



V O L U M E 1 N U M B E R 5

::: OCTOBER 2001 :::

**FEATURE – Adam Greenfield**

**Biting the hand that feeds: a frankly antiquarian rant about wise decisions in an age of all-pervasive digital technology**

Adam Greenfield does a little thang called v-2 Organisation, at <http://www.v-2.org>, where he waxes enthusiastic about liquid architecture, old Citroens, and the odd Maggie Cheung movie. His business card says Senior Information Architect, DentsuFUSE, Tokyo.

**INTERVIEW – Mitch Freedman**

Mitch Freedman is director of the Westchester [NY] County Library, ALA President-elect, and publisher and editor of **The U\*N\*A\*B\*A\*S\*H\*E\*D™ Librarian**. He's taken time from his busy schedule to share his plans for improving salaries and pay equity for library workers, which he has identified as one of his priorities during his ALA Presidency.

**PEOPLE**

**Rogue Librarian**, Carrie Bickner, works at The New York Public Library as the Branch Libraries' Web Coordinator. As unorganized as she claims to be, she got it together enough to share some of the feelings that she and her co-workers are dealing with right now. Reading through her essay, I realize that it doesn't matter what kind of library you work in, or where you go to school, or what country you call home... we're all in this together.

**ASK SUSU**

Susu, our sometimes irreverent advice columnist, answers your questions about work, school, the job hunt, and librarianship in general. In this issue, Susu advises on changing jobs.

**TECH TALK**

In this issue, Colleen muses on the proliferation of PDAs and speculates on how libraries might capitalize on this technology

**LETTERS**

Say What? If you have something to say, we want to hear it. **Send us** your letters and we'll post them here. If you're responding to an article or interview, place the headline in the subject of your email.

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F E A T U R E   A R T I C L E

::: OCTOBER 2001 :::

**Biting the hand that feeds: a frankly antiquarian rant about wise decisions in an age of all-pervasive digital technology**

**ADAM GREENFIELD**

Adam Greenfield does a little thang called v-2 Organisation, at <http://www.v-2.org>, where he waxes enthusiastic about liquid architecture, old Citroens, and the odd Maggie Cheung movie. His business card says Senior Information Architect, DentsuFUSE, Tokyo.

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Enough.

Enough with the e-books, with the location-based digital services, enough with the .whatever initiatives and the Bluetooth-equipped refrigerators.

I suppose it's rather ungrateful for someone whose entire livelihood is predicated on an information economy with a high technology base to be saying this, but I need a break from all of it. I need some time to consolidate, to absorb, and finally, to choose.

I'm going to inch out onto a limb and guess that what I'm experiencing is not merely a personal feeling of option fatigue, but a culture-wide lassitude when confronted with an unabating tide of new technological gadgetry.

I'm not talking about future shock. I don't precisely feel whiplashed by any of the technosocial developments of the last five years, and I'm betting you don't either. I mean, yes, it's nothing short of a miracle that due to the Amazing Internet I'm writing this article in a Starbucks in Tokyo and you're reading it in a Peet's a million miles away.

But come on. The Internet is - conceptually, anyway - 1970s technology. This is yesterday's news, not nearly enough to trigger the sense of nauseous, white-knuckled vertigo I think of as true future shock. Where indisputably revolutionary technology is concerned, as Brother James [*ed.: Brown!*] once pointed out, there "ain't nothing going on but the rent."

So we're not talking about fear of the new. No, what I'm feeling is just a premonitory aura of dread at having to deal with a deluge of more pointless devices and services: something more akin to the feeling one gets when the holidays roll around every year and you confront the idea of seeing your relatives again.

There's a guy at my company here in Tokyo, a young Japanese go-getter who's currently working on kind of a lifeclock for one of our clients, a major provider of digital mobile phone services. The idea is

to identify all of the possible "touch points" for this client's product in your life, as your roles and activities shift throughout the day - at seven-thirty AM, you're a sleeper in need of a wakeup call, at eight-thirty a commuter who's looking for transit information, at two in the afternoon a knowledge worker waiting on data, at six that evening a young woman on the town who wants movie times or the location of the nearest Ethiopian restaurant with a full liquor license.

