

# PROGRESSIVE LIBRARIAN

A Journal for Critical Studies & Progressive Politics in Librarianship

Issue #29

Summer 2007



**ANONYMITY IN LIBRARYLAND BLOGGING**  
**BUSH CRUSADE AGAINST SCIENTIFIC INFORMATION**  
**ROAD TO IRAQ WAR – ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY**  
**INTERNET’S ROOT OF POWER**  
**GENERATIONS – DARFUR – IMMIGRANTS**  
**BRAVERMAN PRIZE ESSAY**  
**BOOK REVIEWS & MORE**

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Peter McDonald, Mark Rosenzweig; Managing Editor: Elaine Harger  
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COVER IMAGE: Detail from "The production brigade's reading room," by  
Zhao Kunhan, 1974, 53x77 cm. This is a poster published in China during the Great  
Proletarian Cultural Revolution, from the Ann Tompkins (Tang Fandi) and Lincoln  
Cushing Chinese Poster Collection at U.C. Berkeley's East Asian Library.  
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Cover art description cont'd:

Ann Tompkins, a U.S. citizen invited to China after supporting the People's Republic of China at the 1965 World Peace Conference in Stockholm. She spent five years in Beijing teaching English, and returned several times subsequently. Her passion for the worker- friendly graphic art of China prompted her to accumulate what is perhaps the largest U.S. collection of posters produced during this period. Years later, Ann heard PLG member and poster scholar Lincoln Cushing talking on public radio about his work with Cuban posters, and asked if he could help her find a suitable institutional home for all the posters she brought back. Cushing then photographed them all and built an initial digital catalog. Chronicle Books, which had published Cushing's previous book on Cuban posters, asked about a proposal for a book on these, and after a year of co-authorship *Chinese Posters: Art from the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution* is due to be released in October of 2007. A complete set of each distinct title was given to U.C. Berkeley's East Asian Library, and the duplicate copies (85 distinct titles, plus duplicates) were donated to the Center for the Study of Political Graphics in Los Angeles.

Peter Zhou, EAL Director, wrote this in his editorial in the Spring 2007 library newsletter: "[This collection] preserves a genre of art that was known to and accepted by hundreds of millions of Chinese during the years of the Cultural Revolution. The posters' images and the directives they supported once influenced a quarter of world's population. Anyone attempting to understand this period will want to study these posters, not simply as illustrations of the era but as expressions of its ideals and vicissitudes."

More about the EAL collection, the book, and the digital catalog can all be found at <<http://www.docspopuli.org/ChinaPosters.html>>

Lincoln Cushing

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## EDITORIAL

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# ON ANONYMITY IN LIBRARYLAND BLOGGING

by John Buschman,  
Mark Rosenzweig &  
Kathleen de la Peña McCook

The case for anonymity in various libraryland blogs — in which (mostly) conservative librarians justify varying degrees of anonymity to mask their identity — is as follows, a distillation of various posting from over the past year or two:

- Anonymous writing has a long and proud history. It is a key component of the rights of free speech and intellectual freedom, and if people don't choose to identify themselves, that is their right too. Anonymous speech is done to focus attention on the debate rather than the speaker.
- There is no reason to stand by someone else's opinions or be responsible for what they say. However, it is possible to have a reasoned debate or to defend your position without necessarily saying who you are. I do not defend the anonymous attack culture but rather their right to engage in their culture. I can defend the right to speech, including anonymous speech, without defending the content. Viciousness reflects back on the speakers, even if they are anonymous.
- Anonymous bloggers' posts have not been overly vicious — possibly overly sarcastic, but interesting and thoughtful all the same. Calling out this person is just *ad hominem* attack. Besides, most of the attacks are not on individuals, but on library groups. How does this have a chilling effect? If you don't like it, feel free to exercise your right to ignore it.
- A particularly nasty or vicious blogger does not represent all conservatives. Attacking the extremes allows you to tar everyone with the same brush, and the bad behavior of anonymous bloggers does not justify a non-anonymous response in-kind.

- Disingenuous, juvenile, and inflammatory posts would have been better off posted anonymously since there was an attempt to hold the blogger accountable for the words. If posted anonymously, then the attacks won't affect the blogger and co-workers can't see what the blogger's views are. Both are better protected. Breaking anonymity is simply another way of silencing.
- This blogger is not anonymous. The name is posted at the website. It makes no sense to accuse a blogger who posts under a *nom de plume* of any form of anonymity.
- I am not anonymous, I spelled my name backwards to shield it from searches on the web.

If by now you are beginning to suspect that anonymity in libraryland blogging protects less-than-lofty goals and discursive exchange, you are correct (see Buschman, 2004 for a humorous take on this phenomenon). A low-light review of some (but not the worst) of the verbiage tossed about anonymously and semi-anonymously from the Right would include “totalitarian,” “boot-licker,” “goose-stepping,” “thought police,” “semi-literate,” “infantile-minded,” “apologist for murderers like Stalin and Mao,” and of course “friend of...” to invoke the always-popular guilt-by-association in Red-baiting. Historically in libraryland blogging, it has been the anonymous and semi-anonymous attacks of the Right, followed by a counter-response, and that response is then characterized by the Right as “silencing” of the original attackers. It is our contention here that the means and the mean-ness of anonymous attack are one in the same. Before addressing that concern, we would like to point out seven fundamental flaws in the argument for anonymity in libraryland blogging (of all stripes).

First and foremost among the points to address is the notion of intellectual freedom as a right, coupled with anonymous speech holding a similar status. Without repeating the long history here, intellectual freedom is our field's version of academic freedom — not a “right” but rather a hard fought space or zone of freewheeling inquiry and exchange in the academy (and thus in libraries) that tenure is meant to protect (see Buschman and Rosenzweig, 1999 and Buschman, 2006). In other words, intellectual freedom is a variant also meant to protect *open, public exchange* in the interests of an open society and democracy. Intellectual freedom as a pillar of support for anonymous speech — particularly the attack-mode variety — is thus a shaky foundation.

Second, the statements justifying anonymity tend to conflate it with the right to privacy. We will not take the time here to comment extensively, except to note the deep ironies of conservative librarian bloggers invoking this idea in the current conservative legal environment which does not recognize a fundamental right to privacy in order to spy on citizens and reinvade women's wombs. Rather, we will simply note that privacy protections come in four varieties: from intrusion into private affairs or

seclusion; from public disclosure of private, uncomfortable facts; public disclosure of falsehoods about oneself; and identity theft (Schoeman, 1992). Privacy as a protection, in other words, would tend to favor more those being anonymously and publicly attacked, not the anonymity of the attackers. Privacy as a right is meant to protect the private, not one's identity upon entering the public arena.

Third, shielding one's identity in entering the public arena is not privacy, but rather a form of secrecy — again a related concept that is often conflated with privacy in the justifications for anonymity. Secrecy is “the practice, often mandated and sanctioned for insiders, of excluding information and conduct from outsiders” (Byrne, 1998). Anonymity is, in other words, a form of secrecy and in no way represents a “right” to or form of privacy or intellectual freedom. There is no right of secrecy. There is no hard-fought zone of secrecy protections meant to push forward the ends of democracy in open, public exchange.

Fourth, the secret that secrecy protects can be legitimate *or* illegitimate. However constructed, “it generally has a culturally and morally more ambiguous status than privacy” (Marx, 2006). The shield or cloak that anonymity and its variants in libraryland blogging represents does not therefore fall into the protected zone of the continuum between public and private, between publicity and privacy, between confidentiality and public disclosure. Rather, in this case it skews the playing field dramatically in favor of the “insider” holding back a piece of information but claiming the full rights of participation in the public sphere, invoking its protections.

Fifth, facile comparisons to the *Federalist Papers* as a justification for anonymous blogging (a real example) are the height of puffery. The answer to bad speech — if it be bad speech — isn't anonymity, it is more speech. The force of the better argument is our best protection, but behind that is an even more fundamental issue about *who* is making the argument. Secrecy in this case is the refuge of scoundrels. The notion that one's coworkers (or readers or public) are “better protected” by anonymous opinions and attacks is wholly specious.

Sixth, *nom de plumes* and backwards names — even if one can find or figure out the identity of the author — represent a variant mask of secrecy in blogging discourse. Unless one goes further into a blog to try and find an identity (thereby further empowering a soapbox against your will), one does not know the source of the opinion. On the contrary, one knows full well the *object* of the petty slap or vicious attack. It is like saying someone can don a mask and scream at you, and the only response available is to be able to take down the license plate number to track down who that person is (without accounting for the benefit of the extra “hits” on the blog in this analogy). Otherwise it comes down to the picayune issue of research and proper citation of *nom de plumes*. In a world of Google name searches, this represents a fundamental form of power, secrecy, and dishonesty. Arguments for anonymity and semi-anonymity allow people

to simply write things with no (or greatly lessened) accountability. The attacks are not meant to convince, they are meant to chill the discussion and silence the more timid. Would those bloggers do the same standing up in a meeting, facing that person? When and why is it wrong to expect someone to own their own words?

Seventh, anonymous commentary is, according to the prevailing logic of the justifications, acceptable when aimed at a *group* of people (PLG, SRRT, “liberals”, socialists, etc.). That is no more a reasonable defense for anonymous blogging attacks than it was for the Ku Klux Klan’s tactics or infiltration of progressive groups by the police.

We deal with extremes in our analysis, because the extremes represent a significant amount of anonymous commentary from those who feel the need to attack those who have worked for people’s right to know and those who actually take time to work for social justice and human rights. They will name people they dislike under the hood of secrecy, but are afraid to stand up for what they purport to believe and unwilling to accept that others outside of their webfans should know their identity. Anonymous libraryland bloggers harm the discourse. Their “ethos” is victory at any cost, democracy be damned. In this sense, they are not librarians, and there is an abiding irony in writing “as librarians” (implying a deep connection to intellectual freedom) from behind a disguise.

The anonymity question must be treated as part and parcel of a broader matter of the degradation of the norms of communication and discourse, as part of what is wrong with blogging as social communications. Ab/use of anonymity is not necessarily a deviation within blogging; it is considered somehow of the essence of the thing, part of what makes it so appealing. The inauthenticity of online interactions is a continuum, stretching from routine use of “handles” instead of names, to elaborate cultivation of false online persona, to abusive anonymity in malicious exchanges. All of this posing has become quite naturalized. People don’t even think much about it any more. The reason an attack on the “right” to anonymity creates such a reaction is because it gets close to the heart of the cyber-libertarian ideology which motivates those who hype an “all-internet” culture. If they give up that principle, a large part of the attraction, not only of blogs, but of the on-line social life, disappears.

Even if we concede the distorted form of “privacy” (anonymity) as a distorted “right,” it is something of a straw man. For those who are engaged with blogs and social networks/networking, privacy is inherently “less of a concern.” Advocating for and taking advantage of the customized benefits of the online “good life” means adopting, by definition, one’s “self” — and exposing one’s self — as a customer who’s proclivities are constantly monitored and harvested to further customize products and spectacles to consume. Privacy as a right is a meaningless and vacuous concept in the online life. Identity is a vendable commodity, and blogs (used this way) are ways to attract eyeballs and project an inauthentic persona. In other words,

the changing attitude towards privacy in librarianship is ironically linked to deeper questions and consequences about the needs fulfilled by the use of these technologies. Polishing one's profile becomes a substitute for personal development, anonymity in the expression of a plethora of private information and well beyond in the public sphere becomes a substitute for privacy; identities are created as brands and logos (and thereby falsified and reified); cleverness becomes a substitute for the power of argument and the persuasiveness of evidence.

In the end the anonymous will fade and the commitment to intellectual freedom, equal access and diversity will prevail because they are the correct things to fight for by librarians. An opinion you'd not care to defend in the light of day does not grow more valid delivered from the shadows. Hiding the source of opinions because co-workers, employers, etc. might not approve leads to the festering culture laid bare here in the exchanges on record. Intellectual freedom is *not* free — and the cheap stunt of hooded attack is no way to practice it. The moral equivalence between anonymous (and its variants) attacks and public discourse, exchange, and debate is not one we would care to go to the Supreme Court over. Let them blog, by all means. Let them fill their echo chambers with hollow righteousness. Let them talk to each other. Hooded heroism is not noble.

When the debate is open, and the issues are vetted fairly in the open, conservatives don't like the results. The culture of anonymous, semi-anonymous and pseudonymous personal attack is a way to change rules in order to win. Krugman (2007) pegs the issue: "the Little Lie — the small accusation invented out of thin air, followed by another, and another, and another [isn't] meant to have staying power. Instead, they create a sort of background hum, a sense that the person facing all these accusations must have done something wrong." These bloggers may well be our new Shakespeare, Morrison, Austen, or Cervantes, their words deathless, their reasoning flawless. However, when they choose to enter the public arena, disguise is not a noble stance. Anonymous speech has value, it of course has the same right to exist as any, but when debating among equals in the public arena, owning one's words is more than simply a technical matter.

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# CATALOGING THE PATH TO A NEW DARK AGE: a taxonomy of the Bush administration's pervasive crusade against scientific communication

by **Patricia Dawson &  
Diane K. Campbell**

*There are known knowns. These are things we know that we know.  
There are known unknowns. That is to say, there are things that we  
know we don't know. But there are also unknown unknowns. There  
are things we don't know we don't know. Donald Rumsfeld*

It is somewhat ironic that another Bush (Dr. Vannevar Bush) created the present system of federal support for basic scientific research for the public good, for “the improvement of National health, creation of new enterprises by bringing new jobs, and the betterment of the national standard of living” as directed by Franklin D. Roosevelt, after World War II (Klaphaak, 1996). However, the present (George W.) Bush and his administration have persistently attempted to disrupt and alter this dynamic of science in the interests of the public. His administration has “resisted sound scientific evidence on global warming, largely ignored consensus science in the reproductive area as well as stem-cell research” and is “using science, or its version of science, that suits them [religious right, business interests] and has a propensity for secrecy and misrepresentation” (Kevles, 2006). This resistance to scientific evidence and propensity for secrecy create perfect conditions for a new Dark Age.

The Bush Administration's crusade began the afternoon of January 20, 2001 and not, as many people assume, after 9/11. It began with the issuance of Chief of Staff Andrew Card's “Regulatory Review Plan” memorandum (Committee on Governmental Affairs, 2002). This plan stated that no regulation, rule or announcement of inquiry that might lead to a rule

may be published in the *Federal Register* without first being cleared by the department head appointed by the President. Exceptions would be allowed but the person who would clear exceptions was the Director of the Office of Management and Budget. Thus all regulations or inquiries leading to regulations to be issued by executive departments such as the Environmental Protection Agency or the Food and Drug Administration must be cleared by the politician in charge. This action, among others, is more extensive than those of any other administration (Kevles, 2006; Nesmith, 2007, Shulman, 2006; Wise, 2006).

Many reports have appeared in print and on the web documenting this phenomenon, especially with global warming, stem cell research, and closings of the EPA libraries. Books have been written and the American Civil Liberties Union, the Union of Concerned Scientists (UCS) and the National Coalition Against Censorship have all issued reports. The UCS report "A to Z Guide to Political Interference in Science" illustrates the widespread nature of this phenomenon by creating a website that uses the periodic table as an organizing principle (Union of Concerned Scientists [UCS], 2006).

We are taking a different approach by creating a taxonomy based on the outline in Figure 1 (Parrott, 2004) and cataloging examples of disruptive actions by the Bush Administration affecting scientific communication. The utility of the taxonomy is in revealing the way in which each individual action interferes and distorts the entire process. This interference represents a danger to scientific information in the public interest that lingers long after policy decisions based on this flawed approach are reversed.

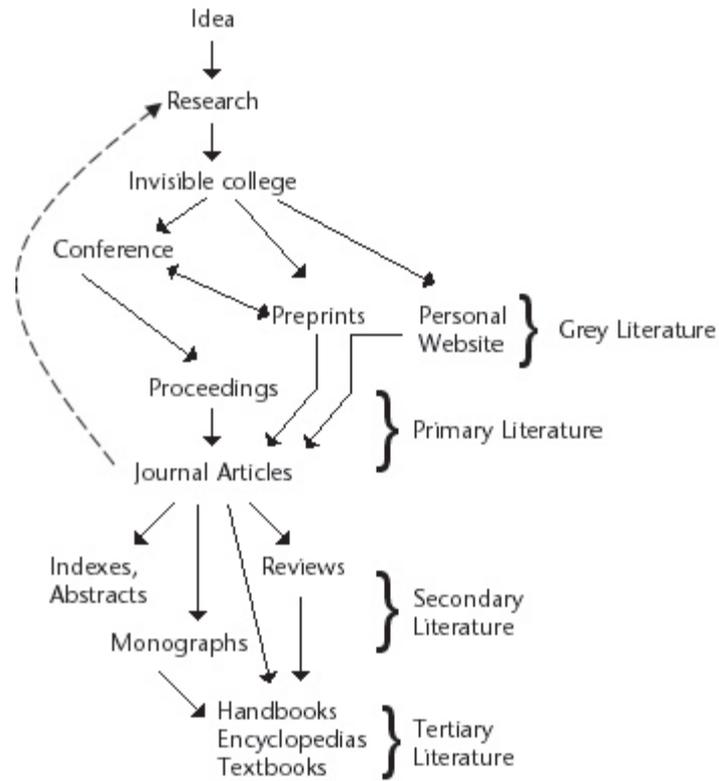
The definition of science is "a system of knowledge covering general truths or the operation of general laws especially obtained and tested through the scientific method" (Merriam-Webster, n.d.). Figure 1 outlines the scientific method as the flow, revision, and dissemination of scientific information as noted below.

#### *Flow of Information*

We use the diagram on the next page to establish eight categories for purposes of this paper: Ideas, Research, Invisible College, Conferences, Grey Literature, Primary Literature, Secondary Literature and Tertiary Literature. The dashed line indicates a feedback mechanism where scientists repeat and duplicate results. This step validates the research and builds consensus. Despite the headlines in newspapers on "breakthrough" research, no newly published report is considered validated until repeated by others over time.

Under each heading, specific instances illustrate how the Bush Administration has interrupted scientific inquiry, the scientific process and information flow. These instances should not be construed as a complete

Figure 1 (Parrott, 2004)



list but as salient examples. Many cases where science was ignored in policy decisions, but not altered, are not included. Also, more and more cases are revealed every day and we leave those to be classified at a later date.

*Ideas*

We placed the collection of data under the heading of ideas because it is frequently the source of inspiration and is not labeled separately in Fig. 1.

Orbital Debris Data

NASA has long shared its database of the orbits of satellites including the debris associated with them with the public, but this information is now restricted to only those who submit an application and are approved. There

is a warning to all who visit the NASA website to apply, stating there is no expectation of privacy. “By continuing you consent to your keystrokes and data content being monitored” (Space-Track.org, 2004). If allowed access to the data, you may not share it as part of your research without permission of the Department of Defense. Therefore to publish requires two levels of permission.

#### Climate Satellites

Reportage concerning cuts to NASA’s budgets on vital satellites to monitor climate change quotes a NASA Administrator: “while global warming is changing Earth’s climate,” he is not convinced it is “a problem we [NASA] must wrestle with.” He continued, “I guess I would ask which human beings – where and when – are to be accorded the privilege of deciding that this particular climate that we have right here today, right now, is the best climate for all other human beings.” This provoked outcry and NASA’s top official on climate change said that “It was a shocking statement because of the level of ignorance it indicated in regard to the current situation,” concluding that this attitude explained the severe cuts in NASA’s climate satellites and other earth-science areas (Kaufman, June 1, 2007). NASA’s earth science budget has been cut 30% since 2000, and will decline more to support the manned missions to Moon and Mars in the future (Kaufman, January 16, 2007).

