Web watch

Compiled by Glenda Browne[*]

MEDIA BIAS AND THE NATIONAL BROADCASTER

Prime Minister Tony Abbott's comment that "A lot of people feel at the moment that the ABC instinctively takes everyone's side but Australia's" in an interview with Ray Hadley on Sydney radio station 2GB (http://www.2gb.com/article/prime-minister-tony-abbott-1#.UuxZOEMvnqQ) led to wide-ranging discussions on the role of the ABC and perceptions of media bias (http://www.abc.net.au/news/2014-01-29/tony-abbott-steps-up-criticism-of-abc/5224676; http://www.smh.com.au/federal-politics/political-news/its-our-abc-so-hands-off-tony-abbott-and-malcolm-turnbull-20140131-31sa6.html; http://www.canberratimes.com.au/comment/tony-abbott-is-fighting-abc-listeners-as-much-as-abc-journalists-20140131-31ssf.html; http://www.crikey.com.au/2014/01/30/abbott-lays-out-his-lines-of-attack-on-the-abc).

Barry Tucker's blog post "Katharine Murphy Deconstructs Abbott" (http://truthinmediaresourcecentre.wordpress.com/tag/tony-abbott) includes links to a transcript of the Hadley interview (on a government website), to a partial video of the interview (in *The Australian*) and to reports by other commentators.

Neesha Bremner compares past experience in New Zealand with the current situation in Australia (http://thedailyblog.co.nz/2014/01/04/australias-future-new-zealands-past).

The Age presented both sides: "The Case for Criticism" by James Paterson from the Institute of Public Affairs (IPA) and "The Case Against" by David Hill, former chairman and managing director of the ABC (http://www.theage.com.au/comment/abbotts-bias-crusade-as-simple-as-abc-20140130-31phn.html).

Newspoll research shows that consumers trust ABC TV news and current affairs more than other sources (70% compared with 31% for commercial radio talkback programs) (http://www.macrobusiness.com.au/2014/01/what-do-australians-think-about-the-abc). Newspoll research also showed that trust levels have decreased since 2009 (http://www.theaustralian.com.au/media/newspoll-finds-loss-of-faith-in-your-abc/story-e6frg996-1226742799953).

Complaints of media bias in Australia and other countries occur regularly, for example:
* Australia – http://www.smh.com.au/federal-politics/political-news/chairman-jim-spigelman-defends-abc-against-attacks-announces-bias-audit-20131211-2z5gr.html
* Indonesia – http://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2013/08/26/no-biased-media-coverage-2014-election-council.html
* Al Jazeera "pro-Saudi political bias" – http://members5.boardhost.com/medialens/msg/1389300707.html
* US on Cambodia – http://www.voacambodia.com/content/us-broadcasters-rejects-cambodia-claims-of-bias/1841443.html.

Comments about journalists' liberal (small-l) bias are also common:
* http://tony-greco.com/2013/12/05/perspectives-on-media-bias
* http://archive.mrc.org/biasbasics/biasbasics.asp
* http://mediamatters.org/blog/2013/10/04/fox-fights-imaginary-media-bias-with-actual-med/196268.

HERITAGE VOCABULARIES

English Heritage, the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland, the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Wales, the Archaeology Data Service

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[*] All websites viewed April 2014.

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and the University of South Wales have announced that cultural heritage thesauri and vocabularies are now freely available as Linked Open Data at http://www.heritagedata.org, as a preliminary outcome of the SENESCHAL project.

National cultural heritage thesauri have already acted as standards for use by national organisations and local authorities. This project will make those vocabularies available online as semantic web resources. The acronym SENESCHAL is derived from "Semantic ENrichment Enabling Sustainability of arCHAeological Links" (a seneschal was "the steward or major-domo of a medieval great house").

Vocabularies on the heritage data website are available in SKOS (RDF), alphabetical (PDF) and hierarchical (PDF) formats. SKOS (Simple Knowledge Organization System) is a W3C standard for thesaurus information.

The topics covered by the vocabularies include:
- Archaeological sciences (for example, dendrochronology)
- Building materials (for example, dolomite)
- Evidence (of past existence of a monument, for example, sonar contact)
- Maritime craft type (for example, oyster dredger)
- Monument type (for example, granary)
- Monument type (Scotland) (for example, broch [a round, defended Iron Age house])
- Monument type (Wales) (for example, tollbooth).

In the next phase, the appealingly named RESTful[1] web services will be established to make the vocabulary resources accessible and searchable. This will include provision for users to suggest new terms. Case studies will explore use of these web services as part of indexing tools and widgets.

MUSEUM MINUTES INDEXING

The blog of the Australian Museum in Sydney tells of the voluntary indexing (by John Rankin) of the Minutes of the Australian Museum Trust, and the interesting facts that this project revealed (http://australianmuseum.net.au/blogpost/Science/Fascinating-stories-Australian-Museums-records).

For example, in 1971, "the whole museum had been cleared of people within 15 mins due to a bomb-scare". The phone call was taken by Miss Pope, a malacologist (invertebrate zoologist who studies molluscs).

READING AND PUBLISHING

READING AUSTRALIA

"Copyright Agency has developed Reading Australia to make significant Australian literary works more readily available for teaching in schools and universities. These works are being supplemented with online teacher resources and essays by popular authors about the enduring relevance of the works" (http://readingaustralia.com.au/About.aspx).The first 200 titles (PDF, 215KB) were selected by the Australian Society of Authors Council.

The list of books provides an interesting overview of significant works in a variety of styles and genres. The list is separated into categories such as "Non-fiction – essay" and "Fiction – short stories" (http://readingaustralia.com.au/Portals/0/Downloads/RA%20200%20list.pdf).

