Conference Circuit

# Meeting explores gateways and gatekeepers

By Jinnie Y. Davis and Ann Okerson

*Highlights of the ARL/AAUP symposium on electronic networks*

The third Association of Research Libraries (ARL)/Association of American University Presses' (AAUP) Joint Symposium on Scholarly Publishing on the Electronic Networks was held in Washington, D.C., from November 13 to 15, 1993. The meeting was also made possible through the collaboration of the University of Virginia Library and the National Science Foundation. Symposium cochairs were Ann Okerson of ARL and Lisa Freeman of the University of Minnesota Press. Karen Marshall of the University of Virginia Library was chair for a Charlottesville session held on November 16. Highlights of the panel presentations and the keynote speech are reported below.

## The Library As Mind

Kaye Gapen (Case Western Reserve University) reported that the university installed a fiber-optic network throughout the campus as the beginning of a "knowledge management" environment. Library staff interviewed 1,400 campus personnel to design the "virtual library," which brings people together with information in an integrated system of textual and image databases and gives them online tools to build, maintain, and share databases. Case Western is also working with IBM to develop Royalty Manager software to help track intellectual property rights of materials. With two electronic classrooms and two centers for digitization, the library has expanded its role as information provider. No longer only "the library as place," the Case Western Libraries have become "the library as mind."

## Do We Have the Vision?

Science-fiction author Bruce Sterling keynoted the symposium with a speech in which he termed the electronic environment the "fastest technological transformation in human history." He cited Prodigy, with its proprietary and revenue-generating philosophy, as a prime example of how not to do networking. The network is a living thing which, like language, encourages people to communicate. Sterling conjured the specter of "Disney Bells"—the alarming intrusion of the telecommunications and entertainment industries into the network. As for who should run the networks, Sterling's choice is librarians, who "know where to put things where they make sense," or universities, which have a set of values. Sterling observed that, with little effort, we can now ensure that the human race never loses another word of the ancient Greeks. Such enterprise deserves the name of greatness, provided we have the vision.

## Electronic Beowulf

Kevin Kieman (University of Kentucky) described the British Library's "Electronic Beowulf" project. By digitizing its manuscripts and applying special recovery techniques, the British Library will provide electronic access to priceless manuscripts in its collection. Manuscripts that were damaged or erased in the original now come to view with startling clarity, opening up the way for new identifications and interpretations of text, as well as insight into the psychology of scribes.

## Electronic Chaucer

Mary Wack (Washington State University) demonstrated her prototype "Electronic Chaucer," which links a text searching and concordance

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program with associated color-image archives and text files such as the *Oxford English Dictionary, MLA Bibliography,* and *Art Index.* Spurred by the inadequacies of traditional methods of teaching Chaucer, Wack developed this interactive tool to engage her students more fully in the learning process.

### Gatekeeper to a Garden of Earthly Delights

David Seaman (University of Virginia) described the Library's Electronic Text Center. It offers not only the texts themselves, but also scanners and software that compares text and generates word lists. The electronic library contains thousands of full-text documents in the humanities, arranged by language and type of resource. Although most commercial databases in the humanities are already encoded with SGML, library staff have also encoded additional, commercially unavailable texts in the public domain, to expand holdings. The project has drawn library staff into new collaborative roles with the faculty.

### The Gods Walk the Earth

Joseph J. Esposito (Encyclopaedia Britannica [EB] Publishing Group) described the current publishing environment as one that is "entirely destabilized, . . . the gods walk the earth, and mere mortals must stay out of the way or be crushed underfoot." By fall of 1994, EB Online will be available on campus terminals, in text form only. Although at last year's symposium Esposito did not see a role for the Internet in this project, the prohibitive cost of installing the database at individual local sites led EB to the Internet, which allows it to develop the product once, then sell subscriptions to colleges with access. EB hopes to drive prices for information down and pass the savings along to clients. The encyclopaedia will no longer be a literary artifact but a knowledge base that takes an actual form whenever a particular marketing application arises.

### Lasting Investment in Content

Michael Ester (Luna Imaging, Inc.) reported on the Getty Art History Project, which is studying how art historians, curators, catalogers, and other professionals use images in their work, to ensure the development of a usable electronic product. Survey results revealed a range of issues, including the need to display works of art in physical juxtaposition for easy comparison of their actual scale; the unexpected finding that colors accurate in a smaller size seem wrong when magnified on a large monitor; and the changing needs for reproduction quantity and quality during different phases of research. Ester stressed the importance of producing archival-quality images; although the technology will change, the content needs lasting investment.

