



Winter 12-15-2003

Oh! The Tangled Web

Mark Y. Herring

Winthrop University, herringm@winthrop.edu

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcommons.winthrop.edu/dacus_facpub

 Part of the [Library and Information Science Commons](#)

Digital Commons Citation

Herring, Mark Y., "Oh! The Tangled Web" (2003). *Dacus Library Faculty Publications*. 43.
https://digitalcommons.winthrop.edu/dacus_facpub/43

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Ida Jane Dacus Library at Digital Commons @ Winthrop University. It has been accepted for inclusion in Dacus Library Faculty Publications by an authorized administrator of Digital Commons @ Winthrop University. For more information, please contact bramed@winthrop.edu.



Little Red Herrings: Part Two — Oh! The Tangled Web

by **Mark Y. Herring** (Dean of Library Services, Dacus Library, Winthrop University)
<herringm@winthrop.edu>

This is Part Two in a series. See Part One "Filter-tipped Libraries," in Against the Grain, v.16#5, p.62.

Now before hundreds rush in with that inane, "One man's Mede is another man's Persian" argument, permit me to define Internet pornography. It isn't difficult at all. Internet pornography is that which depicts pictorially, or in streaming video, fellatio, cunnilingus, anal intercourse, bestiality, gay and lesbian sex, sexual relations of any sort with children or between children, scatology, contrectation, paraphilia, scopophilia, and any sort of attempted sexual insertion of animate or inanimate objects into bodily orifices in a manner not intended for them. (By the way, *all* of what is described above and more is already on the Web.) I do *not* include in this definition written works for, as Horace pointed out, the eye is more easily tamed than the ear. While a case, and a very solid one, can be made for censoring pornographic writings, it is not one being argued here. Libraries have never routinely trafficked in graphic, sexual images such as those everywhere on the Web. What libraries have done is make an exception to the Web, *for these are things that not only have libraries never collected, but would turn them down without question were they offered to them in print form.*

Of course there will still be those who wish to differ even about this pictorial definition. One colleague argued that these sites must be protected for artists who want to draw nudes (apparently these renderings would be what we'd call "quick" draw artists as the sites I've seen

do not have very many posed pictures, unless of course it's of, well, you know). The same colleague argued they must be protected for sex education. How absurd. If parents are using these sites for sex education its no wonder we have the teen-pregnancy problem we do!

The other argument is that porn-surfing isn't really a problem? You be the judge. There are estimated to be more than 200,000 adults addicted to Web-based pornography. The top five pornography sites register *more than 100 million* hits each month. Last year Web-based porn sites earned over \$3 billion. Together, all pornography (adult videos, magazines, cyberporn, etc.) rakes in *more* money annually than CBS, NBC, ABC, ESPN and CNN combined. Indeed, last year alone, porn videos made more than the NFL and the NBA, combined. (Apparently there *is* something men would rather watch than sports!) Indeed, so bad has it become that a women's group has developed a site called "Get Real" whereby they opine for men to get in *real* relationships and out of porn sites.

Furthermore, once you enter a porn site, getting out of cybersleaze isn't so easy. "Pop-up" windows are also a common feature of cyberporn sites, as they are of just about any site these days. Often dozens such "free" windows pop up as soon as you close one. Since many of these sites occur frequently in almost any kind of search (even misspellings!), avoiding them without filtering isn't so easy. Pornographers know these pop-up windows will entice some viewers to come back and offer them for that reason alone, what we would call in other context "entrapment." Many of the screens will move down a kind of progression,

as if the screens were saying, "Do you like this?" "What about this?" Pornographers rely on running by *something* that will have its eventual prurient appeal.

"Mousetraps" are also common now. Mousetraps are sites that look like one thing and end up a pornographic-other. Some are the result of unrenowned Websites that pornographers have snatched up for their own. In England, for example, a well known children's site forgot to renew its Web address (these run less than \$50 annually in the U.S.) and a pornographer took it over. Surfers to that site were greeted with the salacious material rather than educational activities for children. The pornographer has offered to return the address to its owner for (U.S.) \$6,000! For many pornographers this is simply another revenue stream. They hold the addresses until others are willing to pay. Compaq's site at one time, if misspelled, led one to a series of pornographic sites. Most recently, www.firstamendment.org leads surfers to a different sort of argument, one that involves all sorts of perfidious nudity. This may well be the first case of the *.org domain being infiltrated by pornographers.

