

How Librarians Buy Databases

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November 2, 2011



Perspectives, 1

- Chief collections officer at Yale Library 15+ years – responsible for collections policies, budgets, allocations, large purchases
 - 30-40 subject specialists/liaisons to users
 - Central Library budget of about \$14M (down from \$19-20M in 2008-09)
 - Over half of the budget expended on e-resources, with heavy purchasing of archival, full text, govt databases
 - Collaboration with coordinate libraries such as Law, Medical, Beinecke Rare Book Library – another \$10-12M
 - A complex set of relationships, demanding users, against the background of a substantial budget



Perspectives, 2

- Home of NorthEast Research Libraries Consortium (NERL), 1996+
 - Executive Director & YUL representative
 - 28 “core” members & 80+ affiliates
 - \$35M volume of business last year
 - Works with ~60 publishers
 - Central negotiations
 - Centralized billing available
 - No central e-budget: licensing based on individual member choices
 - Preserves individuality
 - But likely reduces the strength of “the deal”



Perspectives, 3

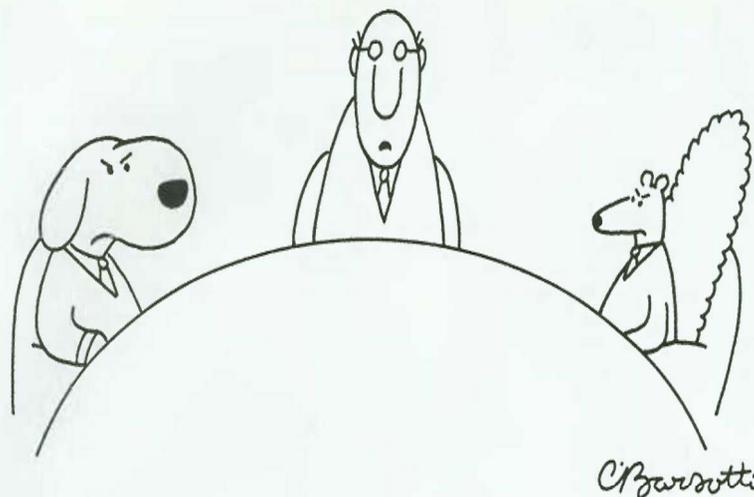
- YUL belongs to multiple consortia
 - e.g., CRL's programs, Lyrisis, Waldo and others
 - A complicated mix
 - Lots of juggling
- This is not an atypical complexity for Libraries!



"Some of us negotiate our contracts better than others."

Groucho Marx says

- “Outside of a dog, a man's best friend is a book. Inside the dog, it's too dark to read.”
- Let's talk about “inside the dog”
 - How do major libraries make big database decisions?
 - What kind of information is used to make them?
 - Tools & metrics?
 - Analysis?
 - Other factors?
 - Where does pricing fit?
 - How do we measure utility and success?



“First, can we agree that it's a big back yard?”

Learning about new e-databases, 1

- At local library level:
 - Sales-force visits, demos, mailings, offers to faculty, subject specialists, library administration, conferences
 - Subject specialists share information within the library and with users
 - May request a license copy and a trial
- At the collective level:
 - Sales-force visit, make consortial offers
 - Educational process
 - Consortium passes info to members
 - May request a license copy and trial
 - The consortial clock
 - Library decisions drive the consortium



Learning about new databases, 2

- Members check with consortium first
- Shouldn't break ranks (this is hard)



"You have logic, I have Roscoe."

YUL internal process, 1

- Subject selectors have budgets commensurate with the programs they support
- Selector discretion for purchases up to \$4,999
- Formal request for purchases \$5,000+, describing:
 - Resource, content – gaps and strengths
 - Demand – how will this be used
 - What is the quality of the resource?
 - Who's on the board?
 - Subject coverage
 - Importance of titles
 - Clarity of text and images
 - Ability to search, arrange results, user-friendly screen, etc.