#### *Research*

#### Airborne Antibiotic-resistant Bacteria

A research microbiologist found antibiotic-resistant bacteria in the air around corporate hog farms, but reported to the Union of Concerned Scientists that he was prevented from publicizing his research at least 11 times by the U.S. Department of Agriculture because it concerned itself with human health which the USDA claimed was not within his purview. A collaborator on the research stated that the research made no extravagant claims, but was simply a measurement of airborne compounds. It seems that USDA administrators recognized the importance of the measurement to human health, and then used that fact to suppress discussion (UCS, *Airborne*, August 10, 2005)

#### *Invisible College*

The “invisible college” (informal scientific communications) in the U.S. has always been enriched by a large number of foreign-born researchers and students. Many of the students contribute to major research endeavors as graduate students and then stay on to direct their own programs. Other foreign scientists join our universities and industries for fellowships or sabbaticals that enrich our research as well as their own. However, this free movement of scholars across our borders has been made much more difficult, and not just in areas that would seem obviously to touch on national security.

### Technical Alert List

During the struggle to keep secrets from the Soviets, the State Department created a list of academic areas that merited special scrutiny because of their utility in developing weapons. This Technology Alert List has now been expanded from areas such as atomic physics to landscape architecture, urban design and environmental planning. This is according to the latest published list which was available in 2002. However, the list itself has now been classified so we cannot verify whether an area is included or not (Simoncelli, 2005). Here's the Freedom of Information Act statement from the State Department:

Revision of Technology Alert List (TAL): The TAL is Sensitive But Unclassified (SBU), and it can be found on the Office of Directives Management Classnet site, as well as the Consular Affairs Classnet site. It is vital it not/not be posted on the public internet, be provided to non U.S. Government personnel, or otherwise reach public domain. (U.S. Dept. of State, 2006)

### Visa Mantis

A Visa Mantis designation is for a special level of clearance deemed necessary for someone who will be studying in a "sensitive" area such as everything named on the TAL. It is up to the Consular Officer to determine whether or not a visa applicant's course of study or research falls within the sensitive areas. Many universities now include information about the process that emphasizes that they cannot help the applicant if it is determined the delay on their visa relates to the TAL. A Visa Mantis takes longer than a regular visa, is much more intrusive and depends entirely on the understanding and judgment of the Consular Officer that happens to be processing the visas that day (BusinessWeek.com, 2006).

### Travel Approvals

The Union of Concerned Scientists reports that the Department of Health and Human Service (DHHS) implemented a plan whereby approval by the Department must be obtained before any scientist takes part in panels convened by organizations of the United Nations. The Department's justification for making the politically appointed DHHS Director of the Global Health Affairs the gatekeeper for allowing scientists to participate was to make sure the appropriate scientist was chosen. Since the person deciding was not part of the science staff, the 'appropriate' status might reasonably be expected to rest on criteria other than the underlying research (UCS, December 18, 2006)

### *Conferences*

We interpret conferences broadly and include gatherings such as panels where scientists can exchange ideas and discuss recent research. Sometimes

these panels control funding for research and therefore are even more important to the wider discipline.

#### Lead Poisoning Prevention Panel

The Department of Health and Human Services refused to accept staff recommendations for scientists to participate in a Lead Poisoning Prevention Panel. The chair of the panel from 1995 to 2000 reported that this was the first time this had ever happened. A distinguished researcher on the subject of lead exposure and chief of pediatrics was dismissed. He was replaced with a toxicologist who previously testified as an expert witness on behalf of Sherwin Williams Paint Company. His view that there has never been a proven link between cognitive problems and levels of lead below 70 micrograms per deciliter is considered very much a “fringe view” and not part of the mainstream consensus derived from the last forty years of data (UCS, *Lead*, August 10, 2005).

#### International AIDS Conference

The Department of Health and Human Services has limited the number of scientists participating in the International AIDS Conference. In 2002 236 scientists had attended, but in 2004 only 50 were allowed to go. The justification was the expense despite the President’s pledge of \$15 billion to fight AIDS. If we are committed to fighting this global scourge, our scientists must be free to participate in this struggle (UCS, December 12, 2006).

#### *Grey Literature/Preprints*

##### Los Alamos Technical Report Library

Fifty years of freely available reports from the Los Alamos Technical Report Library were reclassified, including unique information on fundamental research in material sciences, metallurgy, physics, and engineering. Some reports were found to contain nuclear-weapons designs and that information should have been classified and removed from public view. However, most of the material had no bearing on weapons design whatsoever and should have remained available (Aftergood, 2005).

#### *Proceedings (Primary Literature)*

Many instances of suppression of climate change science have been mentioned in the media, but a truly egregious example was in September 2005 when a National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration scientist was asked to make sure the words “climate change” or “Kyoto” never appeared in any presentations or in papers. It borders on the ridiculous when scientists are given a list of “naughty” words (UCS, 2007).

### *Journal Articles (Primary Literature)*

#### SBU Regulations

The Bush White House produced a memo to government agencies on “sensitive but unclassified” (SBU) information and it appeared in the Homeland Security Act of 2002 (Public Law No. 107-296). This memo outlined SBU labels to control or prevent public access to information. However, these labels are very vague, and a Government Accountability Office report noted 56 different SBU categories, with inconsistencies and some contradicting each other (Bhattacharjee, 2006). These new restrictions negate Reagan’s National Security Decisions Directive No. 189 which states “where the national security requires control, the mechanism for control of information generated during federally funded fundamental research in science, technology, and engineering at colleges, universities, and laboratories is [a system and mechanics of] classification” (Atlas, 2002).

#### Research edited or not undertaken

At a hearing of the House of Representatives Committee on Science, university scientists objected to the directive to remove the materials and methods sections from their manuscripts as a result of being categorized as SBU (Ricks, 2004). Researchers cannot replicate and confirm the validity of a published paper without a description of the materials and methods. Several cases of university researchers who have omitted important information in their publications have been cited. One of the cases involves omission of details in a study reporting on the likelihood and impact of a dirty bomb attack on Los Angeles harbor. Another example discusses the National Center for Food Protection and Defense at the University of Minnesota and its decision not to start a project on analyzing gaps in the safety of the U.S. food supply. The new federal guidelines for SBU violate state laws in Minnesota regarding public access, so the center decided to decline the research project rather than violate state law (Bhattacharjee, 2006). Considering the recent problems with our food supply, this is a particularly disturbing example of the abandonment of research because of conflicting regulations.

#### Missing information

Further, SBU information is being restricted in libraries, archives, websites, and official databases (Aftergood, 2005). Worse yet, it is unknown what information has been withdrawn because there is no inventory of the deleted materials.

### *Secondary and Tertiary Literatures*

It is too soon to witness the impact of six years of the Bush Administration’s assault on science and the effect on the secondary and tertiary literatures

such as textbooks, handbooks, encyclopedias, reviews, indexes and abstracts because this process takes about 10-20 years, depending on the nature of the information and other factors (Vinkler, 2002). But all of the preceding steps in the taxonomy ultimately lead to these literatures, so one can predict there will be a significant impact ten or fifteen years from now. The destruction of data or prevention of the collection of data as outlined in the ideas and research sections previously will result in the delay or the absence of needed information that will eventually make its way to these literatures.

### *Conclusion*

There is, rightfully, a swell of skepticism concerning the positive role of science in society – particularly when it is viewed in light of environmental disasters and the technical enabling of mass slaughter. However, there is an arena in which science has, at least until recently, continued to function reasonably (if intermittently) well, according to its classic, internal norms, in the public interest: scientific investigation in the interest of the public. We are thinking here of environmental issues and analysis, publicly funded health research, the creation of new technologies, and providing leadership worldwide in cutting edge research. Some of the present Bush Administration's attempts to disrupt the flow of scientific communication have been publicized and are well documented, but the particular approach we take here is to, in effect, taxonomize this process of interference to lay bare a systematic attempt to fundamentally alter science in service to an interest other than the public's. Environmental issues may seem insignificant and “– you may not give a flying crap about, and you don't have to. The point is, the federal behavior involved is emblematic of current government trickery and abuse, publicly damaging abuse, and of lack of oversight by the worst Congress in the last century...”(Hanchette, 2007). Others complain “Science is nothing without people, and there's a perception now that politics trumps science and truth. This not just with FDA decisions or climate change or at the EPA. We see this in public health as well” (Nesmith, 2007).

So what can librarians do? Several national library associations are joining other organizations to promote Sunshine Week. Sunshine Week is a “national initiative to open a dialog about the importance of open government and freedom of information” (American Society of Newspaper Editors, 2005). Local programs are conducted across the nation promoting more openness in government. In the future, libraries can advertise these events, host discussions to promote awareness, and support this effort. This will encourage public comment and attention whenever decisions affecting science and the collection of data are being made.

Environmental and other advocacy groups and national library associations (Openethegovernment.org, n.d.) are collecting and disseminating reports of abuse of science. The national library associations use these reports to influence appropriate people in Congress. The response of the library

world to the attempted destruction of the Environmental Protection Agency library system is a good model of action.

Librarians can also contribute directly. We have expertise in digitizing documents, and can work with environmental and other groups to collect and preserve data, documents, etc. When we build our collections we need to be aware of the changes in basic data, and which reports may be altered or missing. We need to seek out other sources in addition to the traditional scientific and technical reports from the government. As we make these collection development decisions, we need to share this information with our patrons and direct them to these other sources. We can no longer rely without question on the integrity of information simply because it comes from a governmental scientific body. We are in danger of losing our scientific process to a new dark age.

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# THE ROAD TO THE IRAQ WAR: an annotated bibliography

by Thomas Ayers

The object of this paper is to document as closely as possible, using only official governmental sources, the step by step progression of events leading to the outbreak of the Iraq War on March 19, 2003. The focus will be on the developing argument of the Bush Administration and its allies in favor of going to war. Special attention will be paid in this regard to the claims made regarding Iraqi weapons of mass destruction, which ultimately became the *casus belli* for the war.

My research in attempting to document the chain of events leading to the war began with President George W. Bush's 2002 State of the Union Speech, since this was the beginning of the Bush Administration's campaign of public diplomacy to press for action against Iraq.

In creating this annotated bibliography, the main problem that I faced was an overabundance of repetitive resources to draw upon. The difficulty was to sift through this mass of documents to locate the ones which provided the most insight into the chain of events. This could only be accomplished through a patient reading of the documents in question, aided by memory and occasional Google searches for news reports to identify the rough dates of the events in question to aid searches through official documents. The documents themselves often led to other important documents, as when I was led to locate the Senate's Iraq hearings by a reference to them in the House's report on the Iraq resolution then being considered by Congress.

First, I focused at first on the documents available at official site of the White House (<http://www.whitehouse.gov>). This proved a treasure trove of documents related to President Bush and Vice President Dick Cheney's various speeches and press conferences regarding the Iraq crisis. It quickly became clear, however, that there was much redundancy in these documents, as the President and Vice President often repeated the exact same phrases or charges at different times and in different venues following the time-honored political method of the repetitive "stump speech" to get a political message out. I therefore had to look for those speeches which added something new to the debate, such as Vice President Cheney's charge in his speech of August 26, 2002 that Iraq was likely very close to obtaining nuclear weapons. This method allowed me to trim the number of documents to a good extent.

My next step was to try to track down the Congressional actions regarding the resolution President Bush submitted calling for authorization of the use of force against Iraq. This proved easy with THOMAS (<http://thomas.loc.gov>), the Library of Congress' site. I quickly identified the resolution in question and located information pertinent to it. As with the White House site, I had to focus my search on those documents which substantially affected the movement towards war, such as the Senate's hearings on September 25 and 26, 2002, or the House report supporting passage of the resolution; otherwise, I could easily become lost documenting minutia.

Lastly, I needed to document the crucial diplomatic activities in the United Nations Security Council just prior to the outbreak of hostilities. For this I used the official UN site (<http://www.un.org>). This site provided many useful and interesting documents related to the final efforts of the UN to resolve the crisis peacefully.

In reading these documents, it is hard, in retrospect, to avoid a sense of how badly misled was public opinion by the Bush administration, which insisted on emphasizing a threat of Iraqi weapons of mass destruction which now appears illusory. There is a clear attitude of near-panic in some of the speeches in regard to this threat, as though an attack on the US using Iraqi WMDs could come at any moment. This is partly explicable in light of the 9/11 attacks, which were very recent at the time of these speeches. Whether there was also an element of political calculation in this as well is very difficult to say, in that various speeches by President Bush and Vice President Cheney clearly indicate that they both thought that eliminating Saddam Hussein's regime would bring benefits to the US and the Middle East in general far beyond just the removal of the WMD threat. To this end they may have been emphasizing the worst-case scenario in order to gain public support for war. However, it is impossible to determine this for certain from studying the documents presently available to the public.

Bibliographic citations are constructed according to the Chicago Manual of Style.

#### *Annotated Bibliography*

U.S. Executive Office of the President. *President Delivers State of the Union Address*. January 29, 2002. Accessed November 20, 2006 at: <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2002/01/20020129-11.html>

In this famous speech, President George W. Bush declared that that the Iraqi government flaunted its hostility to the US, had been seeking to develop weapons of mass destruction for over a decade, had already used poison gas to murder thousands of its own citizens, and refused to allow weapon inspectors into Iraq. Bush described the Iraqi regime as "a grave and growing danger" as it could use weapons of mass destruction to blackmail or attack the US or its allies, or provide these weapons to terrorists. In the speech's most

famous passage, Bush described Iraq along with Iran and North Korea as part of “an axis of evil, arming to threaten the peace of the world”; this speech is often referred to as “the Axis of Evil Speech.” Bush declared that “the United States of America will not permit the world’s most dangerous regimes to threaten us with the world’s most dangerous weapons.”

U.S. Executive Office of the President. *Vice President Speaks at VFW 103rd National Convention*. August 26, 2002. Accessed November 20, 2006 at: <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2002/08/20020826.html>

In this important speech, Vice President Dick Cheney stated that “we now know that Saddam has resumed his efforts to acquire nuclear weapons.” He also stated that “many of us are convinced that Saddam will acquire nuclear weapons fairly soon,” implying, on the basis of past discoveries by weapons inspectors in Iraq, that Iraq was probably closer to developing nuclear weapons than the US realized. Cheney declared that “containment is not possible when dictators obtain weapons of mass destruction and are prepared to share them with terrorists who intend to inflict catastrophic casualties on the United States.” He stated that “there is no doubt that Saddam Hussein now has weapons of mass destruction.” Cheney claimed that removing Saddam’s regime would make the streets of Iraq’s cities “erupt in joy.” This alarmist speech has been cited as the start of the crisis with Iraq that ultimately led to war.

U.S. Executive Office of the President. *President Bush, Prime Minister Blair Discuss Keeping the Peace*. September 7, 2002. Accessed November 20, 2006 at: <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2002/09/20020907-2.html>

In a joint photo opportunity at Camp David, Maryland, President George W. Bush and British Prime Minister Tony Blair discussed the threat of Iraqi weapons of mass destruction. Blair emphasized that “that threat is real” and declared that “the policy of inaction is not a policy we can responsibly subscribe to.” Bush noted that a new report by the International Atomic Agency said that Iraq was six months away from developing a nuclear weapon. Blair declared that “the UN has got to be the way of dealing with this issue, not the way of avoiding it,” and that Iraqi weapons of mass destruction posed “a threat to the whole of the world.” This announcement by Blair signaled the beginning of the effort by the US and Britain to pressure the UN to act on Iraq.

U.S. Executive Office of the President. *President's Remarks at the United Nations General Assembly*. September 12, 2002. Accessed December 4, 2006 at: <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2002/09/20020912-1.html>

In this major speech given before the United Nations General Assembly, President George W. Bush accused Iraq of defying the UN's disarmament demands for twelve years, a "decade of defiance." Bush listed the various UN resolutions that Iraq had ignored over the years, and claimed that despite UN efforts to force compliance, Saddam "continues to develop weapons of mass destruction." Bush focused on the threat of nuclear weapons in Saddam's hands. Bush promised to work with the UN on Iraqi compliance in these areas, but declared that "if Iraq's regime defies us again, the world must move deliberately, decisively to hold Iraq to account," claiming that "Saddam Hussein's regime is a grave and gathering danger." This speech was regarded as a great success and began a renewed effort in the UN to ensure Iraqi compliance with Security Council resolutions, culminating in SC 1441 (2002).

U.S. Executive Office of the President. *President Bush to Send Iraq Resolution to Congress Today*. September 19, 2002. Accessed November 20, 2006 at: <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2002/09/20020919-1.html>

In this photo opportunity with Secretary of State Colin Powell, President George W. Bush commented that he was sending a resolution to Congress that day that would authorize the use of force against Iraq. He said that he appreciated the strong support he was getting from both Republicans and Democrats on the resolution. Bush also stated that regime change would be a part of the resolution as well, and described the resolution as "a chance for Congress to say, we support the administration's ability to keep the peace." Bush declared that the United Nations Security Council must work with the US, Britain, and others to secure Saddam's disarmament, and added that "if the United Nations Security Council won't deal with the problem, the United States and some of our friends will." This statement indicated that Bush was already determined to act against Iraq no matter what the UN did.

U.S. Congress. Senate. Committee on Foreign Relations. *Next Steps in Iraq: Hearings Before the Committee on Foreign Relations of the United States Senate*. 107th Cong., 2nd sess., 25th and 26th September 2002. Accessed on December 4, 2006 at: [http://frwebgate.access.gpo.gov/cgi-bin/getdoc.cgi?dbname=107\\_senate\\_hearings&docid=f:83463.wais](http://frwebgate.access.gpo.gov/cgi-bin/getdoc.cgi?dbname=107_senate_hearings&docid=f:83463.wais)

In these highly-publicized hearings chaired by Rep. Joseph Biden (D, DE), the Committee on Foreign Relations considered the choices the

US faced in dealing with Iraq, hearing testimony from a number of experts. The most prominent witness was former Secretary of State Madeline Albright, who expressed worries that after Saddam's regime was overthrown, "we could be confronted with a no-win choice" between prolonged occupation, which would fuel Arab terrorism, or quick withdrawal, "plunging the country into factionalism and civil war." Albright declared that "it is naive to think that a peaceful and democratic Iraq will automatically emerge from the ashes of our invasion," and urged the administration to carefully "think through the consequences of all this in advance, which it is not evident to me that they have done." Much of Albright's testimony sounds prophetic in hindsight.

U.S. Congress. House. Public Bills and Resolutions. *Congressional Record*. 107th Cong., 2nd sess., October 2, 2002. Accessed December 6, 2006 at: <http://thomas.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/D?r107:4:./temp/~r107FaFqeC::>

Rep. Dennis Hastert (R, Il.) introduced for himself and Rep. Richard Gephardt (D, Mo.) H.J. Resolution 114, the Joint Resolution to Authorize the Use of United States Armed Forces Against Iraq. The resolution had 136 cosponsors in the House. A similar proposal in the Senate, S.J. Res. 46, was introduced by Sen. Joseph Lieberman (D, Ct.), but H.J. Res. 114 became the more important of the Iraq-related measures.

U.S. Executive Office of the President. *President Bush Outlines Iraqi Threat*. October 7, 2002. Accessed November 20, 2006 at: <http://whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2002/10/20021007-8.html>

In this important speech in Cincinnati, Ohio, President George W. Bush argued that, though there were many threats in the world, "the threat from Iraq stands alone." Bush claimed that "we know that Iraq and al Qaeda have had high-level contacts that go back a decade," and that al Qaeda operatives had fled from Afghanistan to Iraq. Bush claimed that intelligence sources had discovered "that Iraq has a growing fleet of manned and unmanned aerial vehicles" which might potentially be used to attack the US with WMDs. Bush declared that regime change was the only way to be sure of removing the threat posed by Saddam, and promised that "if military action is necessary, the United States and our allies will help the Iraqi people rebuild their economy, and create the institutions of liberty in a unified Iraq at peace with its neighbors." This speech shows that, by this time, Bush had completely adopted Cheney's viewpoint on Iraq.

