

# péter's picks & pans



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## National Academies Press Collection, ELPUB Digital Library, Columbia University Press

Many publishers deserve  
praise for making the  
advantages of digital  
publishing available at an  
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no cost at all.

Electronic publishing (or my preferred terminology, digital publishing) has become mainstream, as evidenced by the development of excellent digital collections with powerful access capabilities. Many publishers deserve praise for making the advantages of digital publishing available at an affordable price or for no cost at all. One of my picks is the National Academies Press for its superb collection of more than 3,000 free digital books in all walks of scholarly research. The other pick is ELPUB, a relatively small but worthy collection of the full-text papers presented at the international conference series on electronic publishing. The pan is Columbia University Press, which acquired the top-notch open access publication, *Journal of Electronic Publishing*, nearly 3 years ago amid promises of enhancing and improving it (which *JEL* did not require), then deep-sixed it, without bothering to post a death notice.



the picks

### NATIONAL ACADEMIES PRESS' COLLECTION (NAP)

There has not been much PR or heavy blogging about this worthy project from the National Academies Press [<http://books.nap.edu>]. I first heard about NAP and the digitization project from Eugene Garfield's announcement on the SIGMETRICS discussion list about 2 years ago. He gave credit to NAP for publishing on the Web the free digital version of the proceedings of the landmark 1959 *International Conference on Scientific Information* that discussed many facets of information science and services. Much of the table of contents page reads like one from a current proceedings of an information science conference. It was this conference where the fledgling science and technology abstracting/indexing services reported about the state of the art following the *Sputnik* shock. It is still a fascinating reading for information professionals—particularly when compared with some A/I database editors' contemporaneous PR-stuff masquerading as scholarly articles or conference papers.

On the other end of the time spectrum, cross-referenced by the smart people and software behind NAP, are such important books as the *Proceedings of the International Symposium on Open Access and the Public Domain in Digital Data and Information for Science*, and the *Proceedings on Technical and Medical Journal Publishing and Its Implications*. Held in 2004, both are free for online reading. You can purchase the latter as a unit, or chapter by chapter. This chapter-by-chapter purchase option is perfect for proceedings (and annual reviews), and

shows the sensitivity and the rationality of the publisher. The 3,000 open access monographs and conference proceedings written by respected specialists of the fields cover all walks of scholarly research. Although the majority of books are about science issues, there are also monographs about special topics in education, sociology, public affairs, and economics.

The books are easy to search, are navigational page by page or chapter by chapter (often both in HTML and PDF formats), and can be printed and downloaded (these output options are not always free). There are informative snippets of sentences deemed by the software to be the most important. These can be skimmed to decide if it is worth to jump to and read the specific chapter—an excellent feature. The whole collection can be searched using two different interfaces: the Discovery Engine and the Precision Search Engine. This is unusually puffery verbiage from this publisher for full-text search (Discovery Engine) and title search (Precision Search Engine). One interface and more of the typical full-text search options using field-specific indexes would be much more useful.

NAP is also trialing an experimental search engine (called Research Dashboard) that generates queries from combinations of terms algorithmically extracted from the full text. You can pass the query to Google and Yahoo! to search outside the NAP collection. Because the automatic extraction of terms is less than perfect, the suggested queries also leave much to be desired. Characteristically, the publisher warns about potentially odd extracted terms and term combinations right on the screen. In spite of the weaknesses of the search module, it is a laudable project that offers (often for free) high-quality monographs and conference proceedings on important scientific and social issues.

### ELPUB DIGITAL LIBRARY

Although the ELPUB Digital Library [http://elpub.scix.net] is more like a digital shelf than a library, it is a small but important full-text collection of the papers presented at the global meetings of the *International Conference on Electronic Publishing* since 1997. It is a labor of love collection, compiled by Bob Martens, a professor

at the Technical University of Vienna in Austria, who specializes in spatial simulation of computer-aided architectural design. The collection has only 300 items, but features a sharp focus not only on the topic but also on the document genre, which is often

neglected by abstracting/indexing services. It is also to be noted that the ELPUB conference is the most respected one dedicated to the topic.

To put things into perspective, the LISA database has 136 records of conference papers about electronic

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**THE NATIONAL ACADEMIES Research Dashboard**  
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**Advancing the Federal Research Agenda on Violence Against Women (2004)**

This book's Key Terms can be used to search *WITHIN* this book (below), or used to search *OUT* to external search engines (right).

Terms have been algorithmically extracted from the text of this book. Oddities occur; select the terms most likely to provide you with high-value results.

One Click Search *OUT* to Search Engines

Current primary terms: level project, method level, project goal, domestic violence, title method, women principal, yes yes, potentially

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Search for "level project" ...