Once every touch point has been identified for the desired target audience, this dude (and I use that word advisedly) proposes that the client offer a service to match, using their phones as the delivery platform. I suppose the idea is that life will be so much better when it's almost totally mediated by a handy pocket-sized device.

This is a prospect he's genuinely enthusiastic about. He has a habit of holding up his *keitai* (cellphone) at company meetings, as if it were some totemic signifier of All Tomorrow's Parties. Given half a chance, he'll hold forth hourslong about all the inestimable good that will flow downstream from this brave new age of eCRM, whatever that is.

Maybe he's right. As I write these words, I'm looking across the room at a gorgeous young chiquita whiling away her Saturday morning sipping an overpriced latte and tapping something into her *keitai* one painstaking phoneme at a time. She doesn't look unhappy. Maybe she'd welcome yet another degree of technological intervention in her life, her phone offering her discounts on the new Ewan McGregor movie, updating her on the weather in her preferred vacation spots, reminding her to buy birth-control pills or contact-lens solution.

But as for me... enough. I'm not a Luddite - anything but - and I'm not counseling a kneejerk rejection of technology *per se*. I just want technology to support my real life, not supplant it. In order to ensure this, I need (we all need) to evaluate, to select, and yes, to refuse when it's appropriate.

Because I don't believe for a second that life is about bits flickering in the dark, between constellations of shiny devices embedded and emplaced and orbited and even implanted.

Silly me, I believe life is about dabbing a crusty hunk of bread into a dish of olive oil and raising it to your mouth. Toweling the salty traces of dried sweat from your forehead after an hourlong run. Nibbling on your lover's chewy lower lip. Pulling onto the freeway and really opening up, until the needle twitches at the 100mph line. Rushing home from the bookstore to crack for the first time your favorite author's long-awaited latest. Playing with the foamy head on your pint of Guinness at 1.30 in the morning at some sidewalk café on Avenue A, listening to the air conditioner next door drip drip drip to the concrete.

Not least, I believe life is about doing nothing from time to time.

Any technology that supports my ability to participate in these activities and then gets the hell out of the way is OK by me. In theory, a lot of what my coworker is envisioning would actually do this - be the helpful, practical, useful kind of intercession that has the net effect of returning more time to me, to do with what I see fit.

But this is rarely how it happens in practice. There are *always* batteries to charge, service plans to parse and choose among, help desks to mail and mail again in mounting paroxysms of frustration. The intended time saved is spent managing the technology itself and wondering why the thing isn't working

already. This is already true, and if anything, I think the various gadgetmakers are ramping up their efforts to insinuate their toys into any crevice our lives can afford them.

My guess is that this is because the fatigue we feel at the idea of yet another new matte-aluminum, hundred-gigabyte, thousand-hertz wonderprop is less philosophical than it is a matter of a certain technosatiety.

Like many people I know, I'm all set for gadgets for the foreseeable future. Let's see: I have a laptop and a PDA. I've replaced my CD collection and all its attendant clutter with a six-gig mp3 player. I sport a *keitai* and a USB-compatible digital camera. A state of the art watch. Noise-canceling headphones and a set of lovely transparent speakers. (That each of these devices is called something different, and offers a different interface, when they're all processing the same ones and zeroes, is fodder for a different rant.)

I don't mention any of this to brag, but to make a point: each of these objects is nice, and they all make my life more pleasant in some wise and to some degree. But they're... sufficient. I don't need anything more. I can't see needing to upgrade for quite some time. In a sense, maybe, I've reached a plateau in commodity capitalism's ability to offer me any further inducements to spend.

After years in which the computer's battery never held out long enough, the camera never stored enough high-resolution images, and you couldn't take your Walkman with you on a trail run because the skipping would drive you half-murderous with frustration, this stuff is commensurate to the needs of daily life, more or less. The incremental advantage to be obtained by shelling out still more for the latest iteration of each of these devices eludes me, and for the first time I can remember, the technoporn spilling out of *Wired* and its ilk does nothing for me.