YUL internal process, 2

- Who's the vendor and what's the offer?
 - Trial period?
 - Acceptable terms of use?
 - Perpetual access, appropriate sharing via ILL, etc.
 - What is the price?
 - Choice of pricing?
 - One time, annual?
 - Best possible price?
 - Consortial pricing?
 - Did you negotiate?
 - What funds will pay?
 - MARC records?
 - Any other factors?
 - Opinions of others?



"I always ask for a pony for my birthday. I find it gives the most bargaining room."

YUL internal process, 3

* Good fit with
Your key
discovery tools

Google 2084

[Ads by Google](#) [Records](#) [County Records](#) [Arrest Records](#) [Public Records](#)

Searching...

<input checked="" type="radio"/> Your Brain	<input type="radio"/> Satellite Photos of People You Want to Spy On	<input type="radio"/> Books
<input type="radio"/> Your Home	<input type="radio"/> Satellite Photos of People Spying On You	<input type="radio"/> Movies
<input type="radio"/> Family	<input type="radio"/> Medical Records	<input type="radio"/> TV Shows
<input type="radio"/> Friends	<input type="radio"/> Credit Records	<input type="radio"/> Music
<input type="radio"/> Ex-Friends	<input type="radio"/> Tax Records	<input type="radio"/> Pornography
<input type="radio"/> Relatives	<input type="radio"/> Phone Records	<input type="radio"/> Your Past
<input type="radio"/> Co-workers	<input type="radio"/> Court Records	<input type="radio"/> Your Present
<input type="radio"/> Ex-spouse(s)	<input type="radio"/> Other People's Conversations	<input type="radio"/> Your Future
<input type="radio"/> Enemies		

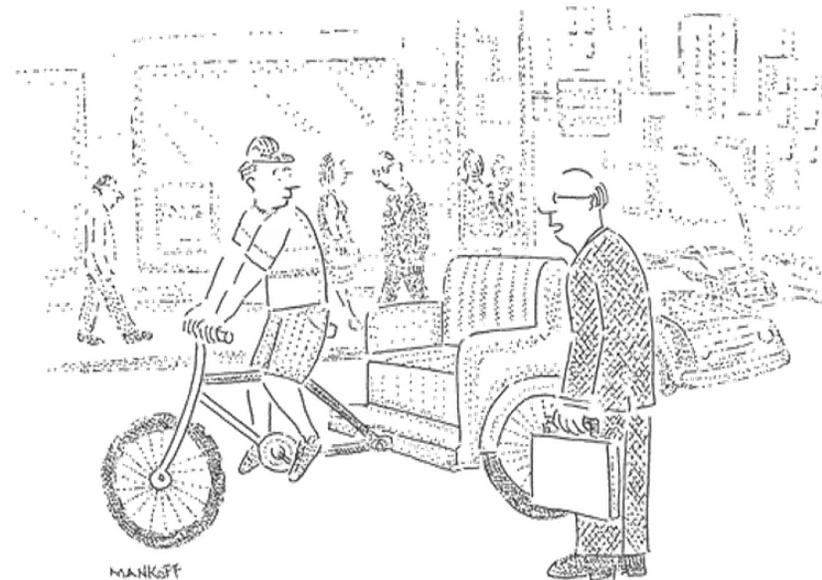
Inside the library dog, 1

- Faculty requests are far & away the #1 driver
 - Generally, our users want nearly “everything” if possible
 - “Could definitely use in seminars, with my grad students”
 - “Yes, I know we have most of this in book or film, but... “
 - “The library is the laboratory for the humanities”
 - Saw it demo-ed at a conference
 - Follow-up from sales representative
 - On the advisory board
 - One or two loud voices may be enough
- Still, we try to estimate campus use
 - General vs. research specialized
 - e.g., NY Times vs. TLG
 - Hard to predict in advance
 - Vendors have surrogates for anticipated use



Inside the library dog, 2

- Price is the #2 driver
 - What is the list price?
 - Pricing rarely transparent (the Damascus Souk)
 - Database providers are not Hermes or Rolls Royce
 - Instant discounts, but
- Purchase vs. subscribe:
 - Break-even point
 - 4 years? 10 years?
 - Subscribe lowers risk
 - Short-term lease possible?
- Annual access fees
 - The innocent \$500!
 - Can you cap?
- “Big customer” advantage



“How much if I pedal?”