U.S. Congress. House. Committee on International Relations. *Authorization for Use of Military Force Against Iraq Resolution of 2002* (to accompany

H.J. Res. 114). 107th Cong., 2nd sess., October 7, 2002. H. Rpt. 107-721. Accessed December 3, 2006 at: [http://frwebgate.access.gpo.gov/cgi-bin/useftp.cgi?IPaddress=162.140.64.21&filename=hr721.107&directory=/disk3/wais/data/107\\_cong\\_reports](http://frwebgate.access.gpo.gov/cgi-bin/useftp.cgi?IPaddress=162.140.64.21&filename=hr721.107&directory=/disk3/wais/data/107_cong_reports)

This House report was published in response to H.J. Res. 114. The report concluded that "Iraq poses a continuing threat to the national security of the United States." The report noted Iraq's attempt to assassinate former President George Bush in 1993 and its firing on many thousands of occasions at US aircraft enforcing the no-fly zones in Iraq during the past decade. The report also stated that Iraq had a "demonstrated capability and willingness to use weapons of mass destruction," continued to harbor members of terrorist organizations hostile to the United States, and potentially could provide terrorists such as al Qaeda with weapons of mass destruction to use in a surprise attack on the United States. In light of these considerations, the Committee on International Relations recommended that H.J. Res. 114 be passed. The resolution moved easily through Congress, passing the House 296-133 on October 10, 2002 and passing the Senate without amendment 77-23 on October 11, 2002.

*Authorization for Use of Military Force Against Iraq Resolution of 2002.* U.S. Code. Vol. 5 Supplement 3, sec. 1541. Washington DC.: Government Printing Office, 2005.

H.J. Res. 114 became Public Law 107-243 with the president's signature on October 16, 2002. It noted Iraq's non-compliance with a long series of Security Council resolutions regarding weapons of mass destruction and authorized the President to "strictly enforce through the United Nations Security Council" all Security Council resolutions regarding Iraq. It also provided him with the authority to use US military forces "as he determines to be necessary and appropriate" to enforce those resolutions. The resolution stated that this law was consistent with the continuing US actions against international terrorist organizations, including those who were involved in the 9/11 attacks. This last part of the resolution shows the success of the Bush Administration's public efforts to tie action against Iraq to the War on Terror.

U.N. Security Council. *Resolution 1441* (2002). November 8, 2002. Accessed on December 3, 2006 at: <http://daccessdds.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N02/682/26/PDF/N0268226.pdf?OpenElement>

This Security Council Resolution recognized the threat of Iraq's non-compliance with Council Resolutions regarding weapons of mass

destruction and long-range missiles. It deplored Iraq's lack of full, final, and complete disclosure of its weapons programs as called for by resolution 687 (1991) and Iraq's repeated obstruction of UN and International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) weapons inspectors. The resolution declared Iraq in material breach of its obligations, and gave Iraq "a final opportunity to comply with its disarmament obligations" by allowing weapons inspectors unrestricted access to the entire country within 45 days. It also called for Iraq to provide a "full and complete declaration of all aspects of its programmes to develop chemical, biological, and nuclear weapons," and recalled "that the Council has repeatedly warned Iraq that it will face serious consequences as a result of its continued violations of its obligations."

U.N. Security Council. *Letter Dated 13 November 2002 From the Secretary-General Addressed to the President of the Security Council*. November 13, 2002. Accessed December 2, 2006 at: <http://daccessdds.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N02/690/99/PDF/N0269099.pdf?OpenElement>

In this letter, Secretary General Kofi Annan conveyed to the President of the Security Council an attached letter from Iraqi Minister for Foreign Affairs Naji Sabri. In the attached letter, Sabri announced Iraq's acceptance of UN Resolution 1441 (2002), but denounced the resolution's "iniquitous contents," claiming that the American and British assertions about Iraq's production and possession of weapons of mass destruction are "utterly unfounded." Much of the letter consists of vituperative denunciations of the United States and Britain as pawns of "Zionism." The letter frequently used religious language to assert Iraq's righteousness, and the letter began and ended with quotes from the *Quran*.

U.S. Department of State. *Secretary of State Colin L. Powell to the United Nations Security Council*. February 5, 2003. Accessed on December 2, 2006 at: <http://www.un.int/usa/03clp0205.htm>

In this dramatic speech before the UN Security Council, US Secretary of State Colin Powell laid out in previously unequalled detail the photographic and recorded evidence that the US and Britain claimed proved that Iraq had a large stockpile of weapons of mass destruction. Powell claimed that Saddam had made no effort to disarm and was continuing to hide its weapons stockpiles from UN inspectors. Powell stated that "there can be no doubt that Saddam Hussein has biological weapons," and that "Iraq today has a stockpile of between 100 and 500 tons of chemical weapons agent." He also claimed that the Iraqi regime was harboring and aiding numerous al Qaeda agents in Iraq. Powell urged the Security Council to ensure that Council resolutions were complied with.

Powell has since publicly expressed serious regret over his testimony, as it shortly became clear that the intelligence information that he based his speech on was deeply flawed.

U.N. Security Council. *Letter Dated 24 February 2003 From the Permanent Representatives of France, Germany and the Russian Federation to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council*. February 24, 2003. Accessed at: <http://daccessdds.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N03/257/43/PDF/N0325743.pdf?OpenElement>

In this letter, France, Germany, and the Russian Federation announced a joint memorandum on the Iraq situation; the memorandum was provided as an annex to this letter. The memorandum stated that, while continuing to support full disarmament of Iraq, the three nations emphasized that disarmament should be achieved “peacefully through the inspection regime,” and that the “military option should only be a last resort.” While “suspicions remain” that Iraq still possessed weapons of mass destruction, “no evidence has been given” proving this. The inspections under way “have already produced results” and Iraqi cooperation was described as “improving.” The three nations called for “reinforced inspections” and enough time for them to succeed. This memorandum shows the growing opposition in the Security Council to resorting to force in the Iraq crisis.

U.S. Executive Office of the President. *President Discusses the Future of Iraq*. February 26, 2003. Accessed November 20, 2006 at: <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2003/02/20030226-11.html>

In this speech in Washington before the American Enterprise Institute, a major neoconservative foundation, President George W. Bush asserted that America would not ignore the threat posed by Saddam Hussein. He argued that a “liberated Iraq can show the power of freedom to transform that vital region,” and that American security interests required a free and peaceful Iraq. Bush claimed that like Germany and Japan after World War Two, “Iraq – with its proud heritage, abundant resources and skilled and educated people – is fully capable of moving towards democracy and freedom.” He also claimed that regime change in Iraq could also aid in bringing about peace between Israel and the Palestinians by depriving terrorists of a powerful patron, and that Palestinians working for democratic reform would thus be strengthened. The Bush Administration’s view of the overthrow of Saddam’s regime as a kind of cure-all for the Middle East’s problems is very clearly expressed in this speech.

U.S. Department of Defense. *Secretary Rumsfeld Media Availability With Afghan President Karzai*. February 27, 2003. Accessed December

4, 2006 at: <http://www.defenselink.mil/Transcripts/transcript.aspx?TranscriptID=1957>

In this media availability, Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld answered a question from a reporter in regard to anticipated occupation force size in post-war Iraq. The reporter noted that General Eric Shinseki had recently voiced the opinion that several hundred thousand ground troops would be required to achieve stability. Rumsfeld replied that that number was “far from the mark” and “simply not the case,” and that “it’s not logical to me that it would take as many forces to win the war – following the conflict as it would to win the war.” Rumsfeld’s opinion of the low number of troops needed for post-war Iraq appears very ironic when read today. Rumsfeld’s opinion also supported going to war since he depicted the military commitment required as relatively small.

U.N. Security Council. *Spain, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and United States of America: Draft Resolution*. March 7, 2003. Accessed December 3, 2006 at: <http://www.un.org/News/dh/iraq/res-iraq-07mar03-en-rev.pdf>

In this draft resolution tabled at the UN Security Council, Spain, Britain, and the United States called for the Security Council to reaffirm the need for full implementation of Resolution 1441. The resolution would have decided that Iraq had failed to “take the final opportunity afforded by resolution 1441 (2002)” unless Iraq cooperated fully with 1441 by March 17, 2003. This resolution was withdrawn by Britain on March 17, 2003 in the face of a near-certain veto by France, signaling the end of the US and British-led efforts to convince the Security Council to authorize force against Iraq.

U.S. Executive Office of the President. *President Bush: Monday “Moment of Truth” for World on Iraq*. March 16, 2003. Accessed November 20, 2006 at: <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2003/03/20030316-3.html>

In a press availability in the Azores, Portugal with British Prime Minister Blair, Spanish President Jose Maria Aznar, and Portuguese Prime Minister Jose Barroso, President George W. Bush stated that the following day would determine whether or not the Iraq crisis could be solved by diplomacy, and urged the nations of the world to support “the immediate and unconditional disarmament of Saddam Hussein.” Bush accused France of planning “to veto anything that held Saddam to account.” Blair accused Saddam of playing games with the UN for the past 12 years instead of disarming. The four leaders agreed that their gathering was intended to show solidarity between their countries and the importance of transatlantic

relations. Bush and Blair agreed that after Saddam's overthrow, the US and Britain would rebuild Iraq and, in Blair's words, "support representative government that unites Iraq on the democratic basis of human rights and the rule of law."

U.S. Executive Office of the President. *President Says Saddam Hussein Must Leave Iraq Within 48 Hours*. March 17, 2003. Accessed November 20, 2006 at: <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2003/03/20030317-7.html>

In a televised address from the White House, President George W. Bush declared that the United States "has the sovereign authority to use force in assuring its own national security." He demanded that "Saddam Hussein and his sons must leave Iraq within 48 hours," and threatened that "refusal to do so will result in military conflict, commenced at a time of our choosing." In a message aimed at the people of Iraq, Bush promised that "we will help you to build a new Iraq that is prosperous and free," and that "the day of your liberation is near." Bush reiterated that "Saddam Hussein and his terrorist allies" would not be allowed to "choose the moment of deadly conflict when they are strongest," and declared that "we choose to meet that threat now, where it arises, before it can appear suddenly in our skies and cities." The reference to 9/11 is quite obvious in this speech.

U.S. Executive Office of the United States. *President Bush Addresses the Nation*. March 19, 2003. Accessed November 20, 2006 at: <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2003/03/20030319-17.html>

In this televised speech from the Oval Office, President George W. Bush announced the beginning of "military operations to disarm Iraq, to free its people and to defend the world from grave danger." He noted that a "campaign on the harsh terrain of a nation as large as California could be longer and more difficult than some predict," and that "helping Iraqis achieve a united, stable and free country will require our sustained commitment." Bush promised that "this will not be a campaign of half measures, and we will accept no outcome but victory."

# TALKIN' 'BOUT MY (NEOLIBERAL) GENERATION: three theses

by John Buschman

Librarianship is awash in the “discovery” of generations: Boomers (of course), Millennials, Gamers, GenX, GenY, NextGen, Echo Boomers, C Generation, ‘Net Gen, the Generation Born With the Chip, the TiVo Generation, Baby Bust Generation, N-Gen, Screenagers, Nexters, Gadget Generation, and MySpace Generation are just some of the monikers.<sup>1</sup> It is not worth parsing these here as if they were real categories other than to say that some signify groups that are older (Boomers), some younger (Gamers), a lot in-between, and most are ill-defined, overlap, or contradictory. These generational monikers are, for the most part, marketing devices rooted in segmenting the population into self-identifying with a common “community” of “needs” - then the products “necessary” to satisfy those “needs” are appropriately target-marketed.<sup>2</sup>

As usual, the American Library Association (ALA) has jumped on this bandwagon with full force. We have been treated to Lowell Catlett’s “entertaining” (he tells us he doesn’t need computer-projected graphics since, with his animated “style” he is “his own hyper-linked PowerPoint”) observations in the 2005 ALA President’s Program that libraries needed to learn from Starbucks: “as people get wealthier, they have the attitude of give me what I want, when, where, and how I want it” (but without depending too much on taxes) representing the “re-engaged” Baby Boomer generation.<sup>3</sup> That 2005 conference also featured panels and presentations on mixed generations, generational management issues and work behaviors (at least three - one from a consultant clearly promoting her services), “Y-Libraries” for the Y-generation, and changing technologies/services/designs in light of changing demographics.<sup>4</sup> The 2006 conference featured topics such as aging Baby Boomers, recruiting and retaining new generations, and the question of “if you build libraries will millennials come?”<sup>5</sup>

However, it is the particularly lemming-like Association of College & Research Libraries (ACRL) division that leads the way here. The 2005 ALA conference saw a really snappy title for the ACRL President’s Program (“Time for a Reality Check: Academic Librarians in a TiVo-lutionary Age”), followed by a panel at 2006 Midwinter on the learning

styles of the “Net Generation,” a précis on “today’s students” in the ACRL “toolkit” publication on the “power of personal persuasion,” and about eleven papers or panels specifically referencing generational “insights” in the upcoming (as of this writing) 2007 National Conference. When one throws in papers referencing new generation-laden products like wikis, “Library2,” social networking, etc. - all meant to “create a sense of the new, foster a buzz [and indicate] new forms of collective intelligence” - that number of papers at the ACRL conference doubles.<sup>6</sup> Finally, a state ACRL chapter - in conjunction with an Ivy League university library - is sponsoring a symposium based around the ubiquitous Beloit College “Mindset list” in light of the purported new learning styles engendered by new technologies like those mentioned in addition to podcasting, blogs, PDA’s, etc. etc. etc. It is worth mentioning that the logo for the symposium is a collage of about 200 logos of corporations offering these services.<sup>7</sup>

However ill-defined, much is claimed in the name of these generational differences. Younger people/students are “focused on happenings elsewhere;”<sup>8</sup> are “practical, immediate ... problem solvers” via trial-and-error, are “relevancy-oriented,” have shorter attention spans, and enjoy risk;<sup>9</sup> they work more collaboratively;<sup>10</sup> they are competitive, resilient, confident, sociable, and analytical - “seeing problems in a deeper, strategic perspective;”<sup>11</sup> they multitask, are “nomadic” (through mobile technologies), have principles and are direct communicators;<sup>12</sup> and are “digital learners”<sup>13</sup> - all while being profoundly influenced as learners by the postmodern conditions of consumerism, superficiality, and knowledge fragmentation.<sup>14</sup> Baby Boomers on the other hand will not retire per se, but remain engaged;<sup>15</sup> are divide themselves by the 1960s and the disco years;<sup>16</sup> are themselves Gamers,<sup>17</sup> bloggers, networkers, iPod-ers, and wiki-ists;<sup>18</sup> and they are materialistic, independent, and idealistic<sup>19</sup> - all at the same time too.

The so-called shifting demographics of librarianship has contributed to the generational-buzz, generating its own cottage industry with insights that “we are what we watch” and how we watch it on television - which is indicative of generational communication shifts in the field.<sup>20</sup> Millennial/Gen X librarians are entrepreneurial, “globally concerned, diverse, cyberliterate, media savvy, and environmentally conscious [and] multitaskers;” who want immediate feedback since they were “raised with instant access to information.”<sup>21</sup> These same librarians “expect to control what, when, and how they learn,”<sup>22</sup> and they seek “nurturing” work environments, “fairness” and “challenges.”<sup>23</sup> NextGen librarians “have more options open to them,” “integrate technology into their lives,” and have a different take on the work/life balance.<sup>24</sup> Almost all of this is derived directly from business research concerned with recruiting and training the next generation of workers and corporate leaders - and being able to manage them effectively in the mean time.<sup>25</sup>

What almost all of this literature does is reify marketing categories - but it is simply not enough to point that out and simply dismiss the tsunami of output

on the matter as more marketing flapdoodle and bamboozlement. Rather, it is the argument here that this “analytical” trend represents three aspects of neoliberalism working its way into and intertwining with librarianship. Before turning to these three theses on generationalism (as I will call it), a précis on neoliberalism drawn from the critical educationist Michael Apple is in order. Apple’s analysis of neoliberal reforms in education is especially powerful and germane since he cuts through much of the macroeconomic cant concerning the benefits of markets to the economy and the public, and focuses on what he calls the “gritty materialities” of the ideological import of such “reforms” for the interrelated issues of education in democracy, the public (as in actual people), and social/economic justice.<sup>26</sup>

*Neoliberalism: an Outline (with an emphasis on public institutions)*

As Apple appropriates and applies them, the tenets of neoliberalism (minus the public relations machinery normally in attendance) are as follows:

- Unlike classical liberalism which sought to free the individual from the reach of the state, neoliberalism represents a “positive conception of the state’s role in creating the appropriate market by providing the conditions, laws and institutions necessary for its operation.”<sup>27</sup>
- That neoliberal conception of the state is still a “weak” one. That is, it is a bedrock principle that “what is private is necessarily good, and what is public is necessarily bad.” Therefore, “public institutions ... are ‘black holes’ into which money is poured ... which do not provide anywhere near adequate results.”<sup>28</sup>
- The neoliberal “solution” is the market: the “one form of rationality that is more powerful than any other.” With this comes the “ethos” of efficiency, cost-benefit analyses, maximizing one’s personal benefits, and the “empirical claim that this is [the definition of] how all rational actors behave.”<sup>29</sup>
- The neoliberal approach joined with the “conservative restoration” which seeks to re-impose “standards” and “values.” Though the alliance is often contradictory with its own tensions (the media market for titillation often collides with moral issues, for instance), the two sides “oddly reinforce each other” resulting in the hegemonic umbrella under which most public policies have been framed and discussed for some time. From both perspectives, “the society is falling apart”: public institutions are incapable of responding to the cultural imperatives of restoring intellectual and social order or the “responsiveness” and “freedom” demanded by market reforms.<sup>30</sup>

For Apple, the economic and social results which flow from neoliberalism as they percolate through public institutions are stark:

- Students (and arguably library patrons) are “human capital [who] must be given the requisite skills and dispositions to compete efficiently and effectively. [A]ny money spent...that is not directly

related to these economic goals is suspect [and a] waste [of] resources that should go into private enterprise.”<sup>31</sup>

- Beyond ubiquitous expansion of the model of the market into public institutions, overall neoliberal social policy envisions a “drastic reduction of government responsibility for social needs; the reinforcement of intensely competitive structures of mobility.; the lowering of ... expectations for economic security; the ‘disciplining’ of culture and the body; and the popularization of...a form of social-Darwinist thinking.”<sup>32</sup>
- This form of “conservative modernization” of the economy must itself be depoliticized, marketed, and sold as “natural and neutral and governed by effort and merit” – and hence more democratic. “Consumer choice” thereby becomes the very essence of democracy, signifying a “transformation of what counts as a good society and a responsible citizen.”<sup>33</sup>
- Finally, this “seemingly contradictory discourse” encompassing family values and cultural ideals, an idealized past, profit, discipline, and “competition, markets, and choice on one hand and accountability, performance objectives, standards, national testing ... on the other [has] created such a din that it is hard to hear anything else.”<sup>34</sup>

While only a sketch, the power of Apple’s analysis of neoliberalism applied to public institutions and the purposes of education is apparent – as is its ready applicability to libraries and librarianship. He goes on to review and analyze much research on market models applied to education, the de-historicizing of the past in the conservative restoration of educational “values,” etc. – all via the lens of his critique of neoliberalism. While all of that is beyond the scope of this article, Apple’s work is instructive on the means to and efficacy of applying a larger theoretical-critical construct to the realities on the ground, and therefore worth examining further to expand the scope of critical-progressive librarianship. For our purposes here, he leads us to the three theses on neoliberal generationalism in librarianship: generations are primarily defined by what they consume (i.e. as a market) – primarily in terms of technology; claims are made on the basis of generational affinity with technology which go to the level of human cognition – thereby attaining a neutral, “natural” inevitability; finally, these “analyses” represent not new insights or novel or critical interpretations, but “customized” theory attuned to changes in the economy. The remainder of the paper will explore these.