I doubt I am alone in this.

Thus the fervent, almost frenzied search for new business models, new niches, new moments of intervention; the consumer-products companies need to find something new to sell us. Samsung and Polaroid, Nokia and Palm: like the proverbial shark, they've got to keep pressing forward else they sink soundlessly to the bottom like so many of their cohorts. They must do this in the absence of any real need, in contravention of sense, and in the face of our own subtlest desires.

The deeper issue is that despite all of their (full disclosure: *our*) efforts to define the delivery of these services as "Experience," any third-grader can tell you that merely being bombarded with information is not the same thing as having an experience. As we all know on some level, information is not the same thing as knowledge, let alone wisdom. To thrust a thousand new gizmos in your face all at once, and tell you that you're being offered Choice and Experience, is nothing short of insulting.

Well, someone has to stand against this. So I'd like to close this rant with a plea to you, in your public role as custodians of information: go ahead, if you must, and rebrand yourselves as "knowledge agents," or whatever formulation succeeds in hoisting your public image out from behind the Marion-the-Librarian cateyes and into the quicksilversexy 21st century. I know your salaries and perceived authority and prospects for advancement (and maybe some small measure of self-esteem) depend on this; far be it from me to dispute the importance or the validity of these things.

But I'm relying on you to help hold the line against the needless onrush of fake novelty, and to remind people where and when you can of the things that really matter.

How to do this? In large measure, as librarians, do what you've always done: defend the controversial, the banned, the unpopular. Champion those thoughts, and thinkers, that help people develop their critical thinking skills. Filter. Interface. Collect, preserve, and defend. Promulgate the subversive notion that quality of life has little to do with an index of all the gadgets we own, or all the data we can accumulate.

Beyond those job-specific imperatives, be an advocate in the world for those most human of qualities, the things about us that are essential and not contingent. Sensuality. Conviviality. Surprise. Even loss and contradiction and sorrow and bias - all the things, in short, that the next generation (and the next) of peer-to-peer, massively-parallel, high-bandwidth, AirPort-compatible, solid unobtainium information appliances won't be able to provide, at least in the foreseeable future.

Meanwhile, in the world it's a gently breezy, sunny September Saturday here in Tokyo: a rarity indeed, in this congested, polluted, overworked, often unpleasant city. I'm going to shut down my PowerBook and go for a bike ride, or maybe a stroll in the park a few blocks away. There's a girl I like to flirt with in the record store I frequent over in Aoyama; perhaps I'll pay her a visit and thumb through the new acid-jazz and ambient arrivals to see if anything particularly strikes my fancy. And - most enticingly of all - I'm entertaining the idea of a lazy afternoon nap out on my deck. You tell me where the "touch point" is in any of that.

**One final note:** I wrote all this in early September, before history cracked in two. I didn't write a word for ten days after the attacks, unwilling to face down that horror with symbols that would never be able to contain it; neither did I read anything I had written previously, for fear that it would sound unbearably trivial.

However, on rereading this article now, I find if anything its advice rings truer than ever. Go find the ones you love, do good, be real. Nothing else matters.

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## F E A T U R E I N T E R V I E W

::: OCTOBER 2001 :::



By day Mitch Freedman is director of the Westchester [NY] County Library, which he arrived at by way of the Newark [NJ] Public Library, UC Berkeley's School of Librarianship, the Library of Congress, Hennepin County Library, New York Public Library, and the Columbia University School of Library Service. He is a staunch defender of free access and information equity, and an avid supporter of ALA; he's currently serving as President-elect of the association. In his spare time he publishes **The U\*N\*A\*B\*A\*S\*H\*E\*D™**

**Librarian**, for which he also serves as editor-in-chief.

In this interview, he takes time from his busy schedule to share his plans for improving salaries and pay equity for library workers, which he has identified as one of his priorities during his ALA Presidency.