Unfortunately, however, there's very little of the market pornographers have not penetrated, so to speak. Palmotica is Asia's answer to hand-held pornography, one might say. It is quite possible that the man (or possibly the woman) next to you on the plane, the subway, or on the Metro is not really reviewing his daily schedule on his hand-held. Rather, he's getting his daily dose of pornography, compliments of Palmotica.

Pornographers will stoop to new lows, too, to provide new content. A New York reporter was shocked to discover that *she* was on a porn site though she had never posed, ever. After denouncing her co-worker for the malicious rumor, she surfed to the site and sure enough, there she was. Apparently while lunching in Central Park on a bright sunny day, a pornographer walked about with a camera held waist-high. When he found women in dresses he waited until they bent over for something, reached for this or that, or crossed and uncrossed their legs. The momentary revealing of cleavage or, in this case, undergarments, was caught on tape and plastered up for the world to see.

Getting to a pornographic Website is scandalously easy. For example, keying in *any* slang term — any slang term that any eight year old would know — is certain to bring up a pornographic site. Depending on the term, one will be treated to progressively heinous depictions. Now, you tell me. Is pornography a problem? Should libraries be dispensing it, courtesy of taxpayer's dollars?


Libraries are rapidly becoming so many *electronic* Adult Bookstores. What possible value, for example, does HealthyHooterville.com (1

continued on page 81

And They Were There from page 79

The **Directory of Open Access Journals** (www.DOAJ.org) is a collection of peer reviewed open access journals in all disciplines and all languages offering scholarly content. As of November 2004, it included 1,345 journal titles from over 300 publishers, including **BioMed Central**. At this point, the directory has global visibility, is integrated into many OPACs and is included in aggregator databases. It is often referred to as the "most important listing of OA journals." Data transfer occurs rapidly and comes from 150 countries. There are many challenges including assisting publishers, some of whom are technically "immature," selecting new journals from inclusion from the many suggested, dealing with low band width areas and working through ideas for improvements. Bjornshaug foresees establishing a network of editors, adding a personalization feature and notification service, making more journals

aware of OA possibilities, setting up a sponsorship program and including OA articles from hybrid journals. He noted that the **University of Lund** requires its faculty to register all published works in its institutional repository and he recommends that authors use a model license agreement when submitting work to a publisher. The OA debate has made it easier to get the attention of university administrators who, along with faculty and librarians, need to recognize the need for change in scholarly publishing, assess current research assessment systems and work for suitable intellectual property rights agreements. Bjornshaug emphasized that universities, through their libraries, should become publishers.

Watch for additional reports from the **Charleston Conference** in the February issue of *Against the Grain!* The entire **Charleston Conference Proceedings** will be published by **Greenwood/Libraries Unlimited** in 2005. 

Little Red Herrings:
from page 80

made this up but it's probably out there) have for anyone? What informational needs are being served by making available *whitehouse.com*, or the *sexmuseum.com*, to every ten-year old? Those who defend the absolutist view have the burden of proof upon them. Let me make this clear. This is *not* a call for books to be burned. It is to sound the tocsin before libraries really do become "bare and ruined choir" where late good books were read.

In 1908, then **American Library Association (ALA)** President, **Arthur E. Bostwick**, addressed librarians in the *ALA Bulletin* about counting *everything* as reading material. He opined,

"Some are born great; some achieve greatness; some have greatness thrust upon them. It is in this way that the librarian has become a censor of literature.... Books that distinctly commend what is wrong, that teach how to sin and tell how pleasant it is, sometimes with and sometime without the added sauce of impropriety, are increasingly popular, tempting to the author to imitate them, the publishers to produce, the bookseller to exploit. Thank Heaven they do not tempt the librarian."

Leaving the Books Behind — The Fate of Librarians, Especially Those in Technical Services: A Library Science Student's Perspective

by **Abigail S. Rush** (University of South Carolina, MLIS)
<abigailrush@yahoo.com>

Column Editor: **Mary E. (Tinker) Massey** (University of South Carolina, School of Library and Information Science, Columbia, SC) <MMassey@gwm.sc.edu>

One of the major questions confronting our profession today is the impending retirement of numerous librarians from various positions throughout the United States and the world. This is especially troubling, given that the current rate at which library science programs are churning out MLS/MLIS graduates is not enough to fill those positions as they become empty in the next five to ten years. Thus, a major concern for librarians everywhere is how are we as a profession going to handle this crisis.