Teacher Resources are included for some of the books (more will be added over time). These contain general information as well as teaching resources. The categories for the resources vary according to the book, for example, the resources for the novel *Hill End* are: field knowledge and context; responding and exploring; and examining, while the resources for the play *Blackrock* are:

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[1] "REST" stands for "REpresentational State Transfer" and is an alternative to SOAP (Simple Object Access Protocol). They are distributed computing specifications for exchanging structured information: see http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Representational_state_transfer.

initial response; close study; significance; and informed reaction. The resources section also links to information on books with similar themes and related information such as reviews, critical commentaries and newspaper articles.

According to the website: "The initial resources for Primary level have been commissioned by the Primary English Teaching Association of Australia, and the resources for Secondary level have been jointly commissioned by the Australian Association for the Teaching of English and the English Teachers Association NSW."

EBOOK PUBLISHING PREDICTIONS

Joanna Cabot has made six predictions about epublishing on the longstanding Teleread blog (http://www.teleread.com/epublishing/joannas-epublishing-predictions-for-2014), suggesting that there will be:
- more tagging of self-published books
- a shake up in the magazine market
- experimentation with new features on tablets
- a rise of the publishing para-professional to assist authors to self-publish
- niche sites for specialised self-published content
- shrinking of the library market because of publisher pricing policies.

TYPES OF EBOOKS

Mike Shatzkin writes that the publishing market is made up of many different markets (trade, academic etc) and that we are now finding that even the trade market is split into different segments, all of which work differently as ebooks (http://www.idealog.com/blog/truth-do-not-yet-know-whether-ebooks-will-work-anything-except-readerly-books). Fiction and narrative non-fiction translate well into ebook format, and sales do not seem to be lost with the move to a digital format. Illustrated books are harder to create and sell as ebooks, and how-to books have been pushed out by the web to a large extent. On the other hand, Shatzkin suggests that how-to information may be marketable "in different sized chunks under a different commercial model".

COPYRIGHT: SHERLOCK HOLMES AND HAPPY BIRTHDAY

A couple of well-known works have been the centre of legal action regarding copyright ownership in the last year.

Matthew Rimmer has summarised the situation with respect to the character of Sherlock Holmes (http://theconversation.com/profiles/matthew-rimmer-4398/activities). Holmes is a fictional detective first created by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle in 1887. He has been the subject of a number of sequels and imitations; there are currently two major TV series based on the character. "In February 2013, Leslie Klinger – an author, editor, and Sherlock Holmes expert – brought legal action against the estate of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle … [seeking] a declaration that the characters of Sherlock Holmes and Dr Watson are no longer protected by copyright law." The Conan Doyle estate sought to defend copyright in both the stories and the characters in the stories.

The Independent has reported that "a federal US judge in Chicago ruled last month that an American writer and leading 'Sherlockian' may publish work inspired by Conan Doyle's stories without fear of legal action by the Scottish author's estate, which is now expected to launch an appeal" (http://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/books/features/sherlock-holmes-and-the-case-of-copyright-9042539.html). Listen to a report on the case at http://www.npr.org/2014/01/07/260471980/sherlocks-expiring-copyright-its-public-domain-dear-watson-.

The song "Happy Birthday to You" has also been the subject of copyright battles (http://www.forbes.com/sites/emmawoollacott/2013/06/14/class-action-suit-aims-to-strip-warner-of-happy-birthday-copyright). Snopes gives an overview of the situation until 2007 (http://www.snopes.com/music/songs/birthday.asp).

On YouTube you can see Kermit the Frog singing "Happy Birthday to You" (http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QXEbONEAVZ8) and on another attempt being approached by the "copyright police" (http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IhpzjVDsfyo).

Latha Jishnu talks about "Happy Birthday" and also an Indian case regarding use of the song title "Jai Ho" (http://www.downtoearth.org.in/content/trademarks-jai-ho).

For another copyright and music issue, have a look at an article on the copyright issues relating to parodies, including those of "Gangnam Style": http://askacyberlawyer.com/category/copyright-law (links to assorted video examples included).

STATISTICALLY FUNNY

Hilda Bastian, who works at the world's largest medical library at US National Institutes of Health (NIH, http://www.nih.gov), writes a wonderful blog called "Statistically Funny: Commenting on the Science of Unbiased Health Research with Cartoons" (http://www.statistically-funny.blogspot.com). Some of the posts cover libraries and other information-related topics.

On 9 April 2013, she wrote that: "A quick way to find systematic reviews is the National Library of Medicine's PubMed Health. It's a one-stop shop of systematic reviews, information based on systematic reviews and key resources to help you understand clinical effectiveness research." She suggests reading the tips for searching PubMed at http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmedhealth/blog/2013/05/new-filters-shortcuts.

On 9 May 2013, she wrote about doctors and their information and searching habits, saying: "We could all be over-estimating, though, just how good people are at finding things with Google – including the biomedically trained." She also reported on an assessment of 368 systematic reviews that "suggests that even systematic reviewers need help searching".

Bastian also links to the Wikipedia article on The Three Bears (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Story_of_the_Three_Bears). This article talks about the literary elements of the tale including "The Goldilocks Principle", which describes: "a situation which is just right in a manner akin to that portrayed in the tale. The concept exists not only in literature but also in astronomy and economics. A Goldilocks planet is neither too close to nor too far from a star to rule out life, while a Goldilocks economy is one that sustains moderate growth and low inflation, which is seen to allow a market-friendly monetary policy."

FOR FUN

"LOL My Thesis" is a place for PhD students to sum up years of work in one sentence (http://lolmythesis.com). For example, from a Classics student at Yale University: "Applying natural language processing to Latin texts is hard because they are written in Latin".