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Webb's Web

👤 Posted by Kerry Webb   💬 25 comments

I always saw Hamlet as an android kinda guy

A few weeks ago, I went to one of the National Library's *Innovative Ideas* talks – this one from William Powers, author of *Hamlet's Blackberry*, where he spoke in general about his work (he came to Australia for the Melbourne Writer's Festival and then spent a few weeks in residence at the University of Canberra). After talking for half an hour and giving out a few teasers about his book, he took several questions from the audience. His idea of taking an Internet Sabbath every weekend struck a chord with many of us. He also had a few good observations about education and the importance of allowing kids to become bored, and then use their imagination. If you can't get your hands on his book, its genesis was an essay that he wrote during a semester at Harvard (**/tinyurl.com/ clhkmd**) which is really worth reading. And for the record, Laertes would have had an iPhone and Fortinbras the Blackberry.

How to do it right

There's a fascinating peek behind the scenes in the blog post at **tinyurl. com/3pp32af** about the National Library's digitisation of the *Australian Home Journal* and the *Band of Hope*, a 19th century periodical. I was encouraged to see that so much attention was paid to occupational health issues, and the lessons learned from the project will be shared by other libraries engaged in such activities.

Unruly posters

I've noticed a problem with a Twitter account that I monitor: a person with a single-item agenda who keeps posting obnoxious variations on their theme. This presents quite a problem for the organisation concerned. Most people read the tweets relating to the account by searching on a hashtag (a string of letters with '#' in it, like #qanda) and there's really no way to stop anyone at all using any hashtag in their tweets. The result is that anyone searching on the hashtag will pick up all sorts of posts – good and bad. And of course, any approach to a serial poster to address their issues is not guaranteed to work; indeed it could backfire, with the offender complaining that they were being censored and the organisation attracting bad publicity. I do think though that it's best to try in this case, because the poster has gone beyond fair comment and is cluttering up the conversation. For less contentious posters though, the issue would be much less clear. It just reinforces my belief that the internet really does survive because of general goodwill; cases like this are quite rare.

How seriously do we take data.gov?

In a thoughtful post at **www. phaseonecg.com/blog/archives/616**, Dan Morgan looks at the 'data' part of the Open Government movement and highlights one of the serious problems of the various initiatives: that people aren't doing much planning in making the government data available. (He also promotes the use of librarians in organising the data - and that's always a good thing.) But back to his main point: have we really looked at what we're doing and how to do it best? For the most part, the response to the call for publishing open government data was met with agencies whining, "Do we have ta?" and then doing a quick scan of their systems to find out what might possibly be found with minimal effort. I believe that there's been no concerted effort (as does Dan) to make the gathering and linking of data some sort of project, with a plan and targets.

The reason for this? Well, it's going to take time and effort - and commitment. Too many senior managers seem to think that this is a fad that will go away soon and then they can get on with their 'real work', a bit like those who deride social media and don't recognise that it really is part of the new landscape.

Prepare to be entranced

I think I may have mentioned that I like graphics. You'll see then why I was so impressed with the animation from Derek Watkins (**derekwatkins. wordpress.com/**) representing the spread of US Post offices (and by extension, civilisation) from 1700 to 1900. The fun is in analysing why certain patterns emerge when they do.

Think (and think again) before you write

Despite all sorts of warnings, people still don't understand that you can be held accountable for what you write on social media. A judgment by Fair Work Australia at **tinyurl. com/3mtwlzw** has reinforced the fact that what goes online can't be regarded as private (even if you think that you've done all you can with privacy settings) and on the same day there was a report about a tram driver who felt that he was similarly immune from what he does "in private". Stories like this are well worth noting if you're putting together a social media policy for your organisation. And speaking of such a policy, I was very impressed by the Victorian Department of Justice video (**www. youtube.com/watch?v=8iQLkt5CG8I**) that summarises what you should and shouldn't do in using social media as an employee. I think the edgy style and music works extremely well in this case.