Before **Bostwick**, ALA president **Joseph Nelson Larned** wrote in 1893 that the librarian should, "defend his shelves against an endless siege of vulgar literature." We've come a long way, baby. For all practical matters, our professional organization of librarians is fighting desperately to keep *www.schlong.com* open as part of the Constitution's First Amendment inalienable right to be titillated.

The **ACLU** and the **ALA** argue that Internet filtering must be halted, first because filtering violates the First Amendment. Filtering, it argues, directly contradicts the First Amendment, ergo, it's wrong, as, indeed, *any* censoring is. This is true only if the First Amendment is viewed to protect any speech or any expression. ALA's *Intellectual Freedom Manual* defines intellectual freedom as "... the right of any person to believe whatever he wants on any subject, and to express his beliefs or ideas *in whatever way he thinks appropriate* (emphasis added)." But is this true, is *all* speech protected by the Constitution?

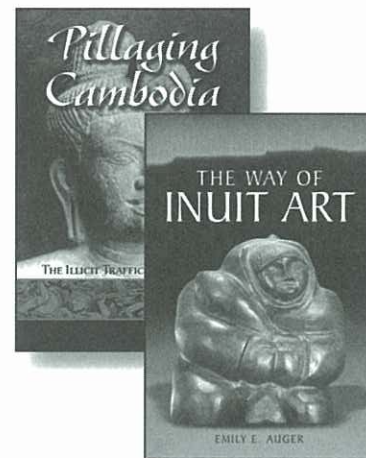
We'll examine that next time. 

Watch for "**Part Three: Free Speech and Filtering Myths,**" coming in *Against the Grain* soon!

A solution that is being offered nowadays is the downgrading of these professional jobs so that a paraprofessional can fill the position. However, it has become of increasing concern to librarians everywhere that once these positions are downgraded, it will be all the more difficult to elevate their status back to what is suitable for a librarian, if at all. Given this uncertain future climate, it is disheartening to know that one of the most affected departments in libraries will be that of technical services.

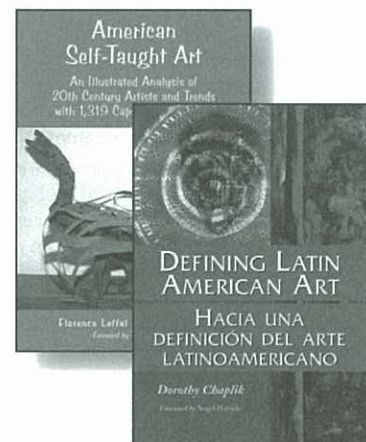
Filling technical services positions has always been problematic at best, but will be especially so in the near future, given that very few students going through library science programs today are opting to be catalogers and government document librarians. Therefore, the most critical question today is not how we as a profession are going to handle this crisis in general, but how we as a profession are going to

continued on page 82



Pillaging Cambodia
The Illicit Traffic in Khmer Art
Masha Lafont. 2004, \$35,
59 photos, maps, notes, appendix,
bibliography, index, 0-7864-1933-4

The Way of Inuit Art
Aesthetics and History in
and Beyond the Arctic
Emily E. Auger. 2005, \$49.95,
184 photos, maps, notes,
bibliography, index, 0-7864-1888-5



American Self-Taught Art
An Illustrated Analysis of 20th
Century Artists and Trends
Florence Laffal and Julius Laffal. 2003, \$45,
125 photos, tables, chronology,
bibliography, index, 0-7864-1669-6

**Defining Latin American Art /
Hacia una definición
del arte latinoamericano**
Dorothy Chaplik. Spanish-language translation
by Carmen Herrera Dania and Elizabeth Bricio
Beauchamp. 2005, \$45, photos,
bibliography, index, 0-7864-1728-5

 **McFarland**
Box 611 • Jefferson NC 28640
Orders 800-253-2187 • FAX 336-246-4403
www.mcfarlandpub.com