### Creating a Culture of Lifelong Learners

Michael Jensen (University of Nebraska Press) stated that limitations by user or machine in the electronic network make it difficult to get information and can lead to the view that educational information is a commodity to be consumed and guarded. The not-for-profit sector should view the interconnectivity of the network as its strength, allowing a mixture of people and ideas that fosters curiosity and investigation. We should rethink the traditional process of publishing, with its ideas of exclusive ownership and sales of a "unit." In a potential web-like model, renting transactions would be more prevalent than sales. The role of university presses is to provide the best information in the most integrated fashion. They must join together to begin discussions of models of free interconnectivity that still retain peer-reviewed quality and allow cost-recovery.

### A Northwest Passage to the Intellectual World

David Blair (University of Michigan) addressed the difficulty of intellectual and physical access on the networks, given the coarseness of the tools now available. Effective searching tools must be able to describe accurately the intellectual content of the information they represent, to distinguish content from that of similar but different items, and to retrieve a small enough number of items that the user can examine them without reaching a "futility point." Access can also be aided by the precise delineation of a partition, or a definable region in search space. Publishers should help by defining clearly their publishing policies. A "Northwest Passage" may be a vision, but it will improve our lives.

### Our Future Is Interlocked

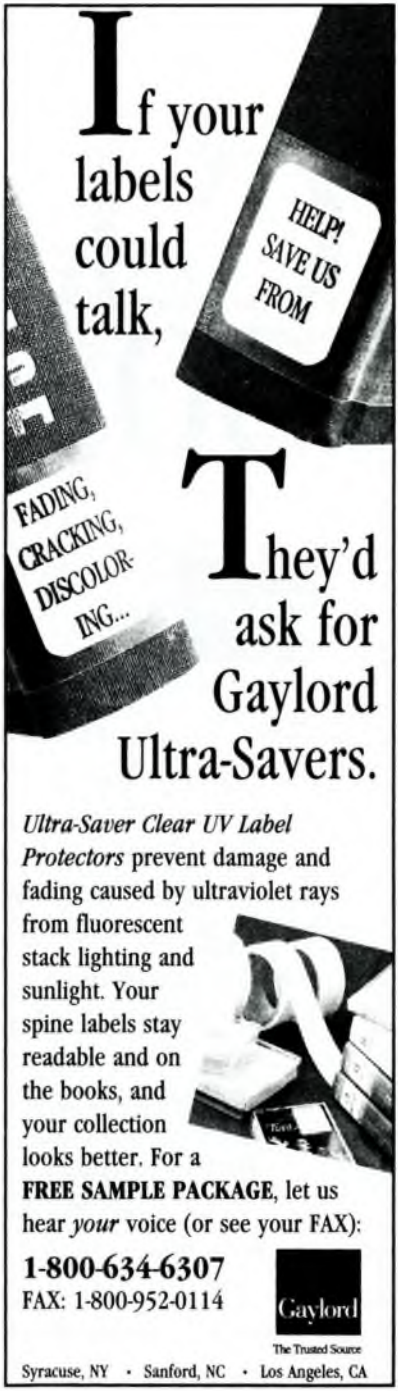
Peter Givler (Ohio State University Press) considers copyright a law that recognizes ownership by creative people of work they create,

while providing a flexible legal framework for wide dissemination of the work. To many academics, copyright seems to pit the rights of publishers and authors against the rights of libraries and users. It is, however, still the law of the land and grants a monopoly on information to copyright holders. As the cost of information has risen more quickly than inflation or library budgets, librarians and patrons have become locked in a struggle to free themselves from this monopoly. Givler blames not the copyright law itself but those who abuse it. The system works because, by establishing ownership, copyright permits the publisher a reasonable chance of recovering costs. Givler warned that, with unregulated dissemination, university presses will be out of business. The university community can explore promising avenues for resolution that balance the rights of publishers, users, and libraries. Givler reminded both university press publishers and librarians that, as part of the same institutions, their future is interlocked, so they must work together to find solutions to this problem.

### Non-Profit Publishers Are Suffering

Janet Fisher (MIT Press) warned that the movement led by libraries encouraging authors to limit rights to commercial publishers is hurting the nonprofit publishers and could destroy the current system of scholarly communication. She explained how the licensing of subsidiary rights in a journal environment works: when authors transfer rights to a publisher, the publisher gives authors the right to reuse their own materials. The publisher then handles copyright registration, depository copies, reprints, and other issues. Such centralization is critical to avoid a time-consuming and expensive process of individual contract negotiation. There is, however, room for compromise. When authors wish to retain copyright, the publisher should have other options available to license subsidiary rights without deterring dissemination (e.g., allowing authors to copy articles for use in their own classrooms). Fisher called for university presses and libraries to work together to develop much-needed guidelines for fair use in the rapidly changing electronic environment.

Proceedings from the meeting are available from: Association of Research Libraries, c/o Ann Okerson, Office of Scientific and Academic Publishing, 21 Dupont Circle, NW, Washington, DC 20036. ■

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