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Editorial

Libraries are now entering another generation of technology maturity as portals and access tools support the technology infrastructure once only retained by online catalogs. It is common today to see content management systems enhance or replace the OPAC and the range of services provided by these resources is expanding all the time. Federated searching is being conducted in many new ways by different instruments and products with the goal to integrate all library resources and services into a unified method.

The other major change in library technology is the customization and individual usage of a range of tools. Library users and students used to rely on a desktop and then laptop model of a computer to seek information, engage in writing and manipulating and storing information using a range of software to help them achieve their goals of creation, expression, integration, storage and recall. Today, those tools have proliferated into morphing cross purposes of reading, studying, recreation and a host of entertainment possibilities. Instruction in the classroom is technology driven and intensive with many different opportunities and a new renaissance has been described in the world of education from primary, secondary through higher education. Streaming of news, lectures, and other programming has been available for a long time on the web.

According to some technology writers, podcasting is now among the most popular application and describes how the distribution of mp3 audio files containing class lectures can be transferred to individual and portable audio devices like iPods, palms, a variety of berries and traditional computers. The distribution method has changed dramatically allowing students and users to subscribe to services or podcasts instead of having to frequently check for the specific content. The subscription process is built on the Really Simple Syndication model or RSS feeds and many institutions and organizations have created central services to offer the recording, hosting, and creation of needed feeds. When this scenario does not exist, podcasting can still work by using services offered by http://Blogger.com or sites like http://www.archive.org/index.php

Many issues related to the amount of technology support for classroom coverage in audio and video coverage complicate the potential of this but it certainly is growing each academic term. Class attendance has experienced some decline and the class culture is indeed different but it is a popular enough situation that libraries are challenged by archiving and usage etiquette.

This issue of LHTN brings you a range of IT content. Conference reports include the pre-World Summit on the Information Society that took place last fall at the new Bibliotheca Alexandrina in Egypt and a report from the London Online Information conference last December. We have several interesting features that build on the importance of ICTs and technology education from Nigeria. The first article is a case study analysis of a survey about computer literacy skills among library staff and the challenges in access to computers, connectivity and specialized training. The second contribution is about IT in Nigerian local governments, in many ways an analogous situation to libraries with a concentration in database development, project management, web

development and other mutual applications. Again, some of the same issues in access, connectivity and continuing education.

Functional requirements of bibliographic records (FRBR) has been a controversial topic in the library community in recent months and this feature explores some of those issues and reservations. It is one viewpoint and we hope that readers will share other perspectives of this model for organizing data in online catalogs.

Technology gadgets have multiplied in nearly every avenue and the feature we offer introduces a range of peripherals, innovations, storage utilities, toys, automotive features and a host of other enhancements that are finding their way to the commercial front. Consumers have much to choose from and there will always be something new and creative being launched.

Read on and discover the columns of new books, what is happening in the industry and professional worlds of libraries and IT and find out what is going on around the world on the conference circuit. We look forward to bring you additional news from the conferences taking place in recent months and highlight other activities that keep library and information technology so vibrant.

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