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ADVISOR REPORTS FROM THE FIELD

Heard on the Net

Top Five Things to Watch in 2010

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With this column, it made sense to identify a list of things to watch for in 2010. We're starting our tenth year into the twenty-first century and there have been some definite fundamental, tectonic shifts occurring in our profession. Technology remains at the forefront of library service orientation as does developing ways to best blend technology into our traditional service orientation. Arguments over copyright controls, digital rights management, and ownership of content in the online environment remain persistent. Software development continues to expand and provide new and better ways of accessing and interacting with information in the digital world. At the same time, some long held assumptions are beginning to be questioned as well. From the catbird seat of this column, I've identified the following items to watch for in 2010. Some may not come to fruition and some may morph into entirely different entities by the year's end. In any case, they'll be fun to track along the way.

First up is Aapture. Aapture allows bloggers, Web site designers, and content managers to readily integrate text, images, video, maps, and music into a given Web page or content management platform. Let me rephrase that: using a single click (no more URLs or codes needed!) you can embed media into your site. Even better, it's a free tool to anyone with less than five million page views per month. Publishers pay monthly subscription fees for premium features along with direct customer support. Best of all, Aapture meets all 508 accessibility standards. This tool has the capability to change online publications as we currently know them. I cannot wait to see how this tool gets used through 2010 and what new online publications will arise because of it <<http://www.aapture.com/>>.

Next up is Firefox. Firefox personnel are hard at work trying to develop a "cross-site navigation and portable IDs, a solvable problem" [from read write Web news post 24 November2009: <http://www.readwriteweb.com/archives/firefoxs_plan_to_kick_the_logins_butt.php>]. Firefox is trying to make it possible for any user to carry a standard set of credentials with themselves as they navigate from one site to another. This also puts forth a number of questions on what can be private information and what can be openly available and readily discovered information on any given individual. It will be interesting to see what other applications will be found for portable IDs though. This could help CrossRef out as they continue to work on the development of a researcher/author identifier.

Third in line of something to watch is Mendeley.com. This is a social networking site for academics and researchers, developed with the intent of creating collaborative space to share and discuss research

and research papers. Again, this is a freely available site to the average end-user with the possibility in the future to upgrade to a professional account that will be subscription-based and provide added value tools. Mendeley provides some really cool functionality regarding citation importing and syncing, the ability to import PDFs from numerous places, and using an annotation mechanism for the PDFs that you can share with others as needed. Developed in Europe, the user community has grown rapidly there and it is just beginning to make in-roads on some University campuses in the United States. A librarian participating in a dedicated research community could have numerous impacts from offering to provide bibliographies and subject pages to directing researchers to specific resources available from the library. There's definitely quite a bit of potential here and as social networks are more broadly accepted and used, this could become quite important over the next few years <<http://www.mendeley.com/>>.

Fourth in my list is another item from the Read Write Web. This information indicates Twitter has plans to acquire more companies and expand upon its current core set of features. Twitter is continuing to grow in leaps and bounds in reference to users. Many businesses and blog writers have adopted Twitter as a form of middle-ware to help drive traffic to their blogs or Web sites. Many early adopters are still going strong and new users are beginning to stick around with the main application longer. The concern is that Twitter could over-extend and try to ramp up too many additional applications all at once. It will be interesting to see what applications do get picked up and how these are then integrated into the platform overall <http://www.readwriteweb.com/archives/what_apps_should_twitter_acquire.php>.

Last on my list of things to watch is Rupert Murdoch's declaration of wanting to block the indexing of News Corp. content on Google. At first, many pundits in the tech world tended to characterize these statements as technophobia from an unapologetic luddite. However, as time has passed and a more seriously consideration has been made of the statements Murdoch gave in his interview, some of those pundits think he may just be sly as a fox. Until now, Google has not really had any challenges by content providers regarding indexing. It has been the belief that Google indexing is needed for survival in today's information glut; especially in regard to news items. A number of news agencies are now beginning to think they can charge for the indexing of their content via various discovery platforms. It is still too early to determine what the end result will be, but I think Mr. Murdoch has given us pause for thought <<http://www.guardian.co.uk/media/2009/nov/09/murdoch-google>>. ■