Arguments for not proceeding

- Availability of individual subs? (e.g., NY Times)
- Are there competing products?
- Already own in other formats (film, books)?
- PD nature of the material?
 - Truly unique or will it be available in Hathi, Europeana
 - Completeness may not be matched for some years?
 - Newspapers: CRL, etc., slow to digitize, but commercials hugely expensive – wait?
 - Invest in HT collections tool?



"We're going to try to negotiate first."

Impediments to strategic action, 1

- We don't necessarily have sufficient time, staff, or expertise
- Written evaluations in the journal literature come too late
- End of year offers
- Better offers to preferred customers
- Brand new pre-pub product offers
- A deal this good will never come again
- Competitiveness among universities
- Way to spend money quickly
- Buy now – but product available over time
- We work with known, liked, smart publishers and sales reps



Impediments to strategic action, 2

*I've grown accustomed to her face.
She almost makes the day begin.
I've grown accustomed to the tune that
She whistles night and noon.
Her smiles, her frowns,
Her ups, her downs
Are second nature to me now;
Like breathing out and breathing in.

*I was serenely independent and content
before we met;
Surely I could always be that way again-
And yet
I've grown accustomed to her look;
Accustomed to her voice;
Accustomed to her face.

(Henry Higgins in *My Fair Lady*)



