To find out how to write a marketing plan - have a look at the full text of this article available at: <http://www.infortoday.com/mls/jun99/how-to.htm>

WEB OVERTURNING IMAGE OF BOOK-FILING LIBRARIAN

From the Washington Business Journal, 4/4/2000

A librarian couldn't get a break in this town before the Internet.

"Nobody really understood the depth and breadth of information that was available, so they didn't see the value in having an expert to help them sort it and grasp it," said Mary Ellen Bates, principal of District-based Bates Information Services.

The Web changed all that, flooding the business world with a staggering wealth of new data. In 1993 Bates hung her own shingle, establishing her consulting firm to help corporations make sense out of the virtual deluge of information being thrown their way.

She is not alone. The advent of the Internet has created unprecedented new demand for the highly trained information specialists known as "special librarians" -- people who can take all this information and organise it into bite-sized bits for easy corporate consumption.

In its 1999 salary survey, the 14,000-member Special Libraries Association found that member salaries had grown 5.1 percent in the previous year, as compared to a 3.3 percent increase for other white-collar workers in roughly the same period. The average full-time information professional was earning \$52,826 a year as of last spring.

Supporting decision making

Another sign of the growing demand: The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics has predicted a net increase of more than 10,000 information professionals in the U.S. labour force by the year 2006.

As demand for information-sorting expertise has grown, the role of the special librarian has evolved.

The corporate librarian "no longer stacks shelves and archives company information," said SLA Executive Director David R. Bender. "Today's corporate librarians are technologically savvy information professionals who use the latest information technology to proactively gather, analyse and disseminate knowledge for strategic decision making."

And thank goodness they do, said Susan Mach, a partner in the Kearney, N.J.-based husband and wife communications consulting firm Laurence & Susan Mach Creative Services. Mach has enlisted the aid of Mary Ellen Bates on numerous occasions -- to research technology trends, study consumer issues and profile various companies and industry sectors.

"I have a Ph.D., and yet I wouldn't know where to begin to look for this information," said Mach. "I understand what good research is, but I don't have the technology training and the experience in sorting out the high-quality stuff from all the self-promoting drivel that is out there. When we are looking for the facts, when we have to find information very quickly and it has to be broad and deep, we pick up the phone and call Mary Ellen."

Association files online

While Bates proffers her services to a wide range of clients, other special librarians have taken a more industry-specific approach. For example, Linda Rothbart established Reston-based Rotlibart Information Solutions two years ago in order to meet the particular needs of the Washington area's massive association industry.

"The idea of what to do with information is just mind-boggling, especially for associations," she said. "Many of these associations have been around for a century now, and, as space gets more and more valuable, they simply don't know what to do with all the paper they have. They can't just fill up their space with file cabinets. They want to put their information into [electronic] formats, and that means they need somebody to come in who understands the pros and cons of doing this."

"These days, for people who have research skills beyond just using the Internet, the market is wide open," said Bates.

This process offers a fine illustration of the librarian's art.

It's true that an association could simply microfiche every scrap of paper it owns --but why? Most of it will never get looked at again anyway, and when someone does actually need to reference a file, it's doubtful that file would ever be found. So it's not just about filing. It's about sorting, prioritising, analysing.

Distilling wine of knowledge

This distinction goes to the heart of a dilemma facing many special librarians today.

After all -- the argument goes -- who needs an information-finding specialist when the Web can deliver vast quantities of data super-fast and totally free?

Librarians bristle at this. In the first place, they say, people overestimate the Web. "It is certainly true that a great deal can be gathered instantaneously and at little or no cost, but you get into issues of quality and reliability. You can have it fast, you can have it good and you can have it cheap. But you can't have all three at the same time," said Lucy Lettis, director of business information services with Arthur Andersen in New York.

In fact, librarians argue, today's easy access to information has made their expert sorting-and-sifting skills more valuable than ever.

