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Again a Cottage Industry

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Again a Cottage Industry

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General Editor, *Collaborative Librarianship*

If I interpret correctly the views of Jason Epstein, elder statesman of the publishing world, *Collaborative Librarianship* in fact takes its place in the re-birthing of a cottage industry. The Random House College Dictionary defines “cottage industry” as, “an industry in which the product is made in a self-employed worker’s home (in contrast with a factory).” Beginning in the 1450s in homes and shops, printing and publishing progressed through the centuries to become enormous, multinational corporate empires. Now, all that is changing. With the emergence of the internet, social networking and mobile technologies of one kind or another, a new paradigm comes into play, a new model described by Epstein as a cottage industry long forgotten in the big business of publishing – and you are invited to be a part of it!

I had the privilege of participating in a small seminar in April, 2010, at Fordham University with Jason Epstein. At 82 years of age he was about to leave for Asia to market in China and elsewhere the new print-on-demand Espresso Book Machines his company has just perfected, but he took the time to catch a cab up to the Bronx from his Greenwich Village apartment to meet with 25 library deans from Jesuit universities in the United States. In Epstein’s prescient little tome, *Book Business: Publishing Past, Present, and Future* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2001) he predicted that given developments of the World Wide Web, book publishing will become “once more a cottage industry of diverse, creative autonomous units” divested of “such vestigial publishing work as marketing, sales, shipping, and warehousing together with their bureaucracies and inefficiencies....” (p. 175). He envisioned a much more direct connection of authors and readers, working both ways. With the explosion of online open access publishing, mobile connectivity to the internet and elevated interactivity, what Epstein expected has become reality – in spades.

As an open access journal, *Collaborative Librarianship* is a case in point. In addition to being an

example itself, in this current issue we present other examples as well. The article by two executives of BiblioLabs on HTML5 apps for tablet devices and the use of new technologies further change the landscape of access to published works. It also opens up new partnerships for libraries, computer companies and software developers. The article on transcendental metadata addresses new modes of connectivity between users and its authors argue that librarians could and should embrace greater user participation in the management of resources. Another article explores innovative applications of Facebook in library course websites that significantly expand connectivity and interaction of librarians and users. And you will not want to miss the two reviews, one on social bookmarking tools and the other on Colwiz – each dealing with new implementations useful in the environment of a re-birthing cottage industry.

Along with the applications of new technologies, *Collaborative Librarianship* continues to champion the more traditional aspects of librarianship, but articles offered in this issue take these staples of the profession to new levels. The piece on literacy programs in the Orbis Cascade Alliance shares ideas on different, innovative approaches to this basic library service. “Label-less Library Logistics...” deals with the practical but highly complex processes of shipping materials from place to place and explores RFID and other coding mechanisms to improve efficiencies.

Collaborative Librarianship invites you to become directly involved in this new cottage industry as authors, editors, reviewers, readers, responders – working where you are, anywhere in the world, creatively, autonomously, and exhibiting much diversity – interacting with information and knowledge. You have an opportunity to participate in meaningful ways in this new world of publishing anticipated by Jason Epstein. For more information about how you can become involved, contact one of the editors of the journal or explore further this website.

