Editor's Desk

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Of Zeros and Ones

We made it! Although this issue of *Library Leadership & Management* (*LL&M*) is dated winter 2010, it is being produced and issued in late 2009 and we feel like celebrating. The idea to make *LL&M* all-digital has been in the discussion/planning stages for at least four years, and a lot of people have worked diligently to make it happen. This is now a 100-percent online publication with no more printed copies (although print-quality copies can be made using a production-grade printer). The navigation around the website may take a little getting used to, and we on the staff are adjusting as well. But we have high hopes for the online *LL&M*—more interactivity, more diverse offerings, the ability to link to other Web locations, and color photography. The latter can be seen in this issue. Previously, for reasons of cost, color reproductions were not included in printed copies. Rather, all photos and illustrations were shaded as black and white reproductions. All this has now changed.

There are a number of opportunities that Web publishing brings. There are also some pitfalls, as followers of the Google Books saga know well. To recap, academics are concerned about a number of issues from image quality to poor metadata to limited public domain for certain classes of publications.[1] Legalities about ownership of books outside copyright protection have yet to be completely ironed out[2] and are possibly years from complete availability. And what if some books under copyright slip through and are scanned and made available? It has happened already,and although the book was removed by Google on request, it is not clear that this would have happened had the author not stumbled on the work.[3] It is not possible to know how prevalent these types of difficulties will be with all the millions of books that have been scanned to date. Once Google has settled its many legal issues, the remaining key issue of ownership will need to be resolved. This ownership is not about copyright or even "books" but rather the scans, the content of the books, which will be controlled by Google.

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The idea has fascinating implications for the future because Google is, like book publishers, a for-profit business. Once in a position to distribute the digital images of book content, they will also be in a position to set up revenue streams around access to the digital images. For libraries, it could be a boon: millions of books available to patrons for a minimal download or use charge. Or it could be a boondoggle: imagine a scenario where the scanned books are only available to members of a consortium that includes regular annual membership dues, access fees, downloading charges, and fee-for-print services. It may be a little far-fetched, but the problem for librarians is that we don't know what Google is going to do when they clear all the legal boundaries to distributing the many volumes they have scanned. What we do know is that they are a business, and that they have spent a lot of money to digitize millions of books. They won't be giving them away for free.

But that isn't the focus of this issue of *LL&M*. Rather, these particular zeros and ones are those that appear on the screen as letters and words with a variety of topics including assessment, positive uses of conflict, hiring older workers, and our continuing series Perspectives on Leadership. This time, wonderful insight is included from two highly regarded academic library directors as well as a public library director who has made the library more of a positive force in the community. Finally, our regular columnists provide insight and wisdom, and there is also a feature on performance reviews in the workplace. The latter is certainly timely, as there is a lot of rolling the eyes each year around this time when these reviews are due. In this case, the authors offer a different model for the reviews, which has been successful at their institution. A more recent opinion by a professor of organizational behavior states what many of us have been thinking for years—that these reviews don't work well. Most performance reviews are instituted by the organization to track progress toward goals and to rate performance. In many cases, however, there are better ways to do this, and he proposes rethinking the notion of performance appraisals entirely and perhaps even discarding them.[4] A somewhat radical idea, but precisely the sort of thinking that the modern leader and administrator needs to have as planning the future library goes forward.

In subsequent issues of LL&M we will continue to explore these and other topics in a timely manner. One

thing to look out for in the next issue (Spring 2010) is special coverage of the coming LLAMA election. We will be including information about the candidates for office in a Q & A format so that their views on the issues can be discussed. This is a new feature for the journal so be sure to watch for it

References

1. American Historical Association, www.historians.org/perspectives/issues/2007/0709/0709vie1.cfm (accessed Oct. 12, 2009).

2. The Huffington Post, "Google Book Settlement 1.0 Is History," www.huffingtonpost.com/pamela-samuelson/google-book-settlement-10_b_296343.html (accessed Oct. 12, 2009).

3. www.mediabistro.com/baynewser/google_book_settlement/nova_scotia_man_accidentally_discovers_family_history_scanned_into_google_books_asks_for_it_to_be_removed_122659.asp (accessed Oct. 12, 2009).

4. Jeffrey Pfeffer, "Low Grades for Performance Reviews," *BusinessWeek* no. 4141 (Aug. 3, 2009): 68.