#### *Thesis I: Generations as Consumer Cohorts and Markets*

This is clearly a theme librarianship has lifted whole from the business and marketing literature. It is unsurprising to find economic categories like housing, income, labor force, and spending as prominent defining statistical characteristics in a book on, for instance, the millennials,<sup>35</sup> and higher education has been seemingly transfixed by the Beloit College

Mindset list which “defines” incoming classes for many administrators: the class of 2005 has always seen IBM Selectrics as antiques, a mouse is not a rodent, they were born the same year as the PC and Mac, no Boeing 727’s have been built since they were born, and lasers have always been marketed as toys; the class of 2007 has always had a PIN number, has always been able to make phone calls from planes, always had parents with SUVs, and “Ctrl + Alt + Del is as basic as ABC;” the class of 2010 grew up in “big box” stores like Walmart, they have never experienced having a sale “rung up” a sale on a cash register, they’re wireless, they’ve outgrown faxing, bar codes are everywhere, and “being techno-savvy has always been inversely proportional to age,” etc., etc., etc.<sup>36</sup>

Librarianship too is defining its generations of patrons via the technologies they consume and use: video games,<sup>37</sup> ATMs,<sup>38</sup> cable television, iPods/MP3s, PDAs, Wi-Fi, camera phones, IM, streaming media, webcams, blogs,<sup>39</sup> “techtainment,”<sup>40</sup> RSS feeds, podcasting, wikis, social networks, RFID,<sup>41</sup> Web 2.0,<sup>42</sup> DVD’s, audiobooks, SMS,<sup>43</sup> and of course the ubiquitous Internet, WWW, Google, etc. Generationalism within librarianship revolves around “growing up around technology,” MTV, and the internet (for various cohorts),<sup>44</sup> TiVo,<sup>45</sup> Gen X wants “competency with new technology” in their leaders,<sup>46</sup> and younger librarians are gamers, social networkers, producers of online A-V content, have iPods and digital photo collections available on the web, are bloggers and wiki-ists.<sup>47</sup> That technology is ubiquitous in the society, economy, and within librarianship is a banal truth, but it should not inure us to the revealing observation of just how thoroughly articulated technology is when we talk about our patrons and our profession. The category of iPod purchasers has become, for instance, reified into a definition of people and a marker of their defining social characteristics in our field.

All of which is to say that such definitions define librarianship as small segments of a neoliberalized market. Librarianship’s literature is clear here: we need to “compete” in a culture saturated with technology, and the only way to fight fire is with fire. We “must” offer not only information via the technological “flavors” favored at the moment, but we “must” also market the technologies themselves as a way to stay relevant and “capture” our “share” of the “market.”<sup>48</sup> Indeed, there is a cottage industry of writing within the field which urges the aping of a variety of corporate-marketing models,<sup>49</sup> culminating in classic neoliberal speculations in the literature: “What if Wal-Mart ran a library?” (“There would be fewer libraries, but they would be much, much larger.” “As the Borg say, resistance is futile.” “Higher education will probably have more to do with JavaScript than with ivy-covered halls.”<sup>50</sup>); and the “strange bedfellows” of libraries and theme parks (Both “are under pressure to reinvent themselves. The impetus ... is coming from ... evolving technology..., changing economic realities and newly emerging cultural patterns.”<sup>51</sup>). Generationalism – defining librarian age-cohorts and library patrons by the technologies they consume – plays into the neoliberal hegemony of defining everything by markets, consumer choices, and a ruthlessly pragmatic ethic of resource investment.

## *Thesis II: Generationalism Posits Changes in Human Cognition*

Closely tied to the issue of technology and its consumption is the simultaneously sweeping and blithe observation that the new modes and formats of information are changing the way the generations learn – and comparisons between them are therefore incommensurate.<sup>52</sup> Again, librarianship’s literature is full of such claims:

- “Gamers are digital learners [and] game design...provides a prototype for ways to make the library and its resources more visible and intuitive to users. [L]ibrarians recognize the value of using multimedia technology in reaching the inquisitive minds of visually oriented students.”<sup>53</sup>
- “[I]n heavily relying upon television, the Internet, videos/DVDs, and other primarily visual sources of information, students may simply be using the modes of information seeking that are the most... effective for their particular learning styles.”<sup>54</sup>
- “Conversation theory” posits that people learn through conversation – “not a totally alien concept in libraries.” “Participatory” (i.e. social) networks “present library decision makers with the opportunities and challenges...to not only fit tools such as Blogs and Wikis into their offerings... but also to show how a...conversational approach to libraries...can help...better integrate current and future functions.”<sup>55</sup>
- Today’s students are dramatically different<sup>56</sup> and “will profoundly impact both library service and the culture within the profession” and as a consequence of their interaction with technology throughout their lives, they “have high-level questioning and thinking skills and lower-level prima facie knowledge” and they may learn more through mind-mapping/visualizing research and information.<sup>57</sup>

Of course, a good deal of this is again derivative of broader speculations. Larry Cuban helpfully traces the promises, the claims for learning, the enormous investments and dubious research surrounding the introduction into classrooms of film, radio, instructional television, and computers from 1920 to the 1980s, each time accompanied by enormous publicity in its favor.<sup>58</sup> Interestingly, the pattern Cuban identifies continues on in the current push for electronic books for students. While the effectiveness of the dedicated electronic book as a tool for either educational or recreational purposes is still debatable..., development...is on-going and...devices currently on the market have not yet exploited electronic or digital technologies to their potential...Young people are champions at exploiting available technologies, re-creating language and modes of communication [and] their skills at creating texts or at ‘reading’ the visual cues in the media with which they surround themselves are obvious.<sup>59</sup>

The introduction of computers to children (both at home and in educational settings) was argued to “bring about new forms of learning which transcend the limitations of older linear methods” and was accompanied

by a “generational rhetoric... powerfully reflected in advertising for computers.”<sup>60</sup> Cognitive claims are now made concerning information and communication technologies and “new” or “multiple” literacies, and “hypercomplexity as an epistemic shift from ‘theocentrism’ to ‘anthropocentrism,’ to ‘polycentrism.’”<sup>61</sup> Perhaps most absurdly, the iPod evokes sweeping claims like “playlist is character,” and that it offers “an entire way of viewing the world” and the ability “to transform civilization, and with it human nature.”<sup>62</sup>

However, the actual effects of various visual and interactive media on learning and cognition is decidedly unproven. While Buckingham is defensive concerning studies of children and new media – he contends that too many are driven by the “the search for evidence of negative effects” – he concedes in the end that “we know very little about how children perceive, interpret and use new media,” and his review of the literature on educational efficacy and technology notes that its promise “has been largely unfulfilled.” Like the current study on e-books quoted above, Buckingham calls for further research<sup>63</sup> to puzzle out this anomaly: visual, networked, and communication technologies surely must promote learning, at a higher level as is so often claimed – a call to disprove the negative. But another recent review of the literature finds “little support for the superiority of illustrated text over plain text,” only “the smallest improvements and sometimes negative effects in learning” concerning the use of images, the inefficacy of movement in illustrations and the distractions inherent in multimedia, and a lack of efficacy of diagrams and animated graphics separated from texts. The bottom line is that “virtual reality experiences are not easily translated into learning” and there are recurrent unanswered questions “on how multimedia helps learning.”<sup>64</sup> All of this is radically unsurprising given that we have yet to fully parse the 500 year old technologically-enabled shift from orality to print literacy, nor the incommensurate nature of viewing literacy as a social vs. individual development, nor the bleed-through between orality and literacy – and vice versa.<sup>65</sup> In light of this – and what research has not learned after enormous investments concerning the positive (or even measurable) effects of media on learning and cognition – broad claims in this area ring hollow, or seem even silly.

Viewed from the standpoint of Apple’s critique of neoliberalism however, the claims have a more subtle purpose. To adapt Tom Mann, the question is: isn’t all this simply the process of learning “evolving” into other forms, and inevitable? He replies that the problem with this line of reasoning is its concealed proposition that...“evolution” [means] biological evolution. The latter is indeed entirely a natural process, as in the unpacking of the information within a DNA code. Such a natural process cannot possibly be “wrong” -- and therefore, it follows, no one can rationally argue against it. The tacit...is a rhetorical sleight-of-hand trick: the unargued assumption that the matter is one of value-neutral biological evolution reframes the discussion in two important ways. It neatly takes the whole matter...out of the realm of...judgment, insight and choice among alternative possible

outcomes of different societal value; and it shoe-horns the notion of inevitability into the...vision of the cyberprophets....<sup>66</sup>

It is here we re-encounter neoliberal logic in librarianship: if “new solutions have been designed to meet the demands of today’s users, who increasingly expect comprehensiveness and speed but also simplicity and elegance,”<sup>67</sup> then we “must” be obliged to meet that “market” “demand” and institutionally acquire those products. The same goes for students in libraries who don’t read, approach learning from a consumeristic vantage (superficially at that), and take information in meaningless, contextless fragments.<sup>68</sup> Librarians must “adapt or die” to capture these eyeballs and ears (a marketing phrase meant to signify the porous boundaries between media and the methods appeal to short attention spans). Therefore, libraries “must,” for instance, acquire audio book content to play on iPods, since that is where the “market” is or “customers” are. Generationalism posits whole new forms of cognition via the differing technologies generations consume, and is underwritten by this “evolutionary” argument and assumption. It furthers the neoliberal agenda of thrusting the market model onto libraries, further turns patrons into “customers,” and by the inevitability of its false evolutionary metaphor makes the library a promoter and customer of products designed to “meet” these new “evolutionary” “needs” of radically “new” types of learning and learners.

### *Thesis III: Generationalism Represents Neoliberal “Customized Theory”*

David Harvey has captured the nature of the neoliberal postmodern economy. There has been, he argues, an “intense phase of time-space compression” with dramatic impact on “political-economic practices [and] cultural and social life.” This happened via the drive to displace rigid Fordist production processes and move toward “flexible accumulation,” meaning flexible labor and labor markets, flexible patterns of consumption, new sectors of production (like financial services) and “greatly intensified rates of commercial, technological, and organizational innovation.” This was achieved by new organizational forms (just-in-time service/product delivery) and new technologies of production (robotics, communication satellites, etc.). Culturally, “accelerating turnover time in production entails parallel accelerations in exchange and consumption” – of which two are particularly notable. First, “the mobilization of fashion in mass...markets...accelerate[d] consumption...across a wide swath of life-styles and recreational activities.” In other words, fashion – broadly conceived – was no longer an elite affair, but rather a mass phenomenon (think of it as SpongeBob SquarePants being replaced by Aqua Teen Hunger Strike Force). Second was the “shift away from the consumption of goods [to] services – not only personal, business, educational, and health services, but also...entertainments, spectacles, happenings, and distractions.” What is being “consumed” is extremely ephemeral – leading to “accentuate[d] volatility...of fashions, products, production...labour processes, ideas, and ideologies [and an emphasis on] the virtues of instantaneity...and of

disposability.”<sup>69</sup> In other words, Harvey is describing the larger neoliberal labor and consumption market that public institutions are being directed to emulate, serve, and further its incursions into social and cultural life.

In turn, generationalism in librarianship represents what Sheldon Wolin calls “customized theory.” To adapt his argument for our purposes here, theory has generally been attuned to critique, reflection, and deliberation – which is now “out of synch with the temporalities, rhythms, and pace governing economy and culture...dictated by innovation, change, [fashion] and replacement through obsolescence.” This in turn has produced “pervasive temporal disjunction.” So far, Wolin seems only to be tracking Harvey’s broader argument, but he makes a crucial point: these developments have had a parallel track in theory: “‘customized theory’ – ‘custom’ not as in ‘tradition’ but as in ‘customer.’...Theory has thus exchanged the tempos of deliberation and contemplation for the temporal rhythms of contemporary culture and economy.”<sup>70</sup> In other words, the purpose of theory has become to generate justification and sell an “explanation” for whatever is dominant in the (primarily consumer) culture at the moment – and it is specifically no longer concerned with fundamental critique. Generationalism in librarianship is the fashionable customized theory of the moment, tied as it is to justifying segmentation of people and the resultant marketing and consumption of the newest and most desirable technologies which carry with them sweeping (yet insupportable) intellectual and cognitive (advertising) claims which act as “imperatives” for the operations, services, and content of public institutions like libraries. These theoretical claims will be quickly and easily discarded when customized theorists move on to the next fashion to take hold in the consumer culture – willfully (almost forcibly?) ignoring those who point to the gaps between reality and the objects of their previous theoretical enthusiasms not unlike those technological enthusiasts noted earlier.<sup>71</sup> As Wolin notes, “the last thing [customized] theorists need is the goal of cumulative knowledge [and] the ideal of a synoptic theory.”<sup>72</sup> Generationalism is the customized theory of the moment to justify neoliberal management tactics in librarianship – to be displaced like theories of TQM, libraries-as-Barnes&Nobles, and “paperless” libraries before it.

### *Conclusion*

Are there no differences between the perspectives of cohorts of people born at different times and their different perspectives on political, economic, historical and cultural events? That is most certainly not the argument of this paper, or its real focus. Generational differences are not the point. Whatever differences that do (or don’t) exist can not be meaningfully explained by pointing to iPods, Wikis, Cadillac’s rebranding scheme, etc., etc. and all the hollow “cognitive” claims made in the name of these products to sell them. They are merely the current incarnation of the techniques and ideology of flexible accumulation, and generationalism is the current customized theory a la mode to explain (that is, market) them.

Librarianship is in full swing in those efforts. And, like all other cultural epiphenomena, they (the products and the theories) will go out of fashion or they will be redesigned to capture the iridescent sheen of desirability in the age of lifestyle marketing. (A facile take on gaming is next up in line in librarianship's aping of the fashions of the moment.) They do not herald epoch-marking shifts in human cognition between age cohorts separated by five to fifty years. The lie is put to many of these claims when one simply looks at the data: older age groups are the majority of users of some social networks and they are the majority of unique website users.<sup>73</sup> However, these services must appear to be the province of the young in order to maintain their cachet. (Even the issue of librarian generational turnover in the wave of retirements is more complicated than portrayed when the data is examined more carefully. For instance the data is based on what people report as their profession – which is off by half, and replacement librarians are often not young MLS graduates but older mid-career or second-career females.<sup>74</sup>)

Apple's critique of neoliberalism explains much more than flip generalizations about generations and available technological products. The real differences in perspective among generations will ultimately boil down to the political and economic, and they will take time to be revealed. Who will be around to face the consequences of the post-9/11 decisions made by the Bush Administration? Who will reap the results of decades of neoliberal policies in public investments? Who will have to live in a culture where all efforts have been made to turn social, political, familial, and community institutions toward furthering neoliberal policy visions? Who will have to live under the false politics of a hollowed-out public sphere? In the meantime, it seems that all the generations prefer to focus on celebrity girls-gone-wild right now, but the realities of global warming, energy supplies, and the roots of terrorism will insert themselves – and those are products of neoliberal ideologies and the postmodern economy they serve. A profession like librarianship should not be in the fashion business – generational or otherwise. An educated profession such as ours should approach such claims more skeptically, and our flagship professional organization should show some intellectual leadership in such matters – for once.

#### Endnotes

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# THE INTERNET'S ROOT OF POWER

by Dan Schiller

The *Financial Times* reports that in February 2007, Gregory Schulte, the U.S. ambassador to the International Atomic Energy Agency, urged the international community to use the “‘measures at its disposal’ to direct political, economic, communications and other... pressures at Iran’s leadership.”<sup>1</sup> Perhaps it is time to ask: Could the United States curtail Internet access by an entire nation or, at least, by its institutional leadership?

States worry about such a prospect. One example surfaced in 2005, when several countries “expressed concern that the U.S. government...could unilaterally...cut them off from the Internet.”<sup>2</sup> Might their concerns be well-founded? We hear so often that this network of networks is uncontrollably decentralized: does the capacity even exist to interdict Internet access on a systematic basis?

Though it possesses no simple on-off spigot, the Internet’s distinctive architecture does offer points at which the U.S. enjoys unique leverage to disable service almost anywhere across the entire system. Explaining why this is true requires some basic acquaintance with the Internet’s technical plumbing and, in particular, with the logic of its Domain Name System.<sup>3</sup>

## *The Domain Name System (DNS)*

The DNS incarnates a twenty-five year history that has been shaped and structured by U.S. interests.

Through the DNS, means were created to assign unique identifiers for each cooperating Internet network and interconnected computer resource, because without such unambiguous identifiers the Internet could not function as a reliable communications medium. Expressed to ordinary Internet users in linguistic form – www.uiuc.edu for example – these complex names are structured hierarchically from right to left. The far right-hand label (e.g., .edu) constitutes the top level domain (TLD); the portion of the name to the left of the TLD constitutes the second-level domain (e.g., .uiuc). Linguistic names are used partly because they are

easier for humans to remember, and partly because they can be made relatively stable while the numerical Internet (IP) addresses to which they correspond may be conveniently altered for various purposes.

Names are converted by the DNS into numerical Internet (IP) addresses: 128.174.254.29, for example, is presently the numerical address for www.uiuc.edu. Largely invisible to ordinary users, it is IP addresses that effectuate Internet communication. An address's numerals and dots uniquely denote particular Internet-enabled computer resources. When a URL is typed into an interconnected computer, the DNS works to resolve the address by consulting files for each hierarchical component from right to left.

The organizational complex that supplies identifiers to each and every Internet-enabled network and computer or appliance and that resolves IP address requests is also hierarchical. At its apex sits the so-called "root zone file" (RZF), which houses authoritative data about where on the Internet numerical addresses are stored for top-level domain names, as Milton Mueller explains:

The root is the point of centralization in the Internet's otherwise thoroughly decentralized architecture. The root stands at the top of the hierarchical distribution of responsibility that makes the Internet work. It is the beginning point in a long chain of contracts and cooperation governing how Internet service providers and end users acquire and utilize the addresses and names that make it possible for data packets to find their destinations.<sup>4</sup>

Whoever defines the root zone file in turn establishes a foundation for the strategic exercise of power over the Internet. This power pivot is held today, as it has been from the beginning of the DNS in the early 1980s, by the U.S. Executive Branch, in concert with a contracting organization, IANA, the Internet Assigned Number Authority established in the early 1980s and now nested within ICANN – the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers established in 1998. Among other functions, the Department of Commerce and ICANN through IANA coordinate the management and operation of the root zone file through a related set of thirteen root name server operators.<sup>5</sup> How does this opaque system function?