"You can't drink water out of a fire hose, and the Internet in a sense is a fire hose. What librarians do is distill it down into the fine wine of knowledge," said Bates. "We are the vintners of the information age."

It's an argument these experts have to make practically every day. As the role of special librarians in corporate America has expanded in recent years, so has the amount of time they spend disabusing colleagues of their illusions.

"One of the things we fight is the idea that everything is on the Internet. It is not. Or the idea that everything can be digitised very quickly and cheaply. It can't. You really have to stand back from all the hoopla and show people that there is a cost to these things," said Rothbart.

"A big part of what we do is to show them what the options are and explain to them what the costs of all this information really are."

Misconceptions notwithstanding, it is clear the business world is learning to prize those who can find information, sort the fluff from the substance, and deliver the goodies.

WHAT'S HAPPENING ON THE COPYRIGHT FRONT?

Latest report back from Denise Nicholson:

Unfortunately we still have not had an official response from the Dept of Trade & Industry. We are also waiting for them to confirm a date for a meeting with us.

On 2 August 2000, Louise Szente (representing the CTP and GAELIC Copyright Sub-Committee), Dawn Taylor, Herman Roos (representing Mike du Toit) and I met with Mr. T. Kulati (Senior Adviser to Minister Kader Asmal) and Sanette Boshoff (Director: Management Support, Dept. of Education) on 2 August 2000.

We discussed our concerns about the copyright amendments and the serious implications for education, libraries, etc. (They also have implications for organisations, firms, journalists, etc.). We also discussed the DTI's lack of transparency and its apparent disregard for the educational sector and libraries.

We have now submitted a document to the Dept. of Education and they have undertaken to take the matter further as a matter of urgency. They will attempt to intercept the Bill before it goes to Parliament so that all the proposed amendments to the Copyright Act can be withdrawn. Parliament will sit in September 2000 but we understand that the Bill will be presented to the Portfolio Committee on Trade and Industry sometime this month.

I am the Very Model of Computerised Librarian

I am the very model of computerised Librarian,
I seek out information zoological to agrarian,
I know each subject that is found in an encyclopaedia
I handle every AV tool and every type of media;
My online databases can locate each journal article,
In physics texts, I can define each elemental particle,
In atlases and online maps, I find the way to Timbuktu,
Identify each capital from Bogotá to Katmandu.
I navigate the Internet with speed and perspicacity;

Evaluate each website for its content and veracity:
In fact, in finding information, most utilitarian, I am the very model of computerised librarian.

I quickly search the Internet or grab the right book off the shelf;
Then give the patron answers or I teach him how to search himself,
I speed through every database like Galenet, FirstSearch, Dialog,
My records are all organised, just try my on-line catalogue;
My homepage is a marvel of well-documented, helpful links,
It points to sites on modern jazz, hang-gliding and old Egypt's Sphinx!

I know just how to catalogue in Dewey and in L. of C.,
I know the best books you should buy and those you wouldn't want for free.

I get you quotes on hot new stocks and find addresses in a trice,
The latest news, a star's birthday, song lyrics or a cure for lice:
In fact, in finding information, most utilitarian,
I am the very model of computerised librarian.

When I can look up online all ephemeral material,
When I can get full text of every page in every serial,
When my computer translates every language and each dialect,
From Hindu texts in Sanskrit to Confucius with each analects,
When every book is digitised and indexed in my database,
When I'm the first librarian to travel into outer space -
And when I've indexed every site on every chromosome and gene,
You'll say a more computerised librarian has never been.

I'm working on an interface directly to the human mind,
So I can capture concepts that have not yet even been defined;
In fact, in finding information, most utilitarian,
I am the very model of computerised librarian.

Lyrics by Diane M. O'Keefe, M.S.L.S. and Janet T. O'Keefe, , M.L.S.

Based on the song "I Am The Very Model of a Modern Major-General" from Gilbert and Sullivan's The Pirates of Penzance.