- and "treatment programs" on Google... Yahoo or The National Academies Press
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level project, method level, project goal, domestic violence, title method, women principal, yes yes, potentially, criminal law, justice university, society review, violent events, family violence, violence court, victim safety, continued research, criminal justice, evaluation national, social structural, goal recommendation, physical abuse, native american, marital violence, wife assault, conflict tactics, interpersonal violence, intimate partner, treatment programs, treating offenders, deterrent effect, risk factors, sexual assault, community evaluation, american women, research examine

Special Assistant: Use Your Own Rough Draft

*Automatically generated query suggestions are not ready for prime time yet*

publishing from 1997 onward (91 if limited to the descriptor field). Of those 136 records, 108 are for papers presented at the ELPUB conference—and these are just bibliographic records with abstracts. LISA does not have records for the papers of this conference after 1999. Neither does it have records for papers about electronic publishing presented at other conferences after 1999 (except for a single paper from the *Proceedings of the International Online* meeting). For that matter, the LISA database has added only a single record for papers presented at conferences after 2001. You get the picture why small and focused can be beautiful. It is apparent from the advanced search templates that ELPUB plans to add documents from other conferences, as well as master theses and doctoral dissertations in the future.

The software allows field-specific and full-text searching. The latter is only available to registered users. Registration is free and painless. My only qualm about the software is that in the basic mode (which searches only the metadata), it assumes that space between query terms represents Boolean OR; a search for scholarly publishing will retrieve every record that contains either scholarly or publishing, rather than the phrase. In full-text search mode, the space triggers a phrase search, so schol

arly publishing actually retrieves articles about scholarly publishing. This can be confusing for users. It is reasonable to use full-text search in such a small database, which would alleviate the problem. [Editor's note: A CSA spokesperson acknowledged that LISA has had some problems with conference proceedings over the past 2–3 years, except those appearing as conference reports in journals. She added that once regular receipt of proceedings is re-established, each paper in the proceedings will be treated separately, as is the case with the existing proceedings in LISA.]



the pan

#### COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY PRESS

In my "Cheers and Jeers" column in *Information Today*, January 2002, the *Journal of Electronic Publishing (JEP)* was one of the cheered products/services. The University of Michigan Press did an excellent job in facilitating the publication of *JEP* for 7 years. Its open access volumes are full of practical, well-researched in-depth studies, research reports, and informed commentaries free from the limits of the traditional print publica-

tions. It had a good search engine, not to mention the distinguished editorial board representing many of the pioneers in electronic publishing.

After cheering it, I kept waiting and waiting in vain for the first issue of volume 8 of *JEP* in 2002. Finally, in August, *JEP* and Columbia University Press issued a press release touting a new partnership between them, missing only the wedding ring icon of a marriage announcement. I was skeptical of this announcement. I did not think it was really a matching couple, and I grew even more skeptical by the end of 2002, especially having seen how the absurdly ill-named divine, Inc. made similar marital vows, but quickly left several companies in shambles and many libraries in anguish after its *nouveau riche* shopping spree and haughty attitude.

Columbia University Press has a good ring to its name for the quality of its reference publications, but it did not bother to deliver on any of its promises, let alone issue a note to explain its change of heart. It did publish the *Columbia Guide to Digital Publishing*—in print—in the summer of 2002 and launched it in online format as well. It received good reviews, but is not free as was *JEP*. An individual subscription is \$6.95/day, \$29.95/month, and \$99.95/year. The institutional price depends on the number of full-time students or corporate employees. As for a wider audience for *JEP*, I don't think so. Lack of new content for 3 years is not conducive to audience expansion. In WorldCat, there are 12 libraries out of the 45,000 plus OCLC member libraries that have subscribed to the digital version of the *Columbia Guide*. *JEP* had 17,000 registered subscribers.

There is good news. Back issues of *JEP* with about 200 articles did not transfer to the Columbia University Press site as promised. Luckily, I would add, as these remain free at the original URL [www.press.umich.edu/jep]. Additionally, crisp new copies of the paperback edition of the *Columbia Guide* are available for \$7 from many Amazon partner stores. Amazon offers the Search in the Book feature for this title. Although you can only go three pages forward and three pages backward from the page(s) that come up for your search, with the detailed table of

elpub Digital Library Works

### Search Results

Search for "scholarly publishing" [Search]

Tip: Type car vehicle automobile to search for any of the words  
More options and help advanced search full text search

