

Editorial

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Special Thread "Internet Publishing" Editor for *Libri*, Chief Editor, *First Monday*

Internet publishing has rapidly grown in the last decade, to the point where scholarly journals, books, newspapers, and magazines all have multiple identities in print and on the screen. Nowhere is this more recognized in the general acceptance of digital versions of newspapers by the public at large (Nguyen 2003) and scholarly journals in academia. In recognition of these developments, the editors of *Libri* have agreed to start, with this issue, a thread of papers discussing current issues in Internet publishing.

This thread will examine Internet publishing from a variety of perspectives, including those of traditional and Web publishers, contributors (in *digitalese*, content creators), and readers (users). Papers in this series will take a decidedly practical approach as well as philosophical, examining in part what progress we have or haven't made in ten years and the implications for the future of our successes and failures in utilizing this new medium.

In some ways, our use of the Internet like a printing press has been slow. I was reminded of this in a re-reading of Lucien Febvre and Henri-Jean Martin's *The Coming of the Book*. Febvre and Martin (1999) describe the quick spread of printing technology in the fifteenth century at a pace that would embarrass many who brag about the rapid adoption of Internet technologies. In some ways, the challenge to use digital media wisely was made to libraries, publishers, and their patrons nearly 40 years ago by J.C.R. Licklider (1965) who wrote:

"We need to substitute for the book a device that will make it easy to transmit information without transporting material, and that will not only present information to people but also process it for them, following procedures they specify, apply, monitor, and, if necessary, revise and reapply."

We have a long way to go before we successfully address Licklider's dream. The papers in this thread represent small steps in addressing that prospect for the future.

In this issue, this thread begins with a paper by Ann Okerson, Associate University Librarian at Yale University. Okerson examines recent experiments in scholarly publishing and the implications of this recent history. In the December issue Wim van Drimmelen, Director, Koninklijke Bibliotheek, The Netherlands, will discuss the difficult issues surrounding digital archiving. Both papers provide a thoughtful start to this ongoing thread on Internet publishing and its implications.

References

- Febvre, L. and Martin, H-J. 1999. *The Coming of the Book*. London: Verso.
- Licklider, J.C.R. 1965. *Libraries of the Future*. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press.
- Nguyen, A. 2003. The current status and potential development of online news consumption: A structural approach. *First Monday* 8(9). Available at URL: http://firstmonday.org/issues/issue8_9/nguyen/index.html [viewed September 8, 2003].