In response to queries, the root server operators supply data about where definitive address information is stored for top-level domains (TLDs). The Internet is arranged so that this RZF is regularly updated and redistributed; in 2007 the root server operators maintained more than 100 root servers located in dozens of countries around the world.<sup>6</sup> Because the address data contained in these servers are both heavily redundant and routinely circulated, even a catastrophic shutdown of the root name services would still only "gradually impair the ability of computers on the Internet to resolve names."<sup>7</sup>

Occupying the next step down on the DNS hierarchy are top-level domains, of which there are two basic types: generic and country code domains. So far, there have been authorized nineteen different generic domains (gTLDs), such as .com, .org, .mobi (which operate under somewhat different sets of rules and conditions). Authorized as well have been 264 country codes (ccTLDs), each of which is designated by a two-letter code in conformity with an International Standardization Organization listing.<sup>8</sup> The country code for Iran, .ir, is managed by the Institute for Studies in Theoretical Physics & Mathematics in Tehran.

gTLD and ccTLD data are fed to ICANN by diverse cooperating agencies. Some gTLDs are run by for-profit organizations, others by nonprofit groups; some are based in the U.S. and others elsewhere. Yet some glaring disparities invalidate any idea that all TLDs possess equal stature. One generic top-level domain – .com – held, along with .net, by a U.S. company – commands a substantial share of TLDs in use globally. During the late 1990s’ worldwide surge in Internet use, the U.S. proprietor of .com and .net controlled 75% of the world’s domain name registrations.<sup>9</sup> Country code registrations of late have grown quickly, but they comprise only about one-third of all TLD registrations. The take-up of ccTLDs, moreover, varies greatly from country to country. According to a recent account, “In Latin America and to a lesser extent in Europe, ccTLDs constitute a majority of the TLDs registered. In contrast, in North America and to a lesser extent in the Asia Pacific region, ccTLDs are a minority of the TLDs registered. This can largely be attributed to historical facts and the early and continuing adoption and popularity of gTLDs in the United States.”<sup>10</sup>

The ascent of this dual system of TLDs underlines a sharp contrast between the Internet and the prior international telecommunications infrastructure. Unlike the country codes that were established for voice telephony, no one-to-one relation between top-level identifiers and nation states governs cyberspace. Users in each country instead employ different TLDs, only some of which may fall under national authority. Put differently: no matter whether a country actively supports a ccTLD, control over the RZF and over .com and to a lesser extent other gTLDs grants ICANN and its sponsors the ability to reach, de facto, far into its domestic social life. To this extent, conceptions of national sovereignty in communications are presently a dead letter.

#### *Rerooting the DNS?*

With this technical detail at hand, we may turn back to the question of whether the DNS might be used by United States authorities to cripple Internet access for nations deemed enemies. Reflecting the complicated arrangements described above, each component of the DNS hierarchy poses distinct issues.

Innumerable second-level domains and many ccTLDs, managed by varied organizations, do not fall within U.S. jurisdiction; for the most part, as a

result, they are not within the direct reach of U.S. strategic power. This does not signify, however, that ccTLDs are immune from danger. More on this momentarily.

In contrast, the gTLDs including, in particular, .com, lie within ICANN's purview. Of considerable additional significance, by far the most important gTLD, .com (as well as .net), is managed by a shadowy U.S. corporation, VeriSign. VeriSign provides routing support for every Web address ending with .com or .net around the world, a task that presently requires it to field "as many as 21 billion domain name system queries every day."<sup>11</sup> Links between this company and the U.S. military/intelligence complex are explicit. A top VeriSign executive serves as a member of the U.S. National Security Telecommunications Advisory Committee – an elite group that assists the Executive Branch in forming policy for this strategically vital infrastructure.

But by far the most basic and consequential U.S. power function pertains to the highest level of the DNS hierarchy: the root zone file. According to Mueller, "The content of the RZF is defined by ICANN and modifications are approved by the U.S. Department of Commerce. The root server operators merely take that information and answer DNS queries based on it."<sup>12</sup> In principle, the U.S. possesses the ability to edit or reprogram the RZF so as to cease meeting query requests for data about particular top-level domains.

Ten of the thirteen root name server operators are U.S. entities physically based in the United States and, therefore, presumably within the immediate reach of its policing power.<sup>13</sup> (The other three are based in London, Stockholm and Tokyo.) First among equals as regards these operators is, again, VeriSign – which possesses two root server operators.

U.S. control over this crucial function comes to a point in one of these: VeriSign's root server A. Root server A publishes the authoritative root zone file for the entire Internet under a special contract between ICANN's ostensible subsidiary IANA and the Department of Commerce. This contract is legally separate from ICANN's seemingly definitive memorandum of understanding with that same Executive Branch department. In its publicity, VeriSign points up its strategic role by declaring that it "manages...root servers...considered national IT assets by the U.S. Federal government."<sup>14</sup>

Daniel Karrenberg, an expert on the technical features of the DNS, has posed the following rhetorical question: "The majority of the root name server operators are based in the United States of America. Couldn't the US government force them to make any changes it wants?" His answer is unequivocal: "In principle I suppose the U.S. government could do that."<sup>15</sup>

A politically structured distance separates this principle from reality. On one hand, U.S. Executive Branch power over the DNS is not an historical accident but an expression of determined resolve. A defining feature of the domain name system's institutional history is that, in sharp contrast to prior communications systems, no oversight role was allotted to the most democratic agencies of government: Congress and the Federal Communications Commission.<sup>16</sup> Though much-publicized, efforts to devolve the power exercised by the Executive Branch by spinning off ICANN have been nominal, at least thus far. When one founding member of the Internet's technical elite took an abrupt turn in this direction in 1998, a high Clinton Administration official preemptorily declared "that any attempt to manipulate the root without the U.S. government's permission would be prosecuted as a criminal offense."<sup>17</sup> Since then, despite a much-publicized new contract in 2006 which supposedly granted ICANN greater independence from the Department of Commerce, "the root file and presumptive root authority has remained, without exception, in the hands of the U.S. government."<sup>18</sup>

On the other hand, U.S. authorities prefer not to exercise their power over the root. Any overt demonstration of this power would carry far beyond Iran or any other targeted nation. Wholesale curtailment of DNS service with respect to, say, a given ccTLD, and/or a country's top ISPs, commercial and government web sites, and/or its major private networks<sup>19</sup> would likely engender severe "blowback" throughout the entire international community. The result could be to cripple the ongoing effort by ICANN and its sponsors to erect a stable system of governance for the transnational Internet.

ICANN has labored since its inception to build up legally binding contractual arrangements worldwide with state agencies and specialized organizations.<sup>20</sup> Such arrangements are crucial for the smooth functioning of an Internet-based political economy shaped to serve transnational capital. They encompass far more than domain names, extending as well into the oversight and enforcement of property rights in information and the policing of online activity. But this prospective mechanism of Internet governance is as politically sensitive as it is essential. Any U.S. action that might jeopardize its institutionalization, therefore, will not be undertaken without very careful attention to its likely strategic costs.

But let there be no mistake: the Internet's domain name system is largely in the hands of the U.S. Executive Branch and, so far at least, there is little evidence that this power will be voluntarily ceded. At the end of the day, no one but the U.S. administration can say if and when it will be used.

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# LIBRARIANS TAKE A STAND ON DARFUR

by Al Kagan

On June 27, 2006 in New Orleans, the Council of the American Library Association adopted CD#50, "Resolution on the Darfur Genocide" (see page 62 for the text of this resolution). It noted that "...over the past three years between 180,000 and 400,000 civilians have been killed in the Darfur region of Sudan, 2,000,000 people have been displaced, 2,000 villages have been burned and their wells poisoned, and women and girls have been raped by government-supported Janjaweed militias." The resolution asserted that an aroused public might have made a difference but that the media has failed to do an adequate job in raising public consciousness. Therefore the ALA Council urged all ALA units and the profession-at-large to highlight and explain the Darfur genocide and called on publishers to seek and distribute relevant materials to aid public understanding on this and other genocides.

Library science students are usually taught and our literature is full of the misconception that our work should be "neutral." This usually means that we must treat all library users equally, take care to balance our collections with materials on all points-of-view, and refrain from taking social and political stands. Advocates of progressive and explicitly socially responsible librarianship generally debunk this myth of neutrality. They argue that while we should of course treat all library users with equal respect, we often fail in balancing our collections and our actions are certainly not neutral. These advocates note that library collections often pay little attention to alternative viewpoints outside the mainstream discourse and that we often self-censor ourselves when considering the purchase of materials that might offend some library users for whatever reasons. Even so, many librarians who self-censor themselves will probably agree with the theory of balanced collections even if they find it difficult or impossible to carry it out.

However the point of real controversy is often the idea that librarians and their associations must remain politically neutral. But even a glance at what we do disproves this assertion. We regularly oppose censorship and support freedom of expression. We advocate for empowering our library

users through access to information, provide literacy training, sponsor interesting programs and exhibits on controversial issues, advocate privacy for our users, and even challenge national security legislation like the USA PATRIOT Act. In all of these areas we advance our social responsibility agenda. The ALA Council has now added the Darfur genocide for our consideration and action.

The most important Africa solidarity organization in the U.S., Africa Action, now estimates more than 450,000 dead and more than 2.5 million displaced inside Darfur and another 350,000 across the border in Chad. Former UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan recently told us that there are now also refugees in the Central African Republic. Almost 7000 people are dying each month. As a result, more than four million people now rely on humanitarian aid for food and shelter. But most Americans know almost nothing about what is going on there.

#### *History and Context*

Sudan is the largest country in Africa, a territory of more than one-quarter the size of the US, with a population of about 41 million people. Much of the country is desert. As with most African countries, Sudan was constructed by colonial powers that divided the land amongst themselves with no consideration of ethnic or cultural cohesiveness. The people of Northern Sudan consider themselves Arabs, and the northern-dominated government has ruled over the peoples of Western and Southern Sudan since independence from the British in 1956. Two long civil wars were fought between the North and the South (1956-1972 and 1983-2005). The second war resulted in two million dead and four million displaced. Sudan has many ethnic and religious groups. The Southerners are mainly Christians or hold traditional beliefs. The Westerners in Darfur are Muslims but do not consider themselves Arabs. There are three main ethnic groups in Darfur: the Fur, Zaghawa, and the Massaleit.

As a result of long-term neglect and a harsh climate with few resources, two armed groups emerged in Darfur in 2003 in rebellion against the government, the Sudan Liberation Army and the Justice and Equality Movement. The government responded by organizing and supplying an irregular militia known as the Janjaweed, which targets civilians, rapes women and girls, destroys crops and water resources, and burns villages. The security situation is currently so unstable that a number of humanitarian organizations have suspended their operations making the situation even more unbearable.

#### *World Response*

Although the US Government and leaders of several European countries have acknowledged this latest continuing genocide (remember Rwanda!),

little has been accomplished in stopping the killing. The African Union sponsored peace talks and concluded an agreement in May 2006 but not all of the groups signed. At the November 30, 2006 meeting of the African Union and UN Security Council in Abjua, Nigeria, Kofi Annan described the latest agreements. The peace process must be made more inclusive, a ceasefire must be made effective, and a three-phase process must be implemented to create a serious peacekeeping presence. In the first phase, the UN is providing the African Union with a "light support package." The second phase would be a "heavy support package." And the third phase would be a hybrid African Union and United Nations operation with troops predominantly from African countries. This presence would cost about one and one-half billion dollars per year. The Sudanese Government has agreed to this formula.

In phase one, the African Union has deployed a small, poorly resourced peacekeeping force of 7000, but it is much too small to cover such a huge area, has no mandate to protect civilians, and has a relatively small effect on stopping the atrocities. The UN Security Council passed resolution 1706 in August 2006 authorizing a UN Force of 20,000. The Sudanese government has blocked deployment in phase two, but agreed in November 2006 to a hybrid force from the African Union and the United Nations. So far, this phase three force has not be deployed, and the government of Sudan continues to support the Janjaweed although it claims otherwise.

#### *Partnerships with the Devil*

In an article in the *Washington Post* (Nov. 19, 2006), John Prendergast asked the question "So How Come We Haven't Stopped It?" Prendergast was director of African Affairs at the National Security Council in the Clinton Administration. He explains that so-called national security has overruled addressing genocide. Remember that Osama bin Laden lived in Sudan in the early 1990s. The current head of security for Sudan's government is Salah Abdallah Gosh, who was bin Laden's main contact with that government. Gosh has now partnered with the U.S. government in detaining terrorism suspects and turning them over to the U.S., expelling Islamic extremists, and handing evidence to the FBI. And that is not all, Gosh and his friends also have a connection to the civil war in Somalia where the U.S. has been secretly funding warlords and the Ethiopian occupation. Last year, Gosh was even flown to the U.S. for a debriefing with the CIA.

Other powerful countries are equally to blame. China is the largest investor in Sudan's oil industry and buys one-half of Sudan's exports. China also sells military aircraft and guns to Sudan. Russia is also a major arms supplier to Sudan and lent that government one billion dollars to purchase military jets and helicopters in October 2006. The Russians are also building an oil pipeline in Sudan.

Prendergast says that the U.S. policy of “walking loudly and carrying a toothpick” only emboldens the Sudanese Government to escalate its attacks in Darfur. Former UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan noted in his farewell address “...respect for national sovereignty can no longer be used as a shield by governments intent on massacring their own people, or as an excuse for the rest of us to do nothing when such heinous crimes are committed.” He said we have not gotten much beyond “lip service.”

### *Conclusion*

The bottom line is that powerful governments are not going to stop genocide unless there are powerful forces from below. There is already a growing student, African-American and religious movement against the lip service U.S. foreign policy. As our resolution states, our associations and libraries can help by raising public consciousness “...through collections, programs, displays, resource guides, and other suitable means.” That would be a good start, but we also need to raise funds to assist refugees and for future reconstruction. But more importantly, we need to lobby the U.S. government to stop the collaboration between the CIA and Sudan’s intelligence agency, and to vigorously support the African Union and UN peacekeeping mission. Furthermore, the U.S. and China have a deep economic relationship. U.S. pressure on China and Russia through trade negotiations could have a tremendous effect. “Never again” is still a hollow slogan when it comes to genocide. A better slogan is “Another World is Possible.”

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# LIBRARIANS AS ADVOCATES FOR THE HUMAN RIGHTS OF IMMIGRANTS

by Kathleen de la Peña McCook

— *Make your priority to serve the community regardless of an individual's legal status* —

Librarian's Toolkit for Responding Effectively  
to Anti-Immigrant Sentiment

Immigration was the focus of much discussion in the summer of 2007. The issues are complex and U.S. libraries as communities have taken different stances on serving undocumented people. With the “Secure Borders, Economic Opportunity and Immigration Reform Act” of 2007 having failed to pass the Senate, and the STRIVE ACT (“Security Through Regularized Immigration and a Vibrant Economy” – H.R. 1645) stalled in the House, librarians must look ahead to safeguard human rights for immigrants who live and work among us as first priority.

As groups supporting immigrants' rights reorganize in light of legislative failure, librarians can assist with *Ya es hora ¡Ciudadanía!*, a national campaign to inform, educate, and motivate the over eight million legal permanent residents living in the U.S. who are eligible to apply for U.S. citizenship. National Council of La Raza is partnering with the National Association of Latino Elected and Appointed Officials, Service Employees International Union, and Univision on this effort.

To assist librarians who chose to take advocacy roles I present a summary of the last 18 months of librarian actions on behalf of people who may be undocumented in the U.S.

The Progressive Librarians Guild passed a “Resolution against Anti-Immigrant Legislation” on March 15, 2006. The Sensenbrenner Bill – H.R. 4437 – was the basis for developing the resolution, and the PLG took a strong pro-immigrant stance declaring in the text of the resolution:

...Be it further resolved that the Progressive Librarians Guild will alert its members to take an active part in the education of members' communities about immigration and social justice for Latino and other immigrant communities;

Be it further resolved that the Progressive Librarians Guild will promote libraries as sites and library workers as providers of citizen education about immigration issues and encourage library workers to act as advocates for the education of undocumented immigrants about their human rights.

In 2006 millions of immigrants marched for justice throughout the United States. On April 10 over 100 cities held demonstrations. Spanish-language media led by such locutores as Eddie Sotelin ('Piolin'/'Tweety') encouraged immigrants to march for rights against the Sensenbrenner Bill. On April 12 REFORMA, the National Association to Promote Library and Information Services to Latinos and the Spanish-Speaking, passed a "Resolution Opposing the Sensenbrenner Bill" In my Florida community over 100 people – documented and undocumented – linked hands at an intersection in rural Wimauma to mark un dia sin inmigrante on May 1.

REFORMISTAS published *The Librarian's Toolkit for Responding Effectively to Anti-Immigrant Sentiment* in May 2006 which provides materials for use by library administrators, staff, and all other interested parties in an effort to enlighten, inform, and expand their knowledge of immigrants and their rights to free public library access. *Versed: The Bulletin of the Office for Diversity* produced a special issue on immigration in May-June and stated: "In the century-long tradition of providing Library services to immigrants, rather than asking how we can lock people out of Library services, we should be asking, what kind of services can we deliver to meet our community members' needs best and how can we do this better than in the past century?" (Carpenter and Hurn).

Throughout summer and fall 2006 a backlash began to form against immigrant rights. In an analysis of the role of Lou Dobbs, "Nightly Nativism," Daphne Eviator characterizes Dobbs who has held forth on his news program vilifying immigrants. She views Dobbs as following in a long line of Americans who have played pivotal roles in the nation's periodic outbreaks of nativism. "For the hundreds of thousands who tune in faithfully to watch Lou Dobbs, securing our "broken borders" may be as much about preserving white American culture as about security or economics. It's a cause white nationalists have long advanced. But it's a new role for television news."

Increased enforcement such as the massive Swift raids on December 12, 2006 saw more than 1,000 agents from Immigration and Customs Enforcement show up at 6 a.m. at Swift meatpacking plants to search for illegal immigrants. Over 1,000 were arrested, many deported and families left to suffer (Preston).

In January 2007 REFORMA passed the "Resolution in Support of Immigrant Rights" which was submitted to the American Library Association and approved and adopted by ALA Council on Wednesday, January 22, 2007.

This resolution combined with the advocacy and commitment to social justice and human rights promoted by the REFORMA and PLG 2006 actions give librarians a solid ethical and organizational history to stand up to help immigrants.

In March 2007 Reps. Luis Gutierrez (D-Ill.) and Jeff Flake (R-Ariz.) submitted the 697 page STRIVE Act (Security through Regularized Immigration and a Vibrant Economy-H.R. 1645) about which Janet Murguía, president of the National Council of La Raza, observed:

“The “STRIVE Act” includes elements to fix the broken immigration system: a path to citizenship for undocumented immigrants, a new worker visa program so that future immigrants can arrive legally, a reduction in family immigration backlogs which allows American families to unite in a reasonable time period, and smart enforcement mechanisms to ensure that the new system remains viable.

While the STRIVE Act has not received universal support (McCook), it seems to have fared better than the Senate proposal, Secure Borders, Economic Opportunity and Immigration Reform Act of 2007. La Raza has concerns about the Senate compromise because of the temporary worker provisions, elimination of family preference, and the employment verification system. The League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC) has similar concerns.

In June, 2007 WebJunction sponsored the program “Effectively Dealing with Anti-Immigrant Sentiment,” which focused on how libraries can create effective strategies for ensuring access to information to all people in their communities. Advocacy, federal legislation, issues and options for academic, public, and school libraries were addressed.

Taken together the resolutions, toolkits and seminars developed by librarians are important components that will assist library workers in protecting the human rights of immigrants. What does it mean, as stated in the 2005 Progressive Librarians Guild “Resolution against Anti-Immigrant Legislation,” to be an “advocate for the education of undocumented immigrants about their human rights?”

1. It is the responsibility of library workers to provide current and up-to-date information about the legislative progress of various bills and laws that will have an impact on the lives of immigrants.
2. It is the responsibility of library workers to provide current information about political actions intended to improve the opportunities for immigrants to participate fully in the life of the nation where they live.
3. It is the responsibility of librarians to take stands and develop tools that enable immigrants to realize full human rights.

As we carry on with our work as librarians, we should keep in mind our history of human rights advocacy, and note the work we do today is a continuation of the commitment to the contributions of our programs, collections and services towards keeping an open society, a public space where democracy lives (Phenix). This year will be a year of much struggle for immigrants rights. Librarians must help with information and advocacy.

