

UC SYSTEM SIGNS ON TO GOOGLE BOOK SCANNING

The University of California will join Oxford University, Harvard University, Stanford University, the University of Michigan, and the New York Public Library in Google’s controversial book-scanning project. The UC System comprises more than 100 libraries on 10 campuses, and the deal gives Google access to millions of volumes housed at those libraries. As with other texts in Google’s program, digital copies will be accessible only through its own search engine. Google still faces legal opposition to its program, which scans copyrighted material as well as public-domain texts, though access to protected work is limited. The UC System also participates in the Open Content Alliance (OCA), which takes a different approach to copyrighted works, scanning only those for which copyright owners have provided explicit permission. Although Jennifer Colvin, strategic communications manager at the California Digital Library, rejected the idea that participating in both projects represents a conflict, others disagreed. Brewster Kahle, founder of the Internet Archive, said, “Having a public institution decide to go with Google’s restrictions doesn’t help the idea of libraries being open in the future.” (CNET, <http://news.com.com/2100-1025_3-6103540.html>)

PENTAGON ISSUES GUIDELINES FOR DISTANCE EDUCATION

The U.S. Department of Defense (DoD) has issued a set of principles addressing distance education. Since the federal government spends around $100 million each year on distance education for members of the armed forces, the principles—drafted by a panel of school officials and DoD personnel—were released as a “preemptive move” to ensure the quality of education that soldiers receive for this investment. Gary Woods, director of educational opportunities for the DoD, said the principles may serve as the basis for the requirements to be met by any provider wanting to offer distance courses to soldiers. Woods said that as distance education programs evolve, he wants to be sure that the DoD is “out ahead of the curve.” Before the draft was released, some institutions were concerned that the principles would eliminate them. However, Susan Aldridge, president of University of Maryland University College and one of the members of the panel that drafted the guidelines, said, “Any university that is serious and running a rigorous program would be able to meet these standards.” (Chronicle of Higher Education, <http://chronicle.com/daily/2006/07/ 2006072501t.htm> [subscription required])

NEW RESEARCH CENTER WILL STUDY IDENTITY FRAUD

A new research center is being launched at Utica College in New York to study identity fraud and ways to fight the problem. The Center for Identity Management and Information Protection (CIMIP) is being developed by the Secret Service, the FBI, IBM, and LexisNexis. Norm Willox, chief executive of special services at LexisNexis, said that CIMIP will fill a gap in current efforts to understand and address identity fraud. Gary Gordon, professor of economic crime management at Utica College, will direct CIMIP, which will have access to Secret Service files to help researchers see the “big picture” and potentially spot patterns. James Burrs, acting assistant director of the FBI’s criminal investigative division, noted that identity fraud also has implications for national security: “The FBI looks forward to the opportunity to apply CIMIP research to more effective law enforcement and protection.” (Wall Street Journal, <http://online.wsj.com/article/SB115144422202392266.html> [subscription required])

OPEN SOURCE POPULAR AT U.K. UNIVERSITIES

According to a survey by Open Source Software Advisory Service (OSS Watch), open source software on campuses in the United Kingdom has moved out of the shadows and into legitimate contention with proprietary software solutions. Results of the survey indicated that...
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CANADIAN PROJECT AIMS TO COORDINATE DISPARATE EFFORTS

A new initiative called AlouetteCanada is designed to bring together disparate digitization efforts from around Canada into a single online location. Carole Moore, chief librarian of the University of Toronto, one of the universities participating in AlouetteCanada, noted that although many universities and museums in the country maintain small-scale digitization efforts of material relevant to the history and culture of Canada, much of this content is inaccessible to most people. The University of Alberta and the University of Brunswick are also part of the project, and Moore said that hundreds of other organizations could conceivably contribute material. Ernie Ingles, chief librarian at the University of Alberta, noted that AlouetteCanada is, in some ways, the antithesis of Google's book-scanning project. Although Google is making content available publicly, he said, it is making that content available “in a commercial way.” And Ingles questioned whether Google would be around forever to continue to make that content available. (Chronicle of Higher Education, <http://chronicle.com/daily/2006/06/2006062101t.htm> [subscription required])

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