No Laughing in the Library: You Name It!
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My wife and I recently purchased a new car, and the name of our salesman was Mr. Crook – no, I’m not kidding. We laughed about it, then reassured ourselves that at least he wasn’t a used car salesman. This got me thinking about other professions and potentially ironic names: the surgeon named Cutter, the teacher named Apple, or the meteorologist named Storm?

In the early 1990s, a fellow graduate student from the University of Pittsburgh had written a very funny piece for our library school newsletter about librarians with humorous occupational names. He had consulted the membership directory of the ALA, and had uncovered librarians with names like Carnegie, Dewey, Page, and Stacks.

Imagine having to introduce yourself at endless social gatherings as Mr. Book, only to cringe in anticipation of the inevitable question – So what do you do for a living, Mr. Book? It would almost be easier to have the same name as a famous actor - like Ralph Fiennes for instance. Or . . . on second thought, maybe not.

Given how dramatically our profession has changed over the past fifteen years, I thought it was time to revisit my classmate’s experiment. I consulted the Personnel Index of the American Library Directory, 58th edition (2005-2006), and here’s what I found . . .
For the readers among us, you’ll be happy to know the directory contained 2 Bookers, 2 Readers, 24 Pages, 48 Barnes, and 7 Nobles. Being a special collections librarian, I was pleased to discover 4 Friends, 1 Binder, and 1 Presser. For all you archivists, there were 3 Hollingers, 3 Gaylords, 2 Boxes and 1 Filer. If you’re a cataloger, it’s worth noting there was 1 Marc, 1 Tag, 2 Records, and 16 Fields.

But what about the modern electronic library, with all of its systems, search engines, and specialized software? Well, you’ll be interested to know there was 1 Ram, 1 Rom, 3 Players, 4 Dells and 6 Drivers. There were no Yahoos or Google, but there was 1 Web, and 44 Webers. There were no Blogs, Bloggers, Pods, or Podcasters, but there was 1 Podboy! Now there’s a man ahead of his time.

Of course, no modern survey would be complete without considering the mighty Microsoft. While there were no Explorers or Excels, there was 1 Word, and 12 Gates. Lastly, let’s not forget about those new cafés that have been incorporated into many of our library buildings. A final check revealed there were 2 Coffees, 2 Creamers and 1 Spill among us!