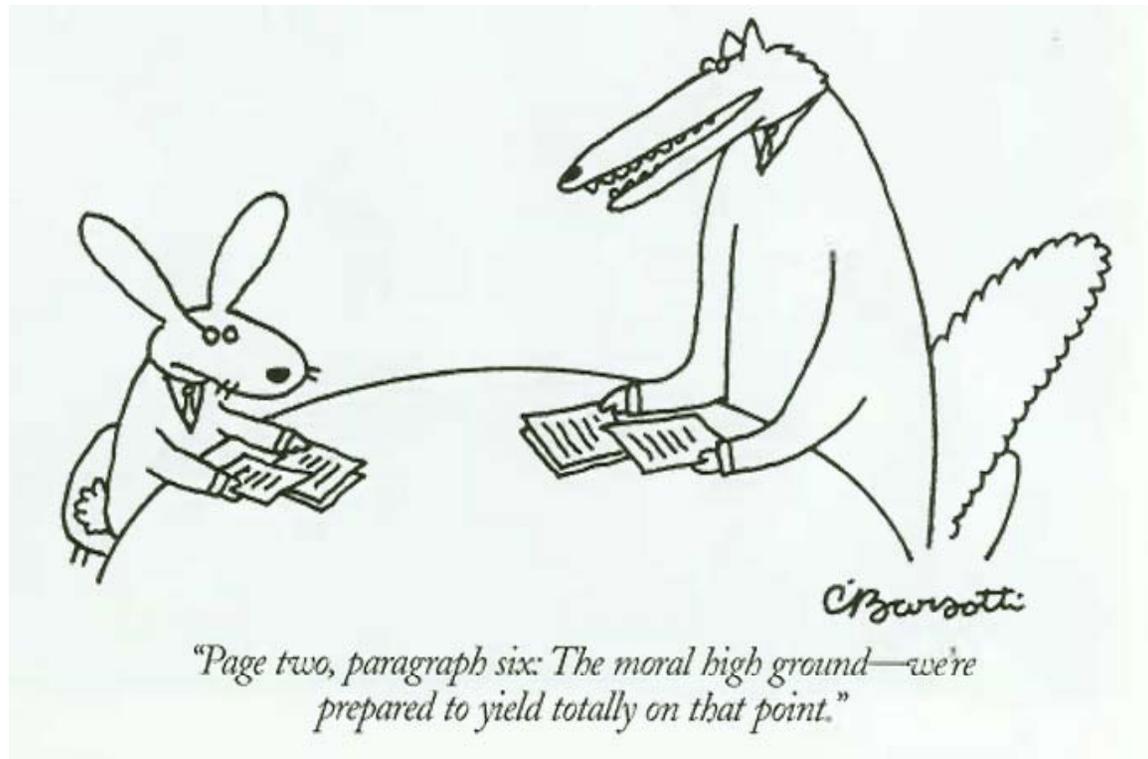
Considerations for strategic action, 1

- What can we bring to the vendor's table
 - How many libraries, students, members, etc.
 - How many dollars so that all members get access?
- Possible to collect a pool of funds?
 - CRL's \$100K is very small
- Each consortium is negotiating for the same stuff
 - Intentional specialization
 - capture the "long tail"
 - Hold out till the right group has the best price
- Work across publishers, not on individual resources
 - Alexander Street as an example
- Get longer trials
- Timely evaluative tools possible?



Considerations for strategic action, 2

- Find out what you're getting in advance (*World Scholar*)



Timely tools, 1

- Academic Database Assessment Tool (ADAT) <<http://www.jisc-adat.com/adat/home.pl>>
 - Free from JISC
 - Aims to help make informed decisions about future subscriptions to bibliographic and full text databases
 - Information about the site's sourcing and comparison on the 'About' page.
 - Compare journal title lists
 - 15 bibliographical
 - 6 full text journal aggregations
 - Compare 10 database platforms
 - input 2 and compare functionality
 - Compare functionality of of 9 e-book platforms



Timely Tools, 2

- Scholarly Stats

- <https://www.scholarlystats.com/sstats/default.htm>
- Provides libraries with a single point of access to their vendor usage statistics
- Delivers usage statistics via Sushi to selected vendors for integration into resource management systems and databases
- Delivers consolidated reports to libraries around the globe, providing a clearer view of usage of over **395,359 journals** and almost **1249 databases** from **59 platforms**
- Can also integrate consolidated usage reports with **2 integration partners**.
- Adding new collection platforms and partners all the time and welcome suggestions

(Thanks to Susan Payne, JHU for slides 1-3)



Timely tools, 3

- 360 Counter from Serial Solutions
 - <http://www.serialsolutions.com/management/360-counter/>
 - Cost-per-use reporting and analysis:
 - Reduces the time to process and analyze usage data from COUNTER-compliant reports
 - Downloads data and prepares reports
 - Uploads them to 360 Counter
 - 360 Counter aggregates data, inserts costs, associates subjects, standardizes titles, calculates usage and costs, and automates analysis
 - Library can customize reporting based on key institutional criteria