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## BRAVERMAN PRIZE ESSAY

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### TOWARDS A PROGRESSIVE DISCOURSE ON COMMUNITY NEEDS ASSESSMENT: perspectives from collaborative ethnography and action research

by Marcel A. Q. LaFlamme

*We are dealing with a small crowd of people whom we call “our public.” Who are the public? Why, you and I, and my family, and others just like us. They want just the same things that we do, and to be accommodated in just the same way that we do. The public is no indefinite, intangible somebody. It is just “we.”<sup>1</sup>*

Gratia A. Countryman, 1905

Libraries are never more alienating than when they assume that the patrons passing through their doors are simply “others just like us.” While each patron deserves the same respect and the same access to information that we as librarians do, different patrons have different information needs that grow out of the material conditions and cultural contexts in which they live their lives. “They” almost certainly do not want just the same things that “we” do, and libraries that miss this point are destined to be, at best, out of touch, and at worst, complicit in the invisibility of anything or anyone outside the dominant culture. Fortunately, librarians have come to think about the information needs of specific populations in more sophisticated terms than the ones being used in 1905. We have started to recognize that marginalized groups have distinct information needs, needs that we have an obligation to meet if we are serious about serving the public – not just part of the public, but all of it.

The practice of community needs assessment has evolved over time as an instrument for documenting and analyzing the information needs of the populations served by a given library. Community needs assessment goes beyond abstractly advising librarians to “know your community.” It involves the adoption of specific methods from the field of social research,

and it has a specific history in the context of American public librarianship. In 1922, for example, Indiana's Evansville Public Library commissioned a neighborhood survey that sent a citizen's advisory committee out on several hundred home visits. Historians have described the Evansville survey as "exceptional for its time," because it relied neither on impressionistic observations nor on indirect sources like circulation records.<sup>2</sup> Librarian Ethel McCullough wanted to know what the people of Evansville were interested in reading, and so she went out and asked them. During the 1930s and 40s, the Graduate Library School of the University of Chicago became the center for research on community analysis; *The Library's Public*, published by the dean of the library school in 1949, was seen for decades as the landmark work in the field.<sup>3</sup> Later research came out of the University of Southern California, where a dedicated Community Analysis Research Institute developed a new model for needs assessment based on the interplay of individuals, groups, agencies and lifestyles.<sup>4</sup> Unfortunately, the formalization of community needs assessment methodology has also led to a myopic focus on quantitative research.<sup>5</sup> By restricting themselves to research instruments that will produce "rigorous" or "objective" results, librarians have made it more difficult to ask the kind of broad, contextual questions that are well suited to qualitative research. Furthermore, recent perspectives on the benefits of needs assessment have tended to focus on the efficient administration of the library, rather than an ambitious commitment to outreach.<sup>6</sup> While the results of a needs assessment can be used to justify phasing out services that are underutilized, the primary goal of a needs assessment should be to plan for new services that meet previously unacknowledged community needs.

*Identifying and Analyzing User Needs*, by Lynn Westbrook, is probably the most current and comprehensive handbook on community needs assessment. Published in 2001, the book walks librarians through the process of planning, carrying out, and acting on the results of a needs assessment, even as it carefully delineates the things that a community needs assessment is not.<sup>7</sup> In many ways, the book represents a snapshot of current thinking in the library and information science field, and in certain ways it might even be described as progressive. Rather than advocating the use of exclusively quantitative research instruments, Westbrook introduces the idea of triangulation, whereby both quantitative and qualitative methods are used in order to get a clearer picture of the community's information needs.<sup>8</sup> And while Westbrook's list of reasons for conducting a needs assessment does slant toward administrative issues like budgetary planning and resource allocation, she also cites identifying and understanding people who do not use the library as "the single most crucial purpose" of any needs assessment.<sup>9</sup> Even though Westbrook does not couch this statement in the language of social justice or information equity, her focus on underserved populations still shares common ground with a more explicitly progressive definition of public service.

In this paper, I want to offer a critique of the prevailing discourse on community needs assessment, as represented by Westbrook's *Identifying*

*and Analyzing User Needs*. This critique extends beyond debates over research instruments or rhetorics for justifying needs assessment, in that it seeks to destabilize some of the profession's most fundamental assumptions about whose knowledge is valuable and to what ends knowledge should be used. I will argue that the prevailing discourse on community needs assessment conceptualizes community analysis as something that is done *to* the community in question, rather than *with* the community in any meaningful way. (The library assesses the community; subject verb object.) I will then draw upon the emerging fields of collaborative ethnography and action research in order to sketch the contours of an alternative discourse on community needs assessment, a discourse that attempts to reimagine needs assessment as a collaboration between library and community, even as it inscribes positive social change as the ultimate goal of the research endeavor. From this perspective, community needs assessment would not just strive to make the library more efficient; it would strive to make the communities that the library serves more free. The critique that I am offering may be described as a radical one, in that it seeks to challenge both the political neutrality and the epistemological positivism that too often characterize the library profession. But if we are to realize a truly progressive mode of librarianship, we must begin by interrogating the forms of privilege that allow us to tell the communities that we serve: "We're professionals. How about you leave this to us?"

In the early pages of *Identifying and Analyzing User Needs*, Westbrook does touch upon the possibility of community collaboration. Chapter 2, entitled "Laying the Groundwork," suggests that libraries should consider hiring an outside consultant to conduct the needs assessment, because of the swiftness and efficiency with which he or she could complete the project. However, Westbrook acknowledges that

another option is available: sacrificing efficiency for the possibility of long-term productivity by involving others in the process. That involvement could move up and down a continuum as needed and appropriate, from simple information to active participation.<sup>10</sup>

Westbrook correctly points out that the design and execution of the needs assessment would become less efficient as it became more participatory. Then, for a split second, she appears to entertain the possibility of measuring the project's success against some benchmark other than that of efficiency. Regrettably, this moment slips away, and as Chapter 2 continues to unfold the community reprises its role as the inert object of analysis. For instance, Westbrook predicts that some staff may fear that any information need identified through the needs assessment will be validated "without regard for the expertise of the librarians involved in meeting that need." "In reality," Westbrook reassures, "the judgment of the professional staff is the driving force behind each phase of the process, especially in the final decisions regarding the action plan...The expertise of librarians is not only respected by, but is crucial to, the [needs assessment] process."<sup>11</sup> Here, the

uppity community is put in its place for voicing inappropriate information needs. The expertise that the librarians wield entitles them to decide which of the community's information needs will and will not be met. These decisions will be accepted at face value by the community, who are, after all, not experts, not even on the subject of their own needs.<sup>12</sup>

Westbrook's skepticism about the value of community collaboration continues to surface in subsequent chapters of *Identifying and Analyzing User Needs*. In Chapter 7, "Launching A Study," Westbrook considers the question of who will gather the data for the needs assessment. She identifies library staff and trained volunteers as the most desirable choices, but grudgingly admits that "as a final option, outsiders can handle some tasks...While unskilled outsiders require extensive and careful supervision, their involvement may pay off in the long run if they become library advocates."<sup>13</sup> This latter statement is fascinating. In the space of a single sentence, Westbrook dismisses community members as "unskilled" (ignoring the possibility that they may have access to knowledge or skills that the library staff would lack), implies that they are untrustworthy, and characterizes their involvement as valuable only in the event that they become library advocates in the future. The idea that having people gather information about their own community might be inherently valuable is not entertained. So perhaps it should come as no surprise that there is absolutely no mention of community involvement in Chapter 8, "Analyzing the Results." The library analyzes the community; subject verb object. At no point is the community given the opportunity to evaluate the conclusions of the assessment team or to participate in the design of an action plan. At most, the community is to be kept informed of the initiatives that are to be launched on its behalf and in its name. Westbrook suggests "a newsletter, bookmark, e-mail notice, or newspaper column" as reasonable ways of accomplishing this goal.<sup>14</sup>

In fairness to Lynn Westbrook, *Identifying and Analyzing User Needs* is hardly unique in its disregard for the input of the community under study. Westbrook is drawing on a long tradition of social research that wraps itself in the mantle of impersonal objectivity, determined to prove that a psychological theory or an economic model can be every bit as "scientific" as a physicist's equations. Yet it is here that anthropologist Hortense Powdermaker identified "an important distinguishing point between the social and natural sciences. There is no reciprocal personal communication between the physicist and atoms, molecules, or electrons, nor does he become part of the situation studied."<sup>15</sup> Practitioners of social research study people, who are complex and unpredictable and have very real opinions about the conclusions that researchers draw about their lives. Among the social sciences, it is anthropology that has proved most receptive to these insights, and over the past thirty years anthropologists have been asking each other terrifically difficult questions about their relationships to the communities that they study. They have learned to think critically about the power dynamics between researcher and informant, and they have come to describe their craft in terms of interpretation, rather than science.<sup>16</sup>

Over the past decade, anthropologists have also expressed a growing interest in collaborative ethnography,<sup>17</sup> a school of thought within social research that could (I argue) inaugurate an alternative discourse of community needs assessment within the field of library and information science. Luke Eric Lassiter has described collaborative ethnography as “an approach to ethnography that deliberately and explicitly emphasizes collaboration at every point in the ethnographic process, without veiling it – from project conceptualization, to fieldwork, and, especially, through the writing process.”<sup>18</sup> Researchers regard members of the community under study not as subjects or informants, but as co-intellectuals who shape the direction that the research takes. For Lassiter, “collaborative ethnography is first and foremost an ethical and moral enterprise, and subsequently a political one.”<sup>19</sup> Hence, even though one goal of collaborative ethnography may be to produce “better” and more accurate social research, the collaborative ethnographer would be more inclined to measure “better” research in terms of relationships with community members that are characterized by mutual respect and intellectual honesty. Lassiter’s vision of collaborative ethnography also involves producing texts that are comprehensible and useful to the communities under study, specifically by inviting community members to comment on and contribute to the text. Extending this invitation means surrendering some of the professional authority (and authorial privilege) behind which academics routinely hide. Unquestionably, it involves risk – but also the potential for great reward.

What would it look like if librarians carried out a community needs assessment modeled on the practice of collaborative ethnography? Presumably, it would look quite different from the model proposed in *Identifying and Analyzing User Needs*. The planning process might begin with a series of community conversations about the use of information in everyday life. Library staff could use transcripts of these conversations to generate a preliminary list of research objectives, which would then be brought back to the community for comment and further discussion.

Next, teams of community members, library staff, and experienced social researchers would be brought together in order to focus on a particular segment of the community; one option would be to bring in an outside consultant, although professors and students at a nearby university might be able to join the project for free as part of a service learning initiative. The teams would be encouraged to think creatively about how they could document the community’s information needs; traditional research instruments like focus groups and interviews could be supplemented by “household information diaries” and participant-observation. Each team would present their findings to the library staff, and would then work alongside the staff to develop the relevant service objectives and priorities.<sup>20</sup> Of course, by now Lynn Westbrook might be forgiven for protesting: “But a consultant who had been given a free hand could have finished this project months ago!” This is probably true. But in the words of anthropologist Glenn Hinson:

True collaboration entails a sharing of authority and a sharing of visions. This means more than just asking for consultant commentary, more than inviting contributions that deepen but don't derail, more than the kind of community tokenism that invites contributors to the opening but not to the planning sessions. Sharing authority and visions means inviting consultants to shape form, text, and intended audience. It also means directing the collaborative work toward multiple ends, ends that speak to different needs and different constituencies, ends that might be so differently defined as to have never even been considered by one or more of the collaborating parties.<sup>21</sup>

Westbrook was surely correct when she observed that social research becomes less efficient as it becomes more participatory. However, I would argue that the loss of efficiency that a library sustains by adopting collaborative ethnography as the model for its needs assessment would be more than outweighed by the opportunity to forge a genuine partnership between library and community – and by the chance to meet culturally specific information needs that might otherwise have gone overlooked.

Community needs assessment that is rooted in collaborative ethnography would democratize the research process and affirm the importance of local knowledge held by the community. However, a truly progressive discourse on community needs assessment would also need to include an explicit commitment to social change. Of course, many individual librarians are already concerned with issues of social justice, and yet I would argue that insights from the field of action research might help these librarians to frame a more robust theoretical framework for progressive librarianship.<sup>22</sup> Davydd Greenwood and Morten Levin have described action research as “a form of research that generates knowledge claims for the express purpose of taking action to promote social change and social analysis.”<sup>23</sup> More specifically, practitioners of action research believe that “those who face social problems have much of the information and analytical capacity needed to solve them.”<sup>24</sup> This is a point of commonality between action research and collaborative ethnography, both of which seek to acknowledge and build upon the knowledge of the community under study (rather than categorically asserting the superiority of “expert” outside knowledge). Yet while a community needs assessment based on collaborative ethnography might be content to document the information needs of underserved populations, a model of community needs assessment that also incorporated action research would consider the ways in which increased access to information could help to liberate these populations from isolation, injustice, or oppression.

Paulo Freire, the Brazilian educator whose work has profoundly influenced action research, cautioned people of privilege working on behalf of oppressed populations to think critically about their motives. Freire's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* observes that “attempting to liberate the

oppressed without their reflective participation in the act of liberation is to treat them as objects which must be saved from a burning building.”<sup>25</sup> And, elsewhere, “the man or woman who proclaims devotion to the cause of liberation yet is unable to enter into communion with the people, whom he or she continues to regard as totally ignorant, is grievously self-deceived.”<sup>26</sup> Freire’s words should resonate with every would-be practitioner of a truly progressive librarianship. Community needs assessment can be a tool for political empowerment and social justice, but only when the initiatives growing out of the needs assessment are developed in collaboration with the community and in response to its real, not imagined, needs. Hence, it would be pointless and insensitive for a library to host a job fair aimed at homeless patrons without first ascertaining the information needs of this population. Perhaps many of the library’s homeless patrons are employed, or do not want to be employed, or already have sources of information on employment and depend on the library for other services. Truly progressive librarians understand that uninformed efforts at activism can be just another form of privileged self-absorption.

As libraries devote increasing amounts of time and energy to serving communities that have been traditionally underserved, the practice of community needs assessment has the potential to offer valuable insight into the information needs of these populations. Currently, the prevailing discourse on community needs assessment tends to focus on swift, efficient execution of putatively objective research. This approach constitutes the community as the passive object of expert knowledge, and it fails to consider the community’s perspectives on its own information needs. Happily, insights from the fields of collaborative ethnography and action research can provide a framework for an alternative discourse of community needs assessment based on authentic partnership and commitment to social change. Instead of the library assessing the community, subject verb object, progressive librarians can use their creativity and compassion to invent a new, more egalitarian grammar of needs assessment.

#### Notes

1. Countryman, Gratia A. “The Library as Social Centre.” *The library and society: reprints of papers and addresses*. ed. Arthur E. Bostwick. New York: H.W. Wilson, 1920. 434.
2. Evans, Charles. “A History of Community Analysis in American Librarianship.” *Library Trends* 24(3), January 1976. 446-448.
3. *Ibid.*, 451.
4. Greer, Roger C. and Hale, Martha L. “The Community Analysis Process.” *Public Librarianship: A Reader*. ed. Jane Robbins-Carter. Englewood, CO: Libraries Unlimited, 1982. 358-367.
5. For instance, the most recent edition of *Basic Research Methods for Librarians*, eds. Ronald R. Powell and Lynn Silipigni Connaway, includes just one chapter on qualitative research methods. Westport, CT: Libraries Unlimited, 2004.
6. See the list of benefits to be expected from a user needs assessment in *Guide to Library User Needs Assessment for Integrated Information Resource Management and Collection Development*, eds. Biblarz, Bosch, and Sugnet. Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 2001. 7.
7. Westbrook, Lynn. *Identifying and Analyzing User Needs*. New York: Neal-Schuman,

2001. 3-4.
8. *ibid.*, 72.
  9. *ibid.*, 10.
  10. *ibid.*, 16.
  11. *ibid.*, 24.
  12. This discourse of professional expertise also crops up in Chapter 4, "Framing Questions and Choosing Tools," when Westbrook considers the case of a public library with "a large number of patrons referred by local social support agencies." In this case, Westbrook advises, "it might be worthwhile to meet with a few directors of those agencies to identify their priorities. Are these agency directors most interested in raising literacy levels, identifying employment opportunities, supporting parents, or some other issue?" Quoted from p. 65. I would suggest that it is at least as important to identify the priorities of the patrons as it is to identify the priorities of the agency directors.
  13. Westbrook, 156-157.
  14. *ibid.*, 197.
  15. Powdermaker, Hortense. *Stranger and Friend: The Way of an Anthropologist*. New York: W.W. Norton, 1966. 286.
  16. A good starting point from which to explore this literature is *The Interpretation of Cultures*, by Clifford Geertz. New York: Basic Books, 1973.
  17. The *Blackwell Dictionary of Sociology* defines ethnography as "a descriptive account of social life and culture in a particular social system based on detailed observations of what people actually do." Ethnographers will argue with each other for hours about how to define ethnography, but this is a serviceable thumbnail definition. Oxford: Blackwell, 2000. 111.
  18. Lassiter, Luke Eric. *The Chicago Guide to Collaborative Ethnography*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005. 16. Emphasis in original.
  19. *ibid.*, 79.
  20. I have borrowed this model for a collaborative ethnographic investigation from Luke Eric Lassiter's study, *The Other Side of Middletown: Exploring Muncie's African-American Community*. Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press, 2004.
  21. Hinson, Glenn. *Fire In My Bones: Transcendence and the Holy Spirit in African-American Gospel*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2000. 2.
  22. The most recent edition of *Basic Research Methods for Librarians* briefly touches on action research, although I tend to doubt that the editors had a full understanding of what action research involves. I am basing this conclusion on their stated belief that the steps involved in action research "do not differ significantly from those typically followed in a basic research study." 55. Whatever one thinks about the merits of action research, the steps involved in carrying it out are unquestionably different from those involved in a basic research study.
  23. Greenwood, Davydd J. and Levin, Morten. *Introduction to Action Research: Social Research for Social Change*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, 1998. 6.
  24. *ibid.*, 95.
  25. Freire, Paulo. *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. trans. Myra Bergman Ramos. New York: Continuum, 2000. 65.
  26. *ibid.*, 61.

## DOCUMENTS

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### RESOLUTION ON THE DARFUR GENOCIDE

Whereas, Over the past three years between 180,000 and 400,000 civilians have been killed in the Darfur region of Sudan, 2,000,000 people have been displaced, 2,000 villages have been burned and their wells poisoned, and women of all ages have been raped by government-supported Janjaweed militias; and

Whereas, This first genocide of the 21st century could be slowed, if not ended, by an aware and aroused public in the United States and elsewhere; and

Whereas, The media, including library publications and websites have not sufficiently raised awareness and knowledge of this issue; and

Whereas, It is the mission of American libraries to contribute actively to informing and educating citizens on public issues; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the American Library Association Council urges all the relevant ALA units and the profession-at-large to highlight and explain the Darfur Genocide through collections, programs, displays, resource guides, and other suitable means; and, be it further

Resolved, That the American Library Association calls upon publishers to actively seek and publish materials at both lay and scholarly levels to add to public understanding of Darfur and other genocidal conflicts.

Adopted by the Council of the American Library Association  
Tuesday, June 27, 2006  
New Orleans, Louisiana

Keith Michael Fiels  
ALA Executive Director

## **PETITION TO THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY...**

...TO SET UP AN INTERNATIONAL CRIMINAL TRIBUNAL TO TRY PRESIDENT GEORGE BUSH, VICE-PRESIDENT DICK CHENEY, FORMER SECRETARY OF DEFENSE DONALD RUMSFELD, SECRETARY OF STATE CONDOLEEZZA RICE, AND ATTORNEY GENERAL ALBERTO GONZALES

1. The U.N. General Assembly has the authority to set up such a tribunal by a majority vote as a “subsidiary organ” under U.N. Charter Article 22.1.
2. The Statute should be modeled upon the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia, which the United States supported at the U.N. Security Council, so as a matter of law it is unobjectionable.
3. There should be added to the ICTY Statute an additional crime of Crime Against Peace, as defined by the Nuremberg Charter 3a (1945), the Nuremberg Judgment (1946), and the Nuremberg Principles (1950), and as codified by U.S. Army Field Manual 27-10 (1956) 3b paragraph 498.
4. The purpose of the ICTU (International Criminal Tribunal against the United States under the Bush regime) would be to investigate and prosecute United States war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide against the Peoples of Iraq just as the ICTY 4 did for the victims of international crimes committed by Serbia and the Milosevic Regime throughout the Balkans.
5. The establishment of ICTU would provide some small degree of justice to the victims of U.S. war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide against the Peoples of Iraq – just as the ICTY has done in the Balkans.
6. Furthermore, the establishment of ICTU by the U.N. General Assembly would serve as a deterrent effect upon U.S. leaders such PRESIDENT GEORGE BUSH, VICE-PRESIDENT DICK CHENEY, SECRETARY OF STATE CONDOLEEZZA RICE AND ATTORNEY GENERAL ALBERTO GONZALES and members of Congress as well as top generals that they will be prosecuted for their further infliction of international crimes against Iraq.
7. Without such a deterrent, the U.S. administration along with the U.S. Congress might be emboldened to attack other states such as Iran.  
[\* Since the USA has refused to become a party to the Rome Statute for the International Criminal Court 5, this is the only effective legal redress the rest of the world has against US Officials.]