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**NewBreed Librarian: One of the major issues you are campaigning for is better salaries for all library workers. Why is this issue so important?**

**Mitch Freedman:** It is important because too few talented people are entering the profession; it is important because many urban libraries that desperately need entry-level staff either can't find them, or can't keep them - their salaries are so non-competitive with suburban and other libraries in the region.

Overall, the issue is important, too, because this is a female predominant field. As with other such professions (e.g., nursing, teaching, social work) librarian salaries suffer because of the inequities between male predominant and female predominant workers who have comparable education, experience, skill, and responsibility. Pay equity has been and is an issue that needs to be addressed societally, but we must do what we can for our colleagues even if we cannot solve the problem for everyone.

It is my hope that my ALA task force that will be working on better salaries and pay equity - the working name will be the Campaign for America's Librarians Task Force - will be able to develop empowerment tools that will help library workers make some progress in redressing especially bad salary situations.

**NBL: The salary survey in the September 2001 issue of *American Libraries* reported that library salaries in the U.S. are not keeping pace with the national average for salaries in all professions. Why do you think this is the case?**

**MF:** For pay equity reasons mentioned above, I would surmise that librarian salaries would not do as well as the national averages for comparable fields. I also would add that most librarians work for non-

profit organizations - public, academic, and other libraries. As such, I would speculate that in difficult times the workers in non-profits and public sector organizations would tend to do worse.

**NBL: I have witnessed many conversations about the current and future shortage of librarians, in terms of folks entering the field, those retiring, and in the numbers of LIS graduates choosing not to work in libraries. Do you think salary has been a major factor in the shortage of librarians? If so, do you think higher salaries will improve the situation?**

**MF:** I think higher salaries will help the situation. This is one problem that "throwing money at" will have to help.

Second, I think that the status of librarians has to continue to change. The stereotype of the "old maid librarian saying shhhh" and of a dedicated professional willing to work for peanuts because of a higher calling still is altogether too commonplace. My task force will try to complement the work being done by Past-President Nancy Kranich's Committee on the Status of Librarians.

The "status" of librarians has to improve. The perception has to improve. It is the job of librarians everywhere to do their utmost to be proud of what they do and to project that pride to the public at large.

We must feel good about what we do and understand its importance and value to society, the economic well-being of the community, and most importantly to the health of our democracy.

Ultimately, I would like to believe that the increased status and perceived value of librarians will generate better salaries and also attract bright and talented women and men to the profession who otherwise might not consider it.

**NBL: How will you, in your capacity as ALA President, address the issue of library salaries? What have you done thus far?**

**MF:** I've appointed a task force (see above) to work on empowerment tools for better salaries and pay equity. It is my hope that the results of the task force's work will include:

- A. A better salaries & pay equity toolkit that will be similar to the ALA Internet Toolkit. It should have:
  - a. Data on salaries;
  - b. Case studies of successful and unsuccessful efforts to achieve pay equity or otherwise improve salaries;
  - c. Sample scripts and responses for advocating for better salaries and pay equity (what to answer in response to the usual arguments against pay equity for librarians);
  - d. Information on the role unions can play in helping to achieve better salaries and pay equity; and
  - e. Strategies on how to go about using the information provided to be your own advocate.
- B. Programs at future conference, particularly the 2002 and 2003 annual meetings.
- C. Road show institutes at minimal costs to spread the word and help inspire and empower people to fight for better compensation for themselves and their colleagues.

We will endeavor to be as aggressive as possible in our support of all library workers getting better salaries and pay equity.

**NBL: One last question: What can we, as members of this profession, do to help improve salaries and pay equity for all library workers?**

**MF:** We must take pride in what we do. We must project to the people for whom we work and the patrons we serve that our work is important and that the service we deliver is of importance to them and to our society. We must also do the same for the politicians and other funding sources. Without that understanding on their part it will be hard for them to support equitable pay for library workers.