Timely tools, 4

- Pubget PaperStats

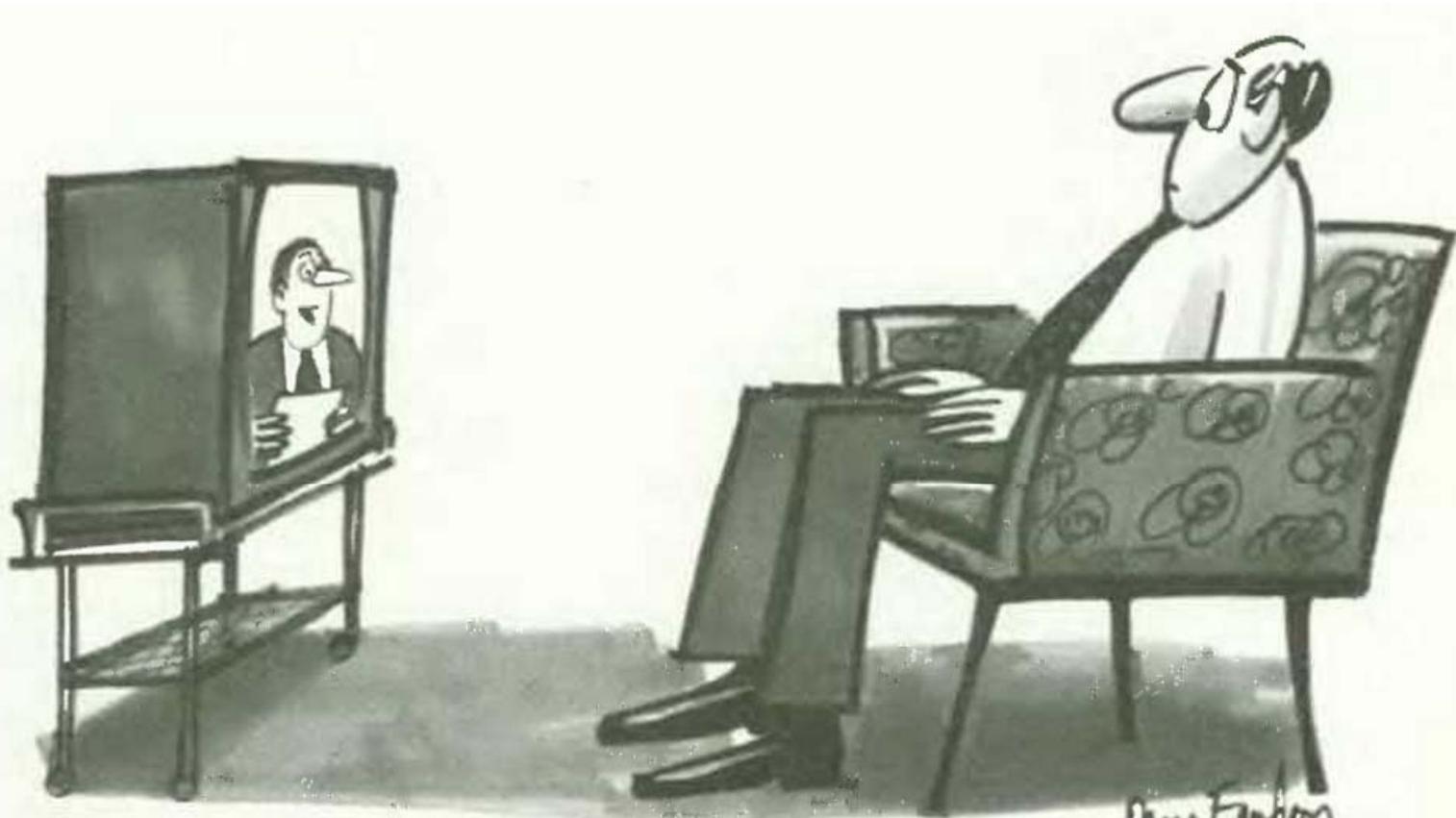
<http://corporate.pubget.com/library/paperstats>

- Securely tracks COUNTER-compliant usage statistics
- Delivers consolidated usage and other powerful reports directly from publisher vendors
- Can provide data for each PDF readers viewed
- Helps to make precise recommendations on which journals or packages to keep

(Courtesy of Ryan Jones, PubGet)

