
Electronic Publishing and Networking '92

Electronic Publishing and Networking '92, the first in what is to be a series of annual conferences and exhibits, was held January 14–15, 1992, in New York City. The *raison d'être* of the conference was, in the words of the conference brochure, "the availability on a global scale of electronic dissemination of information . . . and the unending possibilities for information exchange on an international basis." Certainly the most frequently mentioned name in the discussion of varied topics was the Internet, aptly described by one speaker as currently "a highway system with gravel roads."

The conference was sponsored by Meckler Publishing Company in association with LaFayette College and Princeton University JvNCNet, and successfully brought together individuals from an unusually wide range of professions engaged in the creation and dissemination of information in electronic form. They represented the public and private sector, commercial and non-profit organizations, and academe. Attendees included information providers, educators, librarians, computer communications experts, and academic computer specialists.

Copyright, pricing, funding, marketing, new products, networking standards and security, and governance issues were some of the old and new themes common to the plenary sessions and presentations in the specialist tracks of electronic networking, electronic publishing, and campus-wide information systems. This brief article highlights a few of these important themes.

Copyright and licensing issues continue to be of vital concern to authors, publishers, individual library users, and vendors of products and services like article transmission and delivery, exemplified by FaxonXpress and Ariel. Positive new approaches to copyright were summarized by keynote speaker Mitchell Kapor of the Electronic Frontier Foundation, who said that copyright would not ultimately be enforced by restrictive laws: "There is a natural impulse to copy; however, people are willing to pay as long as the cost is within their envelope of convenience and utility." Clearly a new paradigm for copyright and licensing will emerge for the era of electronic publishing and communication on a national and international network.

Speakers addressing the definition and implications of electronic publishing stressed the increased importance of understanding what users want, and actively marketing to meet those needs, in addition to anticipating new demands which the technology can satisfy and the network can deliver. The *electronic Journal of Clinical Trials* is peer reviewed,

consistent with the needs of its subscribers. According to Pat Morgan from AAAS, it is the result of "important partnership strengths," the publishing expertise of AAAS, and the distributed networking and technical expertise of OCLC.

"Don't just copy—create a wonderful new electronic product," was editor Judith Axler Turner's message. *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, currently being tested in its electronic form, is unbundling its various sections—classified ads or new books—then they are enhanced and amplified, making the individual components available to different segments of the readership via networking.

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"If it plays in Peoria . . ." would have been an appropriate title for the presentation by Tom Grundner of the National Public Telecommunications Network. He discussed the Heartland Freenet, a free public access community communication system in Peoria, Illinois. In addition to community calendars and social service-oriented information, it also includes volunteer contributions from local experts in the form of responses to users' queries on a wide variety of subjects via the network. One question raised by the audience—"Isn't all of this what librarians used to do?"—is a reflection, in my view, of changing roles in the information and publishing professions and organizations, in commercial, public, and academic sectors alike.

The rise of global market-based libraries and the changing roles of information professionals which will result in "the reconceptualization of the library in academe" was one of the topics addressed by Charles McClure of Syracuse University in his presentation on "Electronic Networking Research Applications and Policies."

Barbara Lockett, from Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, described a library in process of transformation. Effective partnerships with computing services and other departments, reorganization, diplomacy, anticipating users' needs, and perseverance has resulted in the library's ability to deliver a wide range of information resources over the campus network. And the word on networks throughout the conference was standardization.

The overall impression I brought away from this exceptionally energizing conference was of a group of committed professionals all aware that an immense change is impending of a magnitude not seen since the days of Gutenberg. Many individuals and organizations are actively experimenting and trying

to divine the future, but no clear vision has yet emerged. Clifford Lynch, from the University of California, summed it up as "flailing about." Lynch attributed the confusion we are currently experiencing to the many kinds of communications now emerging, in addition to the evolution of traditional publishing. The current stage of modernization will result in innovation and, finally, transformation will occur.

It is clear that the future will be shaped by publishers and information and computer communications specialists working in partnership, and talking together at conferences like Electronic Publishing and Networking.—*Ann de Klerk, Director of Library Services, Bucknell University* ■ ■

Media tips: Speaking successfully

Ed. note: These tips are reprinted with permission from the handouts prepared by ALA for the media training workshop given for division presidents and vice-presidents.

1. **Prepare, prepare, prepare.** There's no substitute. And remember it's not just what you say, but how you say it. There are two elements to every good public address—content (substance) and delivery (style). You need both.

2. **Know your audience.** Find out who will be there, how large an audience to expect. Ask about the age range, educational background, special interests and activities of the group's members, their familiarity with libraries.

3. **Personalize your message.** The goal of the speaker is to deliver information the audience believes it needs. The speech must have value to the audience. It will never grab the audience's attention if the audience believes, for instance, that libraries are in trouble but there is no threat to them.

4. **Talk—don't "speak."** Aim to be understood, not to impress. Eliminate librarian jargon. Use statistics sparingly. Make generous use of personal anecdotes, examples and experiences that the audience can relate to.

5. **Say it and say it again.** It's important in oral communication to repeat key points. Tell them what you're going to tell them in your opening remarks. Tell them, in the body of your remarks, the details of what you want them to know. And finally, in closing, tell them what you told them—review the major points.

6. **Write out your remarks word for word.** Then read them out loud. Ask a nonlibrarian to listen and give feedback on whether you are interesting—and understandable.

7. **Practice** so many times that you have your remarks almost memorized. If you are comfortable speaking from notes, use only an outline.

8. **Dress stylishly** but conservatively so the audience is listening to what you say—not how you look. Avoid bright white shirts/blouses that will reflect a visual glare if the podium is lit.

9. **Make the audience like you.** Establish eye contact. Share something personal about yourself—a story your listeners can relate to and that leads into the issue.

10. **Tell jokes sparingly.** Humor is nice but few of us are comics.

11. **Vary the pitch and speed of your voice.** Let your passion show. The most memorable and convincing speakers are those who speak from the heart.

12. **Use your body**—especially your hands, face and upper body to bring additional animation to your remarks.

13. **Use visual aids** but only if they will add to the understanding or impact of your remarks. Dimming the lights can be negative, especially during an evening meeting.

14. **Gauge your audience response** and make adjustments accordingly. Beware of fidgeting and whispering. It's better to bring your remarks to an early halt and take questions than to bore an audience.

15. **Be brief.** In general, limit your remarks to 20 minutes. Most people, especially in the evening, have a short attention span. Far better to leave the audience wanting more than wanting to get rid of you.

16. **Enjoy yourself.** You are prepared. You have an important message. If you're enjoying yourself, chances are the audience will too. ■ ■