Hits 1 to 11 of 11

#	details	full text	citation	check to select
1			Braun, Kim (2003) <i>The German Academic Publishers Project – Gap</i> , ELPUB2003. From information to knowledge: Proceedings of the 7th ICCCF/IFIP International Conference on Electronic Publishing held at the Universidade do Minho, Portugal 25-26 June 2003/Edited by: Sely Mana de Souza Costa, João Alovero Carvalho, Ana Alice Baptista, Ana Cristina Santos Moreira. Universidade do Minho, 2003. <a href="http://elpub.scix.net/cgi-bin/works/Show?0323">http://elpub.scix.net/cgi-bin/works/Show?0323</a>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2			Fytton, Rowland (2003) <i>Peer Review of Electronic Journals</i> , ELPUB2003. From information to knowledge: Proceedings of the 7th ICCCF/IFIP International Conference on Electronic Publishing held at the Universidade do Minho, Portugal 25-26 June 2003/Edited by: Sely Mana de Souza Costa, João Alovero Carvalho, Ana Alice Baptista, Ana Cristina Santos Moreira. Universidade do Minho, 2003. <a href="http://elpub.scix.net/cgi-bin/works/Show?0313">http://elpub.scix.net/cgi-bin/works/Show?0313</a>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3			Kvæmdrup, Hanne Marie (2003) <i>A Nordic Co-Operative Solution for Scholarly Publishing</i> , ELPUB2003. From information to knowledge: Proceedings of the 7th ICCCF/IFIP International Conference on Electronic Publishing held at the Universidade do Minho, Portugal 25-26 June 2003/Edited by: Sely Mana de Souza Costa, João Alovero Carvalho, Ana Alice Baptista, Ana Cristina Santos Moreira. Universidade do Minho, 2003. <a href="http://elpub.scix.net/cgi-bin/works/Show?0309">http://elpub.scix.net/cgi-bin/works/Show?0309</a>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4			Mark Doyle (1999) <i>CITING AND LINKING IN ELECTRONIC SCHOLARLY PUBLISHING: A PRAGMATIC APPROACH</i> , Electronic Publishing 99. Redefining the Information Chain - New Ways and Voices. Proceedings of an ICCCF/IFIP conference held at the University of Karlskrona/Ronneby, Sweden 10-12 May 1999/Edited by John W.T. Smith, Anders Ardo, Peter Linde. Washington D.C. ICC Press, 1999. 326 p. ISBN: 1-891365-04-5	<input type="checkbox"/>

Results list of a search from ELPUB

contents it is no problem to read through entire chapters. Good as Columbia Guide may be, it is no substitute for an excellent open access periodical publication.

This acquisition was a bad deal for readers of *JEP*. It may have been a good deal for Columbia University Press, eliminating a competing publication, but not for boosting its partnership image. Deep-sixing *JEP* just reinforced the fear mongering that open access journals are not here to stay, but are likely to become moribund. I believe, and I hope this is the case, unless divine, Inc. resurrects and moves in with some other morbid acquisition idea.

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Comments? E-mail letters to the editor to marydee@xmission.com.

COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY PRESS TO PUBLISH THE JOURNAL OF ELECTRONIC PUBLISHING

## Newly Revamped Journal to Publish Again in Fall

The Journal of Electronic Publishing and Columbia University Press announce with pleasure their new partnership. With the release of the Fall 2003 issue, The Journal of Electronic Publishing will be published by Columbia University Press and will be re-launched with a new design, augmented content, enhanced search capabilities, and a new home address on the [Columbia University Press Web site](#). Publication of *JEP* will be on a brief hiatus until fall.

The University of Michigan Press published *JEP* since its inception in 1995. The University of Michigan Press and Columbia University Press have agreed that all archives of the journal will be moved to Columbia, and calls to the old URL addresses will be automatically redirected to *JEP*'s new home. In partnership with Columbia, *JEP* can reach a far wider audience, including many of the subscribers to CUP's renowned electronic publications.

The Journal of Electronic Publishing has been published since January, 1995. It currently delivers three issues a year, in April, August, and December. Judith Axler Turner and Eve Trager, who both joined the journal in 1997, will continue in their respective positions of editor and managing editor. *JEP* is available by free subscription, and has 1,700 subscribers and thousands more readers, mostly in the publishing industry, libraries, and the academy. Readers have access to close to 200 articles written by industry professionals in library science, private publishing, and academic presses.

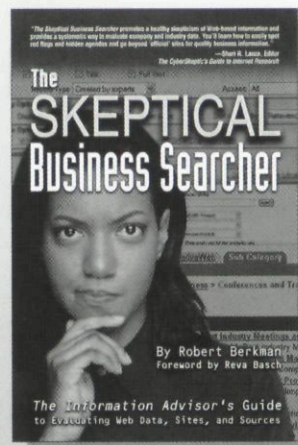
*The marriage vows presented in the "wedding announcement"*

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