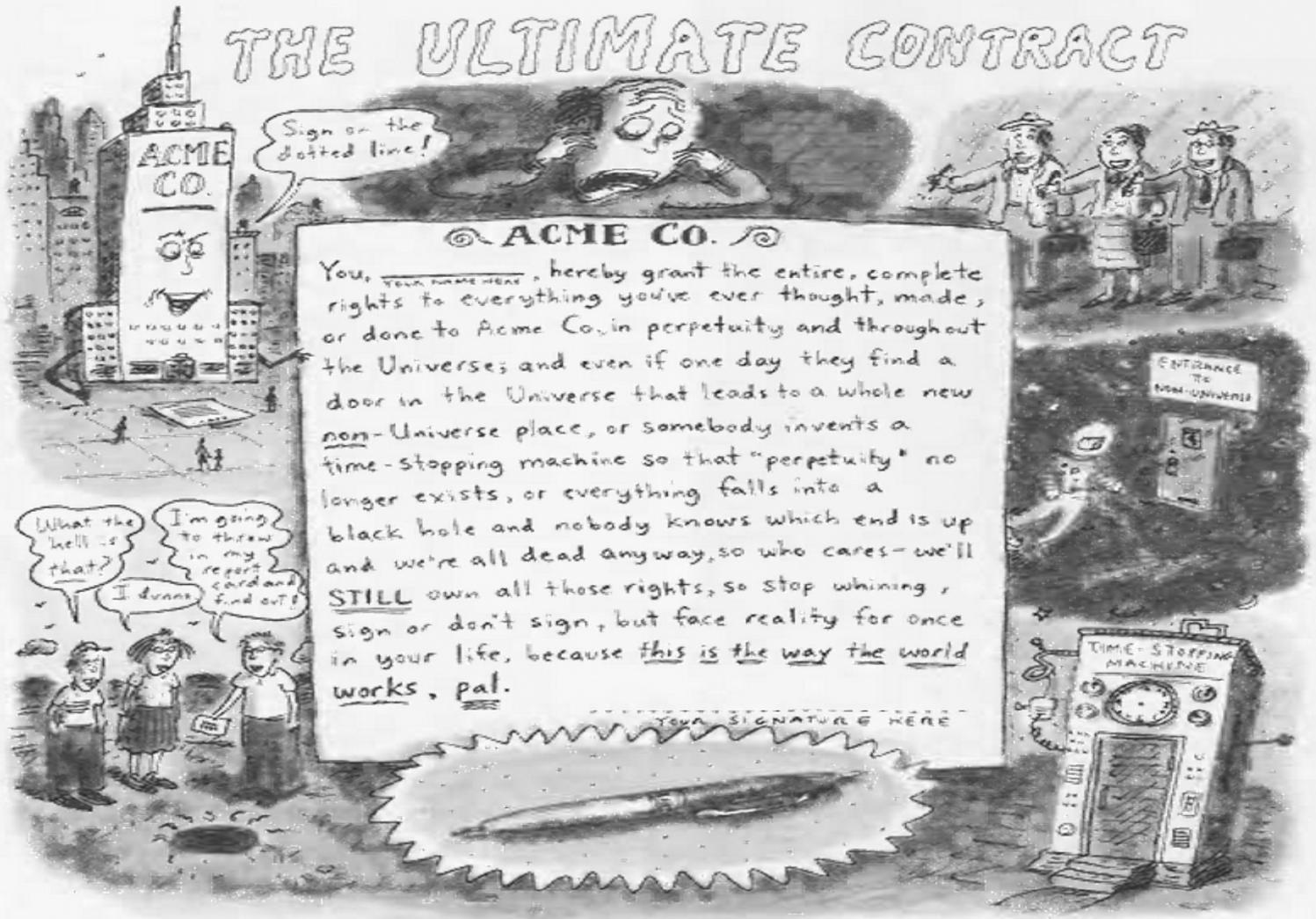


Timely tools ??



*"Meaningless statistics were up one-point-five per cent
this month over last month."*

THE ULTIMATE CONTRACT



Sign on the dotted line!

ACME CO.

You, YOUR NAME HERE, hereby grant the entire, complete rights to everything you've ever thought, made, or done to Acme Co. in perpetuity and throughout the Universes and even if one day they find a door in the Universe that leads to a whole new non-non-Universe place, or somebody invents a time-stopping machine so that "perpetuity" no longer exists, or everything falls into a black hole and nobody knows which end is up and we're all dead anyway, so who cares - we'll STILL own all those rights, so stop whining, sign or don't sign, but face reality for once in your life, because this is the way the world works, pal.

YOUR SIGNATURE HERE

What the hell is that?

I'm going to throw in my report card and find out!

I dunno.