John N. Berry III, Vice-President and Editor-in-Chief of *Library Journal*, always quotes Samuelson, the economist, for his use of the "lighthouse" as an exemplar of the "public good." The lighthouse is something that benefits everyone even though it is "used" by only the ships that see it and help keep them safe. The safety of those ships-that bring the food, the goods, etc. - is important to everyone's well-being.

This also is true of the library. Society benefits from libraries whether or not they are used by everyone. The benefits to those who use the library tend to extend to the non-users in the form of more informed citizens contributing to decisions and to the community, i.e. the more library users in the community, typically the more informed people there will be in the community. To complete the syllogism, the more informed people there are in the community, one would hope that the community's leadership and decision-making would be better - which of course benefits everyone, including the non-library users.

And, as always, librarians can and must demonstrate the benefits of libraries to businesses and other institutions that contribute to the economic welfare of the community. The more ably this is demonstrated, the better understanding there will be about the need to improve library workers' salaries.

In this market-driven economy, it is unfortunate that the worth of libraries must be tied to economic outcomes, but it is a reality that cannot be ignored.

On a final, post-9/11/01 note, the economic downturn and other consequences of the tragedy will make it harder for libraries to get their needed share of resources and probably even more challenging to increase the pay of library workers.

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## P E O P L E

::: OCTOBER 2001 :::



[Rogue Librarian](#), Carrie Bickner, works at The New York Public Library as the Branch Libraries' Web Coordinator. As unorganized as she claims to be, she got it together enough to share some of the feelings that she and her co-workers are dealing with right now. Reading through her essay, I realize that it doesn't matter what kind of library you work in, or where you go to school, or what country you call home... we're all in this together.

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Interviews from New York City  
New York City, 9/25/01

This piece was to have been a collection of interviews of children.

My colleague Catherine and I were to have spent the afternoon of Saturday the 15th in her old branch, George Bruce in Harlem. We were to ask of seven- and eight-year-olds, "Can you describe the perfect library?" and "What do you like about your librarian?" We were to have used our shiny new digital camera to photograph sparkling young faces.

These interviews would have inspired, maybe even moved a few to consider becoming a children's librarian.

But the Saturday before the interviews, two passenger airplanes hit the Twin Towers of the World Trade Center. We watched what happened next, Catherine from the top of her apartment building in Brooklyn, and I from the corner of 40th and 5th.

Wednesday we called off the interviews.

On Friday I spoke to Juanita about interviewing colleagues about their experiences working in the branches the few days after September 11th. It seemed like a good idea; there are many stories to tell.

There is a story to tell of a children's librarian on her way to work Tuesday morning at the New Amsterdam branch, just a few blocks away from the site of the attack. It is a story of her escape from falling bricks and falling people and a monstrous cloud of dust.

There is a story to tell about people using the Internet computers at libraries to e-mail home, "I am safe. Phone is dead. Can't call you. More later." It is a poignant story about the contempt librarians often feel about e-mail and what public access to e-mail means in a time of national crisis. This is a story that will make us reconsider Internet policies, but the people who administer this service can't consider these issues yet.

There is a story to tell about non-English speakers with scarce access to good information in their language, coming to the library to try to piece together what had happened to their new city. I could interview language specialists about what a good foreign-language newspaper collection means to our newest Americans at a time like this, but they are not ready.

There is a story to tell about an entire borough of reference librarians working with out Internet access, their connection severed by the attack. I could interview ten colleagues just about what it is like to be limited to a print collection at a time like this. Library schools could use this interview in Reference 501 to tell tomorrow's librarians about the value of a good print collection. Another time.

And I am not ready. When I think about the possible interviews that I might conduct, the stories - or simply the act of retrieving them - seems invasive or trivial. I know that in a few weeks or months this feeling will fade. I know that soon we'll be able to do more than just get of bed, get onto the train and get to our jobs.

On the morning of Wednesday the 12th I went to Dunkin' Donuts to get some breakfast. They had no donuts. Dunkin' Donuts was out of donuts. All morning all I could see were the empty wire baskets where the donuts should have been.