Please reply with a copy to [j.russow@shawlink.ca](mailto:j.russow@shawlink.ca) and to the President or Prime Minister of your country [if you think your country might be sympathetic] or to another leader, in your country and or in another country, that you believe would be sympathetic.

NAME, GROUP IF RELEVANT, COUNTRY, E-MAIL ADDRESS

For further information; please contact:

Francis Boyle, Ph.D. ( [FBOYLE@LAW.UIUC.EDU](mailto:FBOYLE@LAW.UIUC.EDU) )  
Joan Russow, Ph.D., Global Compliance Research Project,  
([j.russow@shawlink.ca](mailto:j.russow@shawlink.ca))

Research links thanks to Progressive Librarians Guild at:

<http://libr.org/plg/ict.php>.

URLs to links in text above:

1. <http://www.un.org/aboutun/charter/chapter4.htm>
2. <http://www.ohchr.org/english/law/itfy.htm>
- 3a. <http://www.yale.edu/lawweb/avalon/imt/proc/imtconst.htm>
- 3b. [http://www.loc.gov/rr/frd/Military\\_Law/pamphlets\\_manuals.html](http://www.loc.gov/rr/frd/Military_Law/pamphlets_manuals.html)
4. <http://www.un.org/icty/>
5. <http://www.un.org/law/icc/index.html>

Endorsed by the PLG Coordinating Committee

## BOOK REVIEWS

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*Never Be Silent: Publishing & Imperialism in Kenya 1884-1963*, by Shiraz Durrani. London: Vita Books, 2006. 271 p. Distributed in the U.S. by the Mau Mau Research Center, 138-28 107th Ave., Jamaica, NY 11435.

*Reviewed by Al Kagan*

Activist Kenyan librarian Shiraz Durrani went into exile in England in 1984 after trying to publish a series of articles on the hidden history of the later Kenyan anti-colonial struggle, The Mau Mau Rebellion (1950-1963), which finally threw out British rule. His new book is a history of that rebellion spanning the whole colonial period from the Berlin Conference where Africa was divided between the European powers to formal independence from Great Britain. The author uses the history of publishing including interesting key excerpts from periodicals to tell the story from the point-of-view of those like himself who were actively involved in the struggle.

Most Westerners who know something about Kenyan history know the name of the first President, Jomo Kenyatta, who is widely remembered as a struggle leader. However, Kenyatta was not involved in the Mau Mau Rebellion. He was rather the betrayer of the rebellion, the safe politician that Britain could trust to change a few faces and leave the colonial economy in tact. Those who want to know more about this story should have a look at the story of a real Mau Mau fighter, *Roots of Freedom, 1921-1963: the Autobiography of Bildad Kaggia* (Nairobi: East African Publishing House, 1975). Kenya was a settler state (similar in that way to the U.S. and Australia) with a so-called “white highlands” where a few thousand European farmers took over the land and lived their comfortable life on the backs of the local people who became their laborers.

Kenya’s most famous author, Ngugi wa Thiong’o, provides a short introduction noting the importance of the work. Let me recommend Ngugi’s works to those looking for wonderful African literature based on clear progressive politics. Ngugi was himself detained and sent to prison by President Kenyatta for explaining the neo-colonial truth in his novels and organizing village plays that reached the local people in his own first language, Gikuyu. His prison experience is recorded in a book originally written on toilet paper secretly hidden in his cell. See *Detained, a Writer’s Prison Diary* (London: Heinemann, 1981). Ngugi is known for championing the idea that Africans should write for themselves in the own languages, and Durrani cites many publications in African as well as in

Indian languages. There is an entire chapter on Kiswahili as a language of resistance, including songs and traditional poetic forms with examples.

The work is divided into three periods: 1886-1922 (“resistance of nationalities”), 1922-1948 (“working class struggles”), and 1948-1963 (“Mau Mau and the struggle for national and social liberation”). The chapters address the publishing activities of three groups: the colonialists and settlers, African peasants and workers, and the South Asian Kenyans who brought their anti-imperialist ideas with them. There is also a short chapter on international solidarity, with sections on eight countries including the United States.

I found the list of Swahili code words used during the Mau Mau struggle particularly interesting. For example “Kenya Ng’ombe” is literally a cow but also the symbol used by the British Kenya military. “Gikonyo” literally means protruding navel but was the term used for the British bombers “derived from the impression conveyed by the open bomb doors.” “Tie-Ties” was the derisive term used for Europeanized Kenyans who were likely to side with the British.

Shiraz Durrani provides a large bibliography, lists of information activists who suffered repression or death, and a list of banned imports. But it is too bad that these lists were presented in such small print.

This work is an important addition to the hidden history and documentation of the Kenyan anti-colonial struggle. It deserves wide distribution.

*Censoring Culture: Contemporary Threats to Free Expression*, edited by Robert Atkins and Svetlana Mintcheva. New York: The New Press, 2006

reviewed by Mark Hudson

In *Censoring Culture*, Robert Atkins and Svetlana Mintcheva have brought together a very wide-ranging collection of essays, interviews and discussions – many of which will be highly relevant to librarians struggling to defend intellectual freedom and the public sphere in the twentieth-first century. If commitment to the abstract ideals of intellectual freedom defined the core of the library profession’s ethical position in the latter half of the twentieth century, librarians in the new century will have to start thinking beyond “banned books” if we want to fully understand the social and cultural forces stifling the creativity, critical thinking and unfettered debate necessary for a democratic society. The goal of *Censoring Culture* is “the expansion of the very notion of censorship” – i.e., to broaden the debate “by exposing the mechanisms that limit free speech today as part of a complex system of economic, political, cultural, and/or social arrangements.” Only the ability to identify and understand this covert “censorship in camouflage,” the editors argue, will make possible “a proactive approach based on dealing directly with the structural conditions that ensure future censorship.” It’s time for the library profession to sit up and take notice.

The book is organized into five sections, each of which exhaustively explores one aspect of this expanded notion of censorship. In part one, the economic foundations of censorship are thoroughly outlined and analyzed, as they manifest themselves in the art world, the music industry, the world of book publishing and book selling, and the corporate mass media in general. All librarians should take particular note of New Press founder André Schiffrin’s analysis of “market censorship” in the book publishing industry, and those developing popular music collections should take a keen interest in Siva Vaidhyanathan’s “American Music Challenges the Copyright Tradition,” which historically contextualizes the notion of “protectable expression” in American popular music from blues to rap. Dee Dee Halleck’s essay on how the military-industrial complex has morphed into a “military-media-industrial” complex promoting positive images of the U.S. military should be essential reading for librarians seeking to counter these images in their collections with materials providing critical perspectives on war and militarism.

Part two considers the internet and the struggles going on between citizens and media owners over control of the decentralized “creative commons” given birth by cyberspace. Lawrence Lessig, in “Creativity and Real Space,” suggests that the very architecture of cyberspace – i.e., the lack of physical constraints on the movement of digital content – makes the

consolidation of centralized control more difficult for media owners than it is in real space, and he argues that network designers should continue to build a “libertarian presumption” into the architecture of cyberspace. Also noteworthy and relevant is Giselle Fahimian’s essay on *Adbusters* and other marketing parodists, “culture jammers” and practitioners of “electronic civil disobedience,” which argues that such movements have the potential to dismantle unjust intellectual property laws and shape a more “diverse and creative culture” – goals that ought to be shared by the library profession, given our stated commitment in the Library Bill of Rights to “cooperate with all persons and groups concerned with resisting abridgment of free expression and free access to ideas.”

Part three explores the ways that the highly subjective notion of “protecting children” has become a major justification for censorship, even as the U.S. consistently fails to protect them from such threats to their well-being as poverty, low-quality education, physical abuse and lack of adequate healthcare. In “Protection or Politics? The Use and Abuse of Children,” Svetlana Mintcheva argues that “sexual abuse is, in spite of its prominence in the cultural consciousness, a relatively minor problem compared to other types of child abuse,” and that “the panic around child pornography has reached such proportions that the rationale for criminalizing it – that children are abused while producing the images – has been forgotten.” The result is that any photography of nude children – or even of children fully clothed if it is “deemed arousing to pedophiles” – can lead to charges of child pornography, sometimes with disastrously life-altering consequences, as the stories in “Not a Pretty Picture” relate. Thus, while the sexual abuse of children and the production of child pornography are certainly despicable activities, the current legal approach “forces us to look at images of children from the point of view of the pedophile, thus creating and expanding the idea of the sexualized child.”

As librarians will recall, the fear that children will be harmed by any exposure to sexual images was the primary rationale for the Children’s Internet Protection Act (CIPA), which requires all libraries receiving E-rate assistance to filter or block online images deemed “obscene” or “harmful to minors.” Libraries have also been forced to censor materials, displays and exhibits that refer to adolescent sexual activity, or to lesbian, gay, bisexual and/or transgendered themes, on the specious grounds that children and adolescents will be harmed by exposure to such themes. In the long term, such censorship cannot be effectively countered if we do not forthrightly challenge the irrationality used to justify it. As Judith Levine notes in “Censorship: The Sexual Media and the Ambivalence of Knowing,” in recent years “censorship proponents have advertised nearly every assault on speech as a defense of children.”

Part four, “Cultural Diversity and Hate Speech,” also contains some relevant and useful contributions, although Randall Kennedy’s defense of whites who use the N-word in “Pitfalls in Fighting ‘Nigger’” is unconvincing, and the editors could almost certainly have found a more insightful contributor

on this particular topic – e.g., filmmaker Spike Lee, whom Kennedy excoriates in his essay for suggesting that African-Americans have more of a right to use the word than whites do. John Leanos’s story about the violent reaction to his artwork critiquing the U.S. military’s propagandistic use of Patrick Tillman’s death in Afghanistan casts a revealing light on the repressive ideological atmosphere of post-9/11 America, as does the interview regarding the *Mirroring Evil* exhibition, which included the work of an Anglo-Israeli artist and peace activist exploring the issue of ideological exploitation of the Holocaust.

Part five, “Self-Censorship,” deserves particularly close attention from librarians, since we, perhaps even more than other cultural workers, have a responsibility to recognize and counter the censor within ourselves. As the Code of Ethics of the American Library Association states: “We significantly influence or control the selection, organization, preservation, and dissemination of information. In a political system grounded in an informed citizenry, we are members of a profession explicitly committed to intellectual freedom and the freedom of access to information. We have a special obligation to ensure the free flow of information and ideas to present and future generations.” The personal narratives of artists and writers in “The Ubiquitous Censor” provide insights readily applicable to the work of librarians, while J.M. Coetzee, in “Taking Offense,” remarks on how “the censor-figure is involuntarily incorporated into the interior, psychic life, bringing with it humiliation, self-disgust, and shame.” Psychoanalyst Janice Lieberman also explores the interior psychic aspect of self-censorship, arguing that it is rooted in defense mechanisms that “lead us to distort what we think, say, or do in order to protect ourselves from facing what is too uncomfortable to face.” This section of the book is inconclusive but, like the others, it leaves the reader with an abundance of ideas to consider, debate and develop further.

*Censoring Culture* also provides an excellent guide to additional reading, since many of the contributors have written more extensively on the topics briefly covered in it. It is strongly recommended for both public and academic libraries, and it should be on every librarian’s professional bookshelf as well. “Censorship in camouflage” is here, and without the kind of understanding provided by this fine collection of short pieces, librarians will be defenseless in the face of it.

*The Library as Place: History, Community, and Culture*, edited by John E. Buschman and Gloria J. Leckie. Westport, CT: Libraries Unlimited, 2007.

*Reviewed by John M. Budd*

This collection of essays began as an intended special issue of *The Library Quarterly*, which Buschman and Leckie were charged with guest editing. The issue had space for about a half dozen papers, but roughly five times that many submissions arrived. The special issue was never published, but the present volume was and represents the breadth and scope of scholarship on the topic. It is to Libraries Unlimited's credit that they had the foresight to produce this collection; it is undeniably the case that excellent work from various perspectives is being conducted.

In their introduction, Leckie and Buschman ask the key question that guides the volume and sets the tone for the scholarship: "what ultimately makes the library a place?" The question flows from consideration of the difference between library as space and library as place. The space of the physical library is certainly not to be ignored, but consideration of it is couched in terms of the human—individual, shared, and phenomenological—meaning of the space. The introduction mentions David Harvey, whose work on, especially, urban spaces sets a standard for investigation into people's construction of place, and the effects of space on human life. Given the work that both Leckie and Buschman have done over the years, it is not surprising that their own emphasis is on the library as place within the public sphere. Thus, place carries political, as well as social and cultural implications.

The thirteen essays that follow the introduction vary only slightly in quality; on the whole the writing is exceptionally clear. The variation that does occur is in the many ways that place can be examined. Ronald Tetreault, for example, writes about military libraries in the British Empire. There have been some treatments of military, post, and ship libraries of the U.S. military; the British approach is an interesting counterpoint to these studies. The imperial ambitions of Britain relied on a particular kind of learning and literacy; the military libraries, as Tetreault points out, were designed to serve the policy purposes of the Empire, along with providing for the well-being of the soldiers and sailors.

Place can also serve specific groups, as Julie Hersberger, Lou Sua, and Adam Murray observe. They study the building and life of the Carnegie Negro Library in Greensboro, North Carolina. Segregated society was oppressive in many ways; a progressive response was creation of community place that could serve social and cultural needs within a community. Explicitly an educational endeavour, the Carnegie Negro Library was intended to foster advancement through resources and space in which to confer, plan, and organize. Given the time and, to a slightly lesser extent, the location,

the library was not merely a Greensboro place; it was a place specifically for the Black community of Greensboro. It was a place that could be a site of identity through community.

In a somewhat similar point of view, Paulette Rothbauer examines the library in the context of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and queer (LGBQ) patrons. The difference between the studies by Hersberger, Sua, and Murray and Rothbauer is that the Black community in Greensboro could employ political and social strategies to create a place they could call their own. LGBQ patrons have not had the social positioning to effect the same kind of “place of identity.” Rothbauer points out that the customary library policy of providing a safe place can result in tension when it comes to serving LGBQ patrons. The goal of anonymity is frequently achieved through presumed homogeneity; targeted services can either betray that goal or lead to an uncomfortable situation for some patrons. The tension, as Rothbauer noted, is displayed by the simultaneous perception of some patrons that resources are inadequate but that the place can foster community through shared space.

Academic libraries are also the topic of some work. Karen Antell and Debra Engel study the use of the library by scholars. Their investigation suggests some anomalies that challenge the customary view that older scholars are tied, physically and intellectually, to the book, while younger scholars are acculturated into digital resources. Only to an extent does that presumption obtain. Many faculty members do tout the accessibility of digital information, but many extol the benefits of interaction with physical materials. The latter phenomenon may be expressed in terms of browsing—being able to perceive categorically similar works in physical proximity. The results of their study suggest that the intellectual labor of scholars is diverse; there are many ways to inquire and discover, and the many ways may be manifest in the actions of a single scholar.

From social and subscription libraries to *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, place has had, and continues to have, many meanings for people. The essays in this collection illustrate quite clearly some of the very important meanings that libraries have. Taken as a whole, the essays raise critical questions about any single ideological “state” for the library (primarily by demonstrating that there is no such thing as the library). There is no one space that can meet the social, cultural, political, or phenomenological needs of all people. The essays in this collection show how remarkable it is that libraries come so close to accomplishing such a goal. The book can not only inform, but serve as a catalyst for further inquiry.

*Librarianship and Human Rights: A Twenty-First Century Guide*, by Toni Samek. Oxford: Chandos Publishing, 2007.

*Reviewed by John Buschman*

(Truth in reviewing note: the Progressive Librarians Guild (PLG) and three members of the PLG Coordinating Committee – including me – are thanked or cited positively as examples of critical librarianship.)

Perhaps it is my own recent ventures into LIS theory, or perhaps it is a broader weariness with the constant collisions between the human toll from our Middle East folly with the drumbeat to “stay the course,” but this book is a refreshing change. Samek, Associate Professor in the School of Library and Information Studies at the University of Alberta, sets out not to write a scholarly book on the topic, but rather a literal guide to the issues: “this book documents social action strategies used by library and information workers worldwide to negotiate...fundamental barrier[s] in support of human rights in the face of adversity and risk” – professional risk, and well beyond. “It is time we fully recognised the political context of library and information work.” That alone should get our hearty endorsement.

Samek straightforwardly situates this work within the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), and IFLA resolutions on intellectual freedom (IF) which explicitly link IF (and its ancillary issues) as the core value of librarianship to the UDHR. Along the way, Samek sensibly situates human rights generally as lesser in magnitude than other issues – like war or global warming, and, while I might quibble about the disclaimer that human rights are not universal nor appropriate for all peoples, that is probably the more direct route into her primary purpose. The book then proceeds through “The Rhetoric” of the matter, nicely guiding us through the context – and urgency of – twenty-first century librarianship, and the moral imperatives upon the profession. Always the focus is on international contexts – not just our own North American “digital divide” to give one instance. This is a tonic, tending to break us out of our own bubble. Along the way, Samek knits together an overview of IF, human rights, information work, and various dangers like the destruction of Bosnia’s national and university library or the obstacles analyzed and critiqued by the likes of Herbert Schiller or Sandy Berman.

The heart of the book is its part two: “The Reality.” Therein Samek extensively outlines “practical strategies for social action” via extensive definition and documentation of examples. The examples run from “mass direct action” to “access to information” to “critical dialogue” to “activism, honouring of.” These tend to follow a standard format:

“Activism, honouring of”

Definition (“Activism: A doctrine or policy of advocacy energetic action.”) from the OED in this case. This is followed by a paragraph of discussion (“... often used synonymously with protest or dissent...”).

Example (a festschrift on honor of Marvin Scilken) again followed by a discussion, and the source of the information and any relevant citations or websites.

The effect is threefold: 1) the book contextualizes current critical/progressive efforts historically and internationally; 2) the book consciously forges links between these efforts historically and internationally; 3) perhaps most importantly, the book provides a kind of précis for newer librarians on exactly what critical/progressive librarianship is, how it has been and can be effective, and what they might be able to do themselves following these examples and models. Along the way Samek helpfully pulls together a great deal of relevant documentation (ALA’s resolution on the USAPATRIOT Act, the UDHR, and lists of current and past progressive librarian groups worldwide. The effect is, I must admit, energizing.

In sum, Toni Samek is to be congratulated for taking what, in our neoliberal and postmodern age, is a deeply unfashionable topic, and making it compelling, shoving the ethical and moral imperatives of our profession back in front of those who might also need it shoved elsewhere. Finally, any mamby-pamby talk at ALA, on listservs, or by conservative “librarians” about what is and isn’t a “library” issue needs to account for Samek’s argument. ALA and IFLA aren’t veering “off course” when they engage those issues, and our “colleagues” simply want to eviscerate the concept of the responsibility of a profession from within rather than make the argument democratically within those organizations that we should not be concerned about the contexts in which cultural memory institutions operate. Tell them to read Samek before they say another word.

