

### MLANET and the *Bulletin*: accessible, flexible, searchable

The first step in the electronic evolution of the *Bulletin* occurred in April 1997 with the availability of an electronic table of contents service that may be accessed via MLANET\*. Beginning with the July 1996 issue (volume 84:3), table of contents and abstract data have been taken from the prepress area at Allen Press, where the *Bulletin* is printed, and converted into HyperText Markup Language (HTML) for Web presentation.

#### Process and availability

Allen Press uses the Penta electronic publishing system to typeset the *Bulletin* and other journals and books printed for a variety of institutions. Once authorization is given by the *Bulletin* editorial team, the Penta table of contents data are converted to the ASCII format and then tagged in HTML for Web presentation. Material from the issue is then displayed with other processed issues and volumes on the Allen Press Web server. The link to the Allen Press server from the MLANET server is maintained by MLA Headquarters staff in Chicago. The electronic table of contents is expected to be available two to three weeks in advance of the receipt of the paper copy by MLA members and other subscribers.

#### Search engine featured

The *Bulletin* electronic table of contents features a search engine to provide more precise retrieval of words or phrases in the abstracts. The search engine is the Microsoft Index Server, which offers a variety of useful features, including truncation, proximity

\* The Medical Library Association's MLANET is on the World Wide Web at <http://www.kumc.edu/MLA/>.

operators, and Boolean operators. It can be used to search the full Web site (all volumes and issues), specific volumes, or specific issues. A more detailed explanation of the search engine's capabilities is provided at the *Bulletin* Web site.

#### Electronic evolution

A blend of electronic and print information is the delivery strategy currently in use for the *Bulletin*. This blend includes the electronic table of contents service available on the Allen Press server (accessed via MLANET), selected full-text material available on the MLANET server, and the printed *Bulletin*, which remains the archival or "gold" standard. The business model assumes that the Web-based electronic material is freely available to anyone while the archival printed material is available only to MLA members as a membership benefit and to subscribers.

Selected full-text material—including this editorial—has been posted to the MLANET server, and the practice of posting selected full-text information will continue. Please note that the electronic versions of this editorial [1] and Robert M. Braude's 1996 Janet Doe Lecture [2] on MLANET differ from the print versions in that Web locations illustrating points made in the text have been embedded. This permits automatic Internet links to other servers at the discretion of viewers who are visiting the full-text presentation on MLANET. The creation of these hypertext links illustrates one of a number of features available in an electronic format which are not possible in the print format.

The degree to which the *Bulletin*'s blended business model serves MLA members effectively

is a matter of concern which necessitates both further study of its economic impact on MLA and input from the membership. As noted in a previous editorial [3], other business models are being followed by science, technology, and medicine (STM) publishers. The †*Journal of Biological Chemistry*† available online from Stanford University's Highwire Press is an example of a publication that appears in parallel paper and electronic editions and includes features on the electronic version that are not possible in the paper version. The *Medical Journal of Australia*‡ has used electronic publishing on the Web to examine a new model of peer review through Web prepublication, but has retained the paper archive as the "gold standard."

#### Reader input solicited

Readers are asked to visit the *Bulletin* electronic table of contents presentation via MLANET and provide input on the presentation style, features, and future electronic direction. Send your comments to [bulletin@mlahq.org](mailto:bulletin@mlahq.org), or write to the editor.

Please consider the following issues as you visit MLANET and review the new electronic table of contents presentation:

#### Electronic table of contents

- What do you like best about the electronic table of contents presentation?
- What do you like least about the presentation?

† Further information about the *Journal of Biological Chemistry* on the Web can be found by visiting <http://highwire.stanford.edu/jbc/>.

‡ A description of the online peer review trial of the *Medical Journal of Australia* and the University of Sydney Library can be found by visiting <http://www.library.usyd.edu.au/MJA/>.

- What improvements do you suggest?