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A S K S U S U

::: OCTOBER 2001 :::

Susu, our sometimes irreverent advice columnist, answers your questions about work, school, the job hunt, and librarianship in general. In this issue, Susu advises on changing jobs.

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**Dear Susu,** I'm torn. I've been offered a high paying job with fewer responsibilities than the one I have now. Even more appealing, I would have summers off. I think anyone one would jump at this opportunity - and before I visited the library, I thought I would, too. But after taking a trip to check it out, I don't think I would be happy there. There's just not enough to challenge me.

Maybe that's not even it either. I don't know... am I being stupid? Should I take the better pay and summers off? Am I scared of change and somehow unwittingly creating problems because I'm so comfortable where I'm at now?

**Dear Torn,** Change, or the prospect of it, always creates some amount of tension. You would be uncommonly resilient if you weren't feeling a little bit of stress while making such a significant decision. At this point, it's important to allow yourself to feel anxious because processing these emotions, and the attendant reasons behind them, is an integral part of the decision-making process.

Are you stupid for not jumping at higher pay and summers off? No. Not in the least. There are many variables that determine job satisfaction outside salary and vacation time. There's an old folk tale that goes somewhat along these lines: an axeman was told he would be paid for an entire day of chopping wood. His pay would be doubled if he used the blunt edge of the axe. So he immediately took to the blunt side and started to hack. His supervisor left him to his work and returned at the end of the day, suprised to see that the woodsman had reverted to the lower-paying, sharp end of the axe.

"Why," asked the supervisor, "are you using the blade when you could be earning double with the butt?" The axeman replied, "I just had to see the chips fly."

Perhaps more important than salary and time off is the pride generated from your work. Compare the two libraries in terms of collections, collegiality, population served, special projects, support in terms of professional development, intellectual stimulation, and the intrinsic motivators that make you tick, that make you shine.

Talk to people at the library you're considering. Find out what their motivators are and what they think about their work. Do your homework so that when you make your final decision, you'll feel confident that you came about it through level headed decision-making, not fear, compromise, or complacency. And remember to keep those chips flying.

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In this issue, Colleen muses on the proliferation of PDAs and speculates on how libraries might capitalize on this technology.

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They're popping up everywhere.

The [University of South Dakota](#) gave one to every first-year undergraduate, law, and medical student this fall. I've been using one for about 18 months (and it's a good thing, or I'd miss a lot more meetings and appointments than I do). Mark, a colleague, has used his to read an entire book - Mike Resnick's *Soothsayer* - during ALA Midwinter last January, and recently began using it to download those all-important sports scores. And another colleague downloads web sites on hers so she can read [Salon](#) and get access to movie listings on the go.

I'm speaking, of course, of personal digital assistants, or PDAs, just one of a class of wireless or semi-wireless handheld devices that have the potential to deliver butloads of information whenever and wherever we might desire it.

[PalmPilots](#), [Handspring Visors](#), and others are showing up in meetings, at conferences, in the classroom, and elsewhere. The University of Georgia provides a [Palm-friendly version of its news releases](#). Third-year medical students at the University of North Dakota use PDAs during their visits to medical clinics. I rely heavily on mine to remind me when I need to be somewhere, tell me the time (I don't wear a watch), and, when I remember to download it, keep me up to date on Canadian news (in both English and French, which, interestingly enough, are different). And while I haven't tried it yet, I imagine I could even take NewBreed Librarian on the road with me if I wanted to.

My colleague, Mark, thinks we should mount a PalmPilot at the reference desk and allow folks to beam our guides, maps, and self-guided tour into their own PDAs. The only limitation at this point is incompatibility between the infrared ports and software used on various devices. (Last time I tried, the Handspring Visor, which uses the Palm software, couldn't beam data from my Palm.)

The Arizona Health Sciences Library provides [tables of contents](#) formatted for PDAs. And a web search shows several health sciences libraries that are supporting the use of PDAs by medical students engaged in clinical practice.

