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Editorial

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As hard as it is to believe, this is our first summer issue. The academic year has flown by and we now enter the calendar filled with many professional conferences and exhibitions of new technology products and applications. Those will be covered in future issues.

Today's digital environment where we have millions of items at our disposal that are generated on an hourly basis forces us to wonder if we are successful in satisfying our quests with the most relevant responses and content. It is clearly more difficult to organize our content and output. Allowing everyone to customize their own retrieval from all the sources they search and to choose their favorite search engines we can label or tag everything the way we want it. Using software to do this tagging, it then becomes linked to the content and can be recalled or applied in different ways. A more serendipitous, casual and personal method of tagging is more content driven than conforming to a thesaurus or taxonomic structure of indexing and one can assign multiple tags to a given piece of information or an image. Digital environments lend to improved and faster access but does it lead to "anarchy" as some writers suggest, to "chaos" or just to another organizational structure? Some new web sites help users organize information including web sites so that a long list of bookmarks now has far more meaning and relevance when one wants to remember, revisit, recall or cite the source. Some of our favorite sponsors, including Google, Yahoo!, Amazon, eBay, iTunes, among others helps us out by offering tagging systems that contribute some sense of order to the enormous range of content available online.

We are interested in a new trend we perceive and have observed in the literature. The role of IT Generalists. As one columnist opines on this, "one person who knows something about all your operations is one of your most valuable assets," and "the generalist has no turf to protect, no face to save, no axes to grind and doesn't aspire to anyone else's job." Is this a reality in library systems and information technology departments? We would like you to write to us and share your opinions on this volatile topic and explore this more fully in forthcoming issues. Beginning soon, we will have a column, "A Day in the Life of Library Systems ... " in which Library Systems Administrators and IT Chiefs will share some of the most complex issues and challenges they face in a workday or workweek.

Another piece of news that interested us is the recent study that was released by the Center for Justice, Tolerance and Community at the University of California, Santa Cruz, "A Nation Online: Research into the Digital Divide," where indicators demonstrated a small gain in college enrollment rates among high school students without computers, and continuing indicators that those with computers had higher graduation rates, even when controlling for income and family education. Studies such as this are very interesting when sufficient data supports the role of internet access among different segments of populations and can be compared on a more global scale.

In this issue we have several extensive conference reports from Tech Ed in Pasadena, California; the Association of College and Research Libraries 12th National Conference in Minneapolis, Minnesota and the annual North Carolina Serials Conference in Chapel Hill. We also have feature articles that explore using Tablet PCs for reference functions and promoting and tracking customer service; and a case study from Delta State University in Nigeria about experiences in automating library operations. The Around the World column takes us to the University of Port Harcourt also in Nigeria and Gerry McKiernan has an eProfile in which he examines GeoScienceWorld as his in-depth topic.

Enjoy the read and let us know what you think about the issues we raised and others you and your colleagues are pondering. We hope that if we see you at conferences or tradeshow in coming months that you will introduce yourselves and share some reader feedback. Being responsive and trying to more accurately anticipate what we want to know about library technology is easier when we have input to guide us as we solicit contributions and approach writers.

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