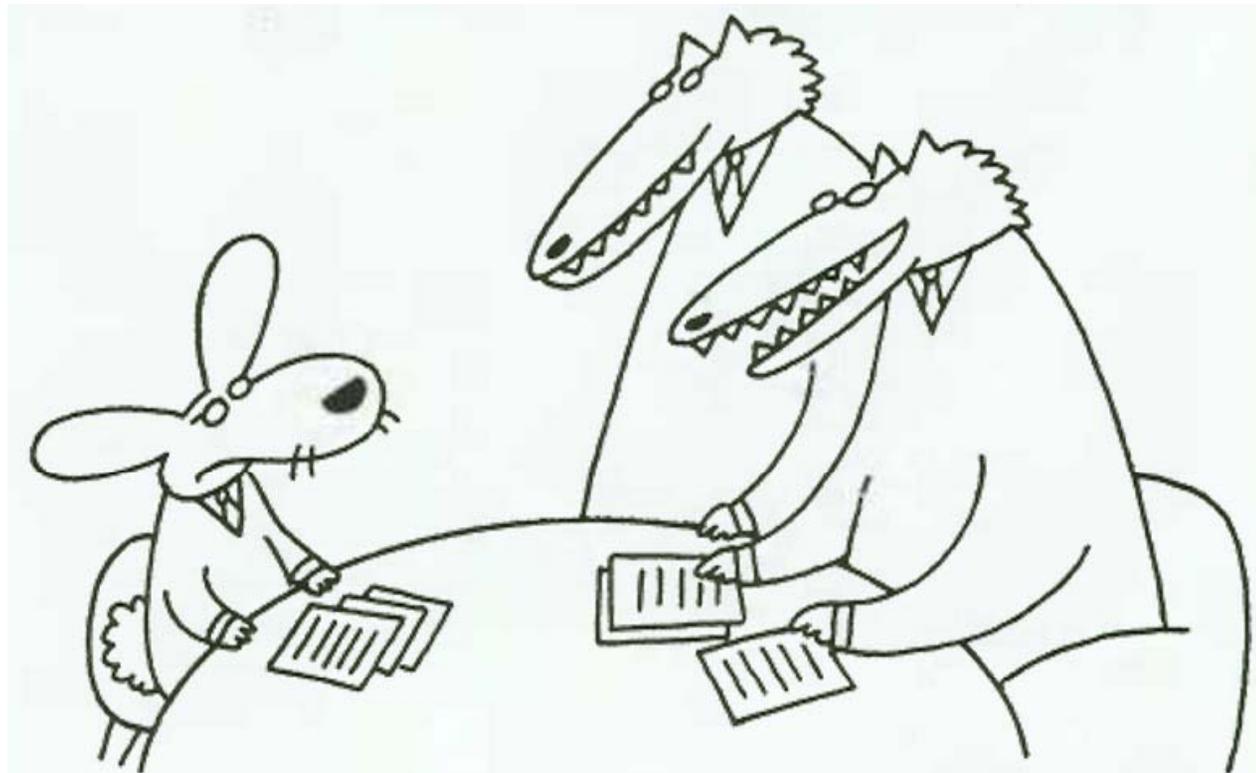
R. Chas

The ultimate contract

- “You, (your name here,) hereby grant the entire, complete rights to everything you’ve ever thought, made, or done to Acme Co., in perpetuity and throughout the Universe that leads to a whole new non-Universe place; or if somebody invents a time-stopping machine so there’s no longer ‘perpetuity,’ or if everything falls into a black hole and nobody knows which end is up and we’re all dead anyway so who cares, we’ll STILL own the rights, so stop you belly-aching, sign or don’t sign, but GROW UP, THIS IS THE WAY THE WORLD WORKS, PAL.” (your signature)
- *by Roz Chast, The New Yorker 8/11/2003*



Thank you! Ann Okerson (aokerson@crl.edu)



C. Barzotti

"There. Now it's all on paper. Feel better?"