

Letters



To the Editor:

With reference to "Destruction of Knowledge: A Study of Journal Mutilation at a Large University Library" (*C&RL* 56 [Nov. 1995]: 497-507) by Constantia Constantinou, this may be a naive question. Has any library calculated the "trade-off" between *free* photocopies and the costs of replacing mutilated materials?

Marvin H. Scilken
Editor

*The U*N*A*B*A*S*H*E*D Librarian*
The "How I Run My Library Good"
Letter

To the Editor:

As I began to read Constantia Constantinou's interesting article on journal mutilation, I was shocked by a reference to "Anthony, emperor of Rome" on page 497. Mark Antony (Anthony, Antonius, etc.) was many things, but he was never an emperor. I would not quibble over a phrase such as "would-be emperor," but "emperor" is the sort of error that discredits librarians in the eyes of other academics. I am surprised that such a boner got by; it detracts from what is otherwise an interesting article.

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To the Editor:

I have no quibble with the logical conclusion that Carolyn W. Jardine reaches in "Maybe the 55 Percent Rule Doesn't Tell the Whole Story" (*C&RL* 56 [Nov. 1995]: 477-485), namely, that positive be-

havioral traits will result in greater user satisfaction. But it is important to keep in mind that librarians are *not* pharmacists: it does not really matter if patrons indicate that they are satisfied if they concomitantly have not achieved their goal, specifically, the acquisition of the material that they seek. Reference personnel are not in the business of providing users with satisfaction. We tender apposite sources, search strategies, data, and information—even to dissatisfied customers.

A simplistic analogy might help here. A man who needs a snow shovel goes to a hardware store. He discovers that because of a recent blizzard the store does not have a single snow shovel in stock. On the way out, he notices that some esoteric grass seed has been reduced from twelve to two dollars a pound. He purchases a large bag (not realizing that the seed will have lost much of its viability by the time planting season arrives). As he heads for his car, an interviewer asks him if he is satisfied. "Indeed I am. I did not get the shovel I need, but I was lucky enough to find this incredibly priced grass seed." Satisfaction is not necessarily a tenable indicator of success. I am obviously not advocating the purposeful alienation of our clients. I am indicating that in our business satisfaction is a secondary, not a primary, consideration.

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