Wouldn't it be really great if we could convince vendors to start making their products - integrated library systems, indexes and other databases, and more - compatible with PDAs? (Some vendors, such as [Ovid](#), already provide some support.) Patrons could link up through a wireless network and download search results directly to a PDA. Then they could link to a GIS or global positioning system to locate certain resources within the library.

There are probably internal routines that could also benefit from the use of PDAs - inventory and usage counts where the data is transmitted to the integrated library system as soon as it's scanned in, and feedback on the success or failure is available immediately. Or cataloging, serials check-ins, ordering and receiving that can be done anywhere, anytime.

Just think of how many places the library would be popping up.

**Related Links:**

[How Stuff Works: Wireless Networking](#)

[AvantGo](#) and [Vindigo](#)

[Mobile Devices Will Soon Be Useful](#) [Jakob Nielsen's *Alertbox*]

[PDAGeek](#) and [PDA Buzz](#)

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L E T T E R S

::: OCTOBER 2001 :::

16 OCT 01 :: **"Better even than not overriding type size, what about not forcing type\_face\_?"**

Feel free to entirely ignore this ingrate, particularly since I won't do *Cites & Insights* in HTML...

but...

Better even than not overriding type size, what about not forcing type\_face\_? That is, restricting type-related HTML to color and relative size only...

I happen to prefer serif type on the screen as well as on the printed page - and, for some reason, serif seems to be consistently significantly smaller than sans in Internet Explorer's size pantheon. So your new "whatever you want" type looks enormous to me. **[NBL says: to us, too]**

A minor point. I appreciate Newbreedlibrarian, even if it is way more design-intensive than anything I'd ever do...

Cheers,  
Walt Crawford

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14 OCT 01 :: **"I understand that [cascading style sheets] let you produce a more professional site more quickly, but why such tiny print?."**

Dear NBL,

Your site is very attractive looking. It appears to have some very interesting content. However I can't read it because the intense squinting required to try and focus on the tiny tiny print hurts after a very short time.

I see that you are using cascading style sheets and I understand that they let you produce a more professional site more quickly, but why such tiny print? Many people who might be interested in your content will be accessing it on a shared computer, public access or office, where they can't change the underlying settings. The computer I'm using at the moment has IE 6 and Windows XP, but the browser setting for text size which I normally keep on large does me no good due, I assume to the CSS override. Since this is not my personal computer, I can't change the monitor resolution, 1152 x 864, or make other basic changes.

While I have poor eyesight, I'm not legally blind or anywhere near it - I'm just nearsighted. I hope that you can do something to make it easier to obtain the information on your site.

Sincerely,  
Anne Gometz  
<http://www.rhus.com>

**NBL's response:**

Anne and Walt, we hear ya. Which is why we've said, "damn the torpedoes" and have blown those font specs right out of our style sheet. Browse to your heart's content, using your favorite font face and size.

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05 OCT 01 :: **"...while all of that was going on, I really had no idea it was going on."**

I congratulate you on all of the people you reach with New Breed [sic] Librarian. The following message [from Australia - we didn't include it] is one of four I've received already pertaining to the [interview](#).

I guess I'm just not web-oriented enough. Your publication, [Juice](#), [LIS News](#), and others really have an impact and reach lots of people - and while all of that was going on, I really had no idea it was going on.

Congratulations, again.

Thanks for giving me such a great forum.

mitch

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02 OCT 01 :: **"It really is enough to know that the wire bins were empty at Dunkin' Donuts."**

I just read Ms. Bickner's article on New York libraries and Sept. 11. Thank you, thank you, thank you. Thank for not doing what so many have (even my beloved NPR) and invaded people's space at a time of great tragedy in the name of "human interest" at best and "news" at worst. How this event will touch our lives and impact our profession is everywhere - late book shipments, no phones, frantic parents. It really is enough to know that the wire bins were empty at Dunkin' Donuts. I will see those bins for a long time even though I never "saw" them. For me that says it all. Peace and blessings,

Cathy Norman  
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