### Electronic evolution of the *Bulletin*

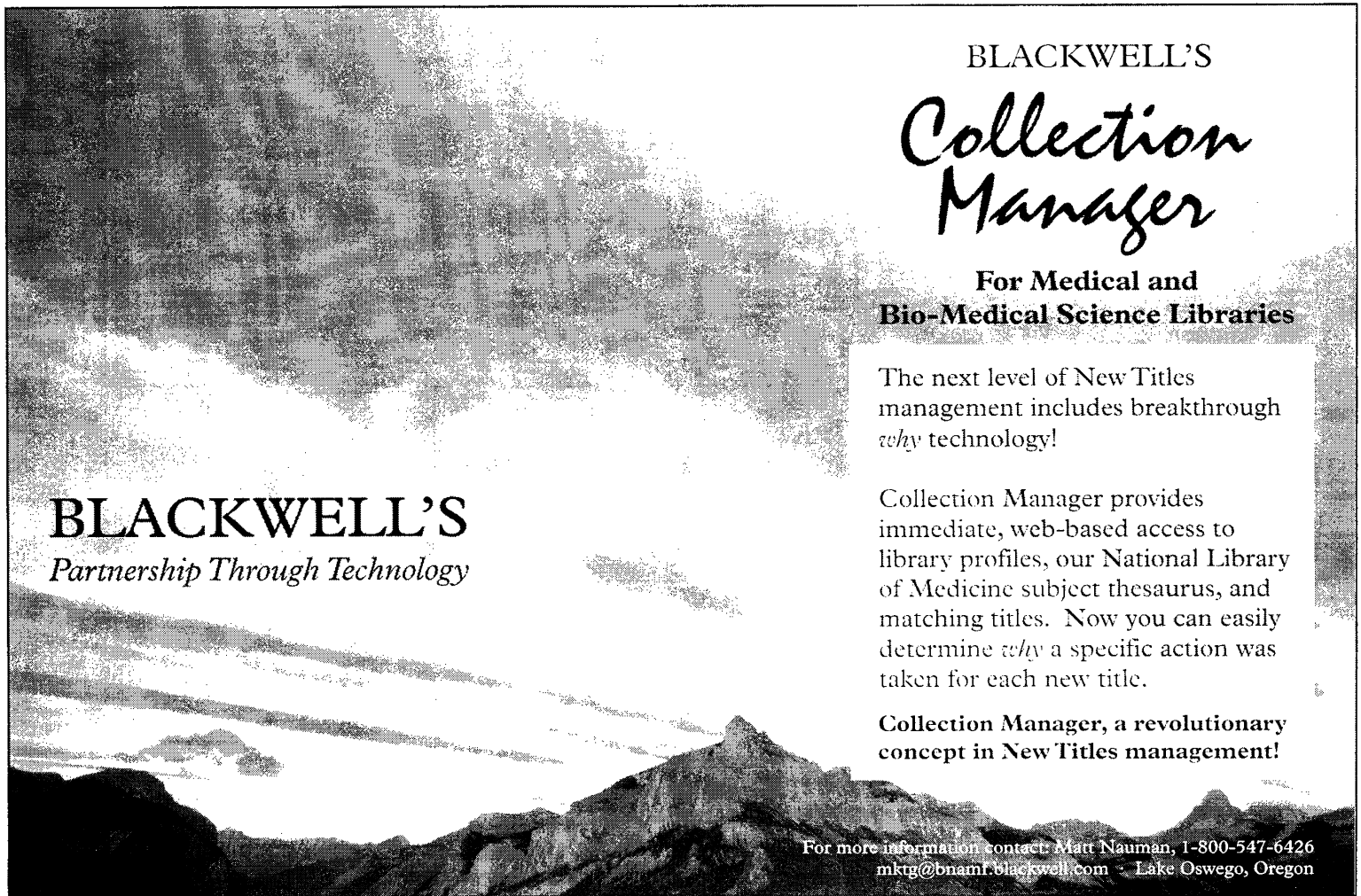
- How important is a Web-based, full-text-and-image *Bulletin* to you personally?
- How important is it to MLA?

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### References

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2. BRAUDE RM. On the origin of a species: evolution of health sciences librarianship. [Web document] Chicago: Medical Library Association, 1996 [rev. 17 July 1996; cited 31 March 1997]. Available from Internet: <<http://www.kumc.edu/MLA/>>
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