*Library Juice Concentrate*, edited and mostly written by Rory Litwin. Duluth, MN: Library Juice Press, 2006.

*Reviewed by Douglas Raber*

The material Rory Litwin collected for *Library Juice Concentrate* is available in its original online format at [libr.org/juice/](http://libr.org/juice/) but it's nice to have it available in a book. By taking the material offline and making choices about what to include, Litwin provides what he calls "classic information"; contextualized knowledge intentionally communicated for a discernable purpose. Each piece in the collection informs and is informed by the others. The intellectual coherence of digital material can be overlooked when "content" is consumed one item at a time online. Gathered in a book these pieces, most of them written by Litwin, come together to represent a critical professional consciousness. As with any book, readers are free to "link" these pieces in as many creative ways as they choose, perhaps by writing notes to themselves in the margins.

Litwin's book reveals a set of tensions that condition professional practice. Each can be framed as a competing imperative. Librarians must adapt their practices to developing technologies yet guard against implications that threaten librarianship's founding principles. They must adopt an activist stance toward the social problems libraries are intended to solve yet preserve the conserving functions of librarianship. They must maintain a commitment to intellectual freedom yet not abdicate social responsibility. Litwin argues that librarianship's founding principles are simultaneously communitarian and libertarian. Libraries allow collectives to share the economic burden of making knowledge accessible thereby supporting individual aspiration and liberty. Because the use of library resources does not diminish their value they are available for re-use. Libraries are models of sustainability. Truth, knowledge and learning are central to individual and social enrichment that is the purpose of democratic culture. Because libraries preserve and provide these values they are crucial democratic institutions. Librarianship is necessarily a democratic practice, but that practice can be distorted to serve non-democratic ends.

Librarians must be clear about three political concepts that are central to their work: neutrality, objectivity, and the political center. They must respect the right of users to think for themselves; to use material they judge relevant for whatever purpose they choose. Being neutral, however, does not allow librarians to suspend personal or professional judgment regarding social problems and community needs. Not taking a side is taking a side, usually one that serves dominant political interests. Material that is objective is not necessarily value-free and limiting collections to apparently "objective" items is to engage bias, usually privileging dominant ideas. Finally, the political center is not the middle ground where general agreement resides but instead a constantly shifting balance of power between dominant and

subordinate interests in differentiated social structures. The center is where justice is pursued.

Given these principles, Litwin's book explores issues arising from tensions within practice. He recognizes, for example, that information and communication technologies (ICT's) expand the possibilities of library service. A new generation of librarians is creating Library 2.0, "remaking the profession from the ground up for the digital future" according to their own vision of professional imperatives and in response to demands from a new generation of library users. These practices are based on active sharing of information and interactive personalized service, transforming the library into a medium of communication. It's important to remember that Library Juice began its life as a web-based publication and continues today as a blog (see <http://libraryjuicepress.com/blog/>). Litwin believes in an activist librarianship that will protect citizens' rights to information and extend library service in new ways to new audiences. Blogs, social networking and the web itself, however, are just tools. They are means to ends rather than ends in themselves and care must be taken so that librarians use rather than are used by them.

Litwin rejects the notion that all technology is automatically good and that librarians who cannot see this are somehow misguided. He argues that librarians should not identify themselves as "information professionals" because it too easily leads to a focus on "neo-information": digital, undifferentiated, decontextualized content unconnected to any genuine human project. Neo-information and the ICT that supports it substitute commodity fetishism for relevance, threatening both privacy and individual intellectual autonomy. These consequences serve an information environment dominated by interests of private property whose goal is the manipulation of human need for commercial and political ends. Litwin asserts that librarianship must be about using information to maintain connections with reality and authentic existence; that it must be based on the truthful assessment of the patron's real needs and must situate retrieved information in the context of available information. The end of librarianship is not about librarians; it is about the "enrichment, enlightenment and empowerment" of patrons.

To accomplish this end libraries and librarianship need to change in order to connect more intimately with human needs and democratic purposes increasingly conditioned by a Web 2.0 environment. From Litwin's perspective, library practice must work to counter value systems that prize economic gain over any other value. Librarians need to identify and provide alternative information sources. Dominant knowledge hegemonies tend to flatten thought and discourage informed citizenship favoring instead the complacent consumption of information products.

Librarianship has to embrace the political implications of its work but a radical stance for its own sake or for the sake of advancing the self-interest of librarians is not appropriate. The stereotypical librarian, one hesitant to

embrace personal or professional change, can also be seen as a defender of enduring democratic values. Not all change is progressive. Web 2.0 offers possibilities for the democratization of communication but it also can allow unverified assertions to pass for truth. Calls for non-hierarchical, non-power dominated libraries and professional communities such as those made by the anarchist librarian movement of the 90's resonate with democratic ideals and bear careful consideration but Litwin reminds us that standardization, hierarchy, and order are also signs of rational thought and necessary for the discovery of truth. Institutions and authority must earn their legitimacy, but they are necessary to accomplish human ends.

Although intellectual freedom is the explicit topic of only one of the pieces in the book, it is arguably the primary value underlying the critical professional consciousness manifest throughout. Litwin makes a strong point when he observes that ideas are dangerous, the best ideas do not always win in the marketplace of ideas and suppressed ideas do not necessarily gain strength. These conditions make a principled and active commitment to intellectual freedom a primary value of both librarianship and democracy. Problems arise for librarianship, however, because the relationship between intellectual freedom and social responsibility is not free of ambiguity. This problem is well illustrated by the selection of pieces on Cuba. Litwin writes that the book would have retained its coherence if this section had been omitted and that he chose to include it for historical reasons. On the contrary, I think that this section is crucial to the book and reveals contradictions within the library left that it has yet to address.

Rhonda Neugebauer and Ann Sparanese, for example, offer critiques of the so-called independent libraries in Cuba, as well as the organization, Friends of Cuban Libraries, based in Miami. Both are seen as parts of a strategy orchestrated by the U.S. government to destabilize the Cuban government. Contacts and efforts by American librarians to provide aid to Cuban state librarians are documented as evidence of taking a genuine socially responsible professional position in the face of unjust American foreign policy toward Cuba. Sparanese recognizes that the conditions of free speech in Cuba are less than desirable but asks "Can we realistically expect and demand that Cuba be the model of democratic rights in the face of the unrelenting U.S. economic and political aggression?"

Given Cuba's relative powerlessness regarding its relations with both the U.S. and the former Soviet Union, its role as a pawn in the Cold War, and American efforts at economic isolation if not regime change in Cuba, distortions of social democratic revolutionary ideals are understandable. If after 45 years, however, the transition from a dictatorship of the proletariat to genuine collective self-rule is still waiting, then it is fair to ask if something has gone wrong with the revolution. Some of the voices suppressed in Cuba are those of critical socialists who justifiably expect more from their revolution.

If justice is the goal of librarianship the Cuban situation presents an illustrative and complex practical problem requiring a theoretical analysis missing from professional discourse. This problem engages the professional tensions explored throughout Litwin's book. The founding principles of librarianship certainly include a libertarian commitment to individual rights and intellectual freedom as well as a communitarian commitment to social responsibility and justice. The *a priori* application of absolute principle in professional discourse, however, provides little guidance for the resolution of conflicts between actual individual and collective interests. Politically wise as well as moral choice requires that we adequately theorize practical situations. For example, is it possible to support independent Cuban libraries as a matter of intellectual freedom and Cuban state libraries as a matter of social responsibility, or is this contradiction essentially irresolvable? What do we need to know to answer this question?

Litwin's book does a good job at raising important questions like these. Everyday, librarians confront practical situations that demand theoretical and moral analysis. Everyday they are called upon to resolve tensions between the need to effectively use ICT and avoid its totalizing implications; between the need to conserve democratic traditions of library purpose and use while committing to the social activism implied by the nature of library practice; between a concept of intellectual freedom that does not allow neutrality to subvert the social responsibility that informs the principle and a concept of social responsibility that does not subvert the end of justice by using it to justify means inimical to personal freedom. Reading Litwin's book is a good way to begin thinking about these issues.

*Globalisation, Information and Libraries: The implications of the World Trade Organisation's GATS and TRIPS Agreements*, by Ruth Rikowski. Oxford: Chandos Publishing, 2005.

*Reviewed by Samuel E. Trosow*

Based on her earlier works published in *Information for Social Change*, this book presents a thorough introduction to the complexities of the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS) and Trade Related Aspects of Intellectual Property (TRIPS) Agreements and their implications for public information services. Despite the sometimes-technical nature of the subject matter, the materials are presented in an accessible manner, and the author is able to sort through the various agreements in a coherent way. The work is well documented and the chapters are well organized making the book a useful reference that remains timely even though the international trade environment is rapidly changing.

Two factors especially contribute to the ongoing usefulness of the work. First, the author pays close attention to the historical development of these agreements. And second, a solid theoretical foundation is offered in the last section of the book. By viewing GATS and TRIPS through the lens of critical political economy, Rikowski avoids the trap that afflicts many writers on the subject of international trade, which is a formalist/legalistic approach that fails to place the emergence of the Agreements in some historical context and within a wider theoretical framework. The theme that runs throughout the work is that GATS and TRIPS are interrelated with each other and are part of a larger process of globalization

To briefly outline the organization of the book, it is divided into four parts; the first provides an overview of the World Trade Organization (WTO). Here the author weaves together an organizational and structural analysis of the WTO and its processes with an historical analysis of how and why this institution came about at the time that it did. This overview is important before jumping into the details of GATS or TRIPS as both of these agreements are Annexes to the WTO Agreement and are governed by the same set of institutional rules and procedures, especially those relating to the dispute settlement process. At the outset, Rikowski links these Agreements to the process of globalization, a point she will return to in the final part with some greater refinement.

Part two turns to the details of the GATS, emphasizing the effects the Agreement could have on public services. The general concern about GATS is that its driving logic, the progressive liberalization of measures affecting trade in services, is at odds with the public goods nature of many public services. Libraries present an excellent case study of how this tension arises and plays out, as libraries are not only publicly provided services, but they are delivered by those with a very strong public service

ethic. Perhaps more than other government services, libraries have traditionally provided an important space outside of the private market. The social ethics driving library services are fundamentally at odds with the drive towards privatizing public services and transforming them into a site for the accumulation of private capital. The various GATS disciplines all work together to accomplish this shift, albeit in a subtle matter that is not always clear on the surface.

This part of the book explains how library services are “measures” within the meaning of the Agreement and how the classification of services works. The text of GATS itself, as complicated as it appears, is only a framework document, and the details of the coverage of the Agreement are worked out in a continuing series of negotiations between members concerning which service sectors and sub-sectors are listed in a country’s schedule of commitments. The important point is stressed that while library services generally fall under sub-sector 10C (which covers libraries, archives, museums and other cultural services), many aspects of library services can also come under other sectors (such as telecommunications, educational, or R&D services) as well. Thus, while it is important to carefully note which countries have made commitments under sub-sector 10C (that is, they have “listed” them on their schedule of commitments), it is important to understand that the changing nature of library services widens the potential for a GATS challenge under various sectors. While certain GATS rules apply across the Board, many of the most significant restrictions only apply to services that have been listed by a country. Part 2 includes sections on various countries and concludes with an analysis of the positions taken by various library associations and organizations.

The TRIPS Agreement is the focus of part three, beginning with an overview of the Agreement. The author’s position is that “TRIPS is about transforming information, knowledge and ideas into intellectual property rights which can then be traded on the global market in the form of internally tradable commodities” (p. 187). After discussing the different types of intellectual property devices that are covered by TRIPS (Trademarks, Industrial Design, Integrated Circuit Design and undisclosed information as well as the more familiar Patents and Copyright), Rikowski asks the important question of whether intellectual property even belongs in a trade agreement. She answers the question by saying that while “the argument that TRIPS should not be part of the WTO might seem, at first, to be rather convincing . . . upon careful examination it is clear that the TRIPS Agreement definitely is part of trade, and indeed that this is its overriding aim” (p. 204).

She then turns to a particular discussion of how Patents and Copyright are treated under TRIPS and its implications for library services and the profession. As for Copyright, Rikowski concludes that “the overriding aim in TRIPS is to encourage and exacerbate the trading of intellectual property rights . . . and it is not concerned with trying to achieve the main balance in copyright, i.e. the balance between the free flow of information

and the giving of rights to creators of works and copyright holders” (p. 257). She also raises the exclusion of the moral rights of authors from TRIPS coverage as an indication of further imbalance. As for Patents, she points out that while the implications for libraries is less direct than in the case of Copyright, the ability to patent traditional, indigenous knowledge has a significant impact on the developing world. She points out that “large corporations in the developed world can easily appropriate traditional knowledge, transform it into an intellectual property right, patent it and make money out of it, without having to compensate the original creators of the knowledge” (p. 245).

At the conclusion of part three, Rikowski makes the claim that “[i]t should now be clearly apparent that the GATS and TRIPS together represent powerful, far-reaching agreements that could, and I am sure will, have serious implications for the library and information professions” (p. 287). As a whole, the book stands up to this claim. Her recommendation that “as a profession we surely need to take urgent action on these matters” (id.) is well taken.

Had Rikowski stopped here, the book would still be an important contribution to our understanding of this emerging area of information policy. But she continues with part 4 in which she presents what she calls “An Open Marxist theoretical perspective on global capitalism and the World Trade Organization.” Her stated “intention . . . is to convince the reader of the importance of bringing theory and practice together, and moreover to present the argument that Marxism provides a more adequate theoretical understanding and analysis of society and the economy and its intrinsic workings than any other theory” (p. 292). This is an ambitious undertaking, but Rikowski lays out a convincing argument in the final chapters. Of course, this work is tentative and needs to be developed through further research and analysis. Certainly this book will be an important resource for future work in the area.

The implications of international trade agreements are an important component of the study of information policy. Unfortunately, the area is not as widely recognized as such and is often given inadequate attention, both in the library school curriculum and in the ongoing advocacy program of many library associations. This book should help to alleviate this gap and it should be read by anyone seeking a deeper understanding of the global processes that are at work in promoting the commercialization of privatization of public services.

*Constraining Public Libraries: The World Trade Organization's General Agreement on Trade in Services*, by Samuel E. Trosow and Kirsti Nilsen. Metuchen NJ: Scarecrow Press, 2006.

*Reviewed by Ruth Rikowski*

I was delighted to discover that another book has now been written about the implications of the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS) for libraries. Trosow and Nilsen's book is indeed, very welcome. It considers the GATS in some detail, which is very useful, including chapters on the Scope of the GATS (Chapter 2) and the GATS disciplines (Chapter 3). The authors summarise and simplify a number of issues (e.g. the scope of and rules regarding the coverage of GATS) in diagrammatic form – which aids in understanding this complex and dense topic.

GATS is about the liberalisation of trade in services, and as such it threatens state-funded libraries, including public libraries. Trosow and Nilsen make this very clear. There are also four appendices A-D (pp.175-220), which provide useful background material: on pertinent sections of the GATS Agreement (Appendix A), on the WTO Dispute Settlement Process (Appendix B), the IFLA position on the WTO, as at 2001 (in Appendix C), and on the Canadian Library Association's position on the potential threat to library and information services posed by the GATS (Appendix D). To the uninitiated, this might be helpful, although such information can be found elsewhere.

Trosow and Nilsen also emphasise how difficult it is to understand the intricacies of the international trade agenda in general:

By design, the international trade regime is confusing, and equally by design it is fully accessible only to the most specialized trade lawyers and lobbyists...The GATS agenda is ongoing and not always transparent. (p.150).

Chapter 4 considers whether public libraries operate on a commercial basis, and within this, a range of collection, information and reference services are examined. Trosow and Nilsen conclude the chapter saying:

The wide variety of public library services available illustrates the extent to which libraries are either operating in a commercial manner or competing with private-sector suppliers. On either account, libraries cannot rely on the GATS exemption for services provided under the auspices of government authority. (p. 80)

Considerable reference is given to my own book, *Globalisation, Information and Libraries*, in Chapter 5, particularly in relation to my typology regarding commercialisation, privatisation and capitalisation. The authors write:

...Ruth Rikowski provides a timely and very useful framework that explains the mechanisms of three main paths to privatization. (p. 100)

In this way, they build on my previous work, although not so much in other ways. Trosow and Nilsen refer to commercialisation in regard to commercial digital libraries, for example, saying that:

HighBeam Research and Questia...are examples of commercial digital libraries that market services directly to individuals and bypass any connection to physical libraries. (p.71)

They make an interesting point when they say that although public libraries are not providing Internet access on a commercial basis, perhaps they can be seen to be competing with private sector Internet providers. This is something that we need to be aware of and to deliberate further on.

Chapter 6 considers how to avoid the negative impact of trade in services and a number of very useful recommendations are made. These include discouraging privatisation, limiting commercialisation and avoiding user fees, engaging in advocacy for public libraries and avoiding complacency (p. 144).

However, this book does not have the clear political and theoretical message that I purvey. It does basically establish that the GATS is something that the library and information profession needs to be really concerned about, if we care about our public libraries. Yet I do find their conclusion disturbing: Trosow and Nilsen indicate that the implications of the WTO agreements for libraries were “unanticipated,” and just showed an “unintentional and unfortunate lack of foresight” (p.168). I do not accept this at all. Instead, the GATS is primarily about placing public services (including library and information services) within a trade agenda. Its trajectory and development carries with it the potential to transform public services into internationally tradable commodities under the auspices of capital and profit-making enterprises. All this is an aspect of the “logic” of capital, a logic currently dressed up in academic and left media circles as neoliberalism, which is an ideology that has practical effects when embraced by governments: viz. to break down barriers to marketisation, commodification and capital accumulation – throughout the known social universe. It is disingenuous, in my opinion, to argue that those negotiators who traded away a whole gamut of public services into the arms of capital via the GATS in 1994 – even before the WTO became a legal entity on 1st January 1995 – were apparently clueless, and hence blameless, regarding what they did.

In the final section there is a “GATS Glossary” (pp.221-225) that opens up the relevant acronyms used in GATSpeak accurately and succinctly. The bibliography is quite extensive and useful, especially for postgraduate students and researchers new to this growing field of enquiry. There is an

index and also quite extensive notes at the end of each chapter. All this, plus the appendices, constitutes approximately one third of the book.

In conclusion, I certainly recommend this book. The more that we can uncover and unravel of the complexities of the global capitalist trade agenda for libraries and information, the better. The book provides a very valuable contribution to this task. However, I do urge against falling for any form of smoke screen, no matter where it comes from. But hopefully, together we can start to “blow the lid” on this global capitalist agenda and, indeed, uncover the hidden (and not so hidden) global capitalist trade agenda for libraries and information.

## NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

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**Ruth Rikowski** teaches at the University of Greenwich and at London South Bank University. She is also the Commissioning Editor for Chandos Publishing, has been an information professional for over 25 years working in both the public and private sectors (mostly in public sector). She is on the Editorial Board of *Information for Social Change* and was co-editor from 2004-06. She and her husband maintain a website, The Flow of Ideas, at <http://www.flowideas.co.uk/>.

**Mark Rosenzweig** is one of the founders of the Progressive Librarians Guild and its journal *Progressive Librarian*. He is a Councilor at large of the American Library Association. He is currently teaching in Zhenjiang, China.

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**Samuel Trosow** is an Associate Professor at the University of Western Ontario where he holds a joint appointment in the Faculty of Information & Media Studies and in the Faculty of Law. He teaches in the areas of intellectual property, jurisprudence, urban law, information policy, the political economy of information and foundations of library and information science and is the co-author of *Constraining Public Libraries: the World Trade Organization's General Agreement on Trade in Services* (with Kirsti Nilsen, Scarecrow Press, 2006).