

Editorial



Your Editors celebrating the New (electronic) Year at Cedar Key, Florida

There are several hot topics on the serials industry agenda at the moment – and we all know what they are! Open access; the UK House of Commons Select Committee report; and the activities of Google. You will not be surprised to hear that all these topics are represented within this issue of *Serials*.

Our Key Issue this month is by Chuck Hamaker on Google Scholar. Chuck explains the mysteries of Googlebot (the official name of Google's robot) and explores the availability of articles from searches. Overall he is cautiously optimistic about the development of the service – recognizing that it is embryonic and will doubtless develop rapidly – and he concludes that '... identifying articles, at least in the fields we checked, Google Scholar did an excellent job of finding recent publications'. Our Profile of Ronald Milne this issue touches on another important Google initiative, that of scanning millions of library volumes and making them searchable on the web. Ronald is Acting Director of Oxford University Library Services, and Oxford is one of the libraries working with Google on this huge project; other sites include Harvard, Stanford and Michigan University Libraries. In the case of Oxford, only out-of-copy-right 19th-century materials are being digitized, but that is not the case in some of the other libraries. So perhaps it is no surprise to read in the *Chronicle of Higher Education* of 8 February 2005: 'Some publishing groups say that Google's ambitious project ... could run afoul of copyright laws, and that

Google should get permission from publishers before proceeding...' No doubt this saga will run and run. And while on the topic of Google, our invaluable Editorial Assistant Ally Souster informs us (courtesy of Google) that the green pantone colour we selected for the cover of *Serials* is the colour used for Marge Simpson's dress: a need-to-know.

The other significant feature in this issue is the publication of presentations from UKSG's 'sell-out' seminar on the Select Committee report. The star studded line-up included Ian Gibson MP, who chaired the Select Committee, and speakers from all parts of the industry. In the librarians' corner were Ann Okerson from Yale University, Tom Graham from Newcastle University and Stephen Pinfield from Nottingham University. Between them they spoke of librarians' positive reaction to the report but their deep disappointment with the Government's response. Ann went on to discuss some of the implications of open access publishing and institutional repositories on Yale in particular, one of the world's leading research libraries. In the publishers' corner were Jan Velterop from the open access publisher BioMed Central, Martin Richardson from Oxford University Press and Bob Campbell from Blackwell. As can be imagined, their perspectives and concerns were wide ranging and diverse and make for very interesting reading.

As we move into spring we move towards the annual UKSG conference in April at Heriot-Watt University in Edinburgh – a very popular venue.

For many people in the industry this is probably the most important conference of the year and once again the UKSG conference planning committee has put together an excellent programme of professional and social events. Exhibition places at the conference sold out within the space of days. We look forward to meeting up with everyone in Edinburgh and will, of course, be publishing the conference papers in the July and November issues.

And finally: please do remember that from 2005 *Serials* will be e-only. For this reason you will find some changes in this and future issues. UKSG News has moved to *Serials-eNews* where it will appear in the first issue of the month, and you will notice some layout changes. However, for those of you who tell us you still prefer to read *Serials* on the train, plane or in the bath, you may purchase a print-on-demand copy from UKSG. Just fill in the form.



The venue for the conference dinner in Edinburgh – see you there!
Photo: © Trustees of the National Museums of Scotland