A look at scholarly communication

As a reader, an author, and an editor, I am always amazed by how quickly the scholarly communication landscape evolves and how resourcefully it adapts. Some of the changes are driven by technology—such as the growth of social media and the focus on data—and some are driven by political or economic or policy-related concerns.

Scholarly communication is a pivotal issue in librarianship, as indicated by the increased attention in both scholarship and practice. As a nod to the significance, February will see the publication of a special issue on scholarly communication with a special guest editorial. While open access is often an advocacy issue, I actually see library engagement in scholarly communication in a more balanced way—librarians are stewards of information and access, but they also have a responsibility to empower creators of information and knowledge to assert their intellectual property rights, if they so choose. Librarians are in a position to provide expertise and guidance on scholarly communication topics, many of which are addressed in this issue.

Perhaps the most notorious issue in scholarly communication is the tension between commercial publishing and academic research or scholarship, as indicated by "Fast and Furious (at Publishers): The Motivations behind Crowdsourced Research Sharing." Academic libraries have straddled this issue as collaborators with faculty, who create new knowledge (often using library resources as a foundation), and as customers of information vendors, who repackage scholarly information to sell it back to universities. This is an interesting model that also demonstrates the implications of outsourcing and whether it is a cost or an added value. Certainly, the increasing use of electronic information and

the impacts of journal inflation have made this a point of contention, leading to calls for boycotts and cancellations. "Scholarly Communication and the Dilemma of Collective Action: Why Academic Journals Cost Too Much" explores these and other issues. To address this economic issue and the inherent contradiction in the traditional publishing model, there is the growth of the library-as-publisher movement with institutional repositories at its base and evolving efforts around data, open access journals, and digital projects. "Libraries as Content Producers: How Library Publishing Services Address the Reading Experience" provides some insight into this role. It is exciting to see libraries shift their focus and reallocate priorities to actively engage in the publishing process, building and administering platforms for journals or online projects. Libraries have both the mandate and the expertise to engage in this way, assuming to costs inherent in publishing for the benefit of furthering access to information.

Not unrelated to the balance between commercial and academic interests, libraries have traditionally played a mediating role between intellectual property and access. Technology has made this more complex than it has ever been and with the threat of litigation, it is more critical than ever that libraries engage on this issue at the university level and provide direction and guidance for educational efforts and services, such as distance education, document delivery, source reserves, streaming media, and many others. "Academic Libraries and Copyright: Do Librarians Really Have the Required Knowledge?" assesses the effectiveness of these efforts. Knowledge of open access guidelines, copyright law, and public domain is required to provide an effective and balanced approach. "How Large is the 'Public Domain'?: A Comparative Analysis of Ringer's 1961 Copyright Renewal Study and HathiTrust CRMS Data" looks at the landscape of public domain and how it has developed.

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One of the major obstacles to moving to more progressive publishing models, such as open access and open peer review, is that the traditional reward systems in institutions of higher education are slow to change. It is all very well and good to advocate for open access and that information should be free, but tenure and promotion is largely predicated on publication in top tier journals or from scholarly presses, and the cost of switching may be deemed too great. Certainly, young faculty are more likely to engage in the new scholarly environment and make use of new technologies or methods, but they are also the most vulnerable in the academic paradigm and such behavior is risky without the support of their organizations and the explicit acknowledgement in tenure or promotion standards that open access is acceptable in their department and in their discipline. This necessitates discussions on indicators of scholarly impact and quality within the organization and the discipline, another area where libraries can engage and facilitate understanding. "Scholarly Metrics Baseline: A Survey of Faculty Knowledge, Use, and Opinion about Scholarly Metrics" provides an effective model for investigating faculty and researcher attitudes. "Faculty Use of Author Identifiers and Researcher Networking Tools" also explores usage of technology in scholarly communication for purposes of identifying experts and facilitating collaboration.

• Carolyn Caffrey Gardner and Gabriel J. Gardner. "Fast and Furious (at Publishers): The Motivations behind Crowdsourced Research Sharing." *Abstract:* Crowdsourced research sharing takes place across social media platforms including Twitter hashtags (such as #icanhazpdf), Reddit Scholar, and Facebook. This study surveys users of these peer-to-peer exchanges on demographic information, frequency of use, and their motivations in both providing and obtaining scholarly information on these platforms. Respondents also provided their perspectives on the database terms of service or copyright violations in these exchanges. Findings indicate that the motivations of this community are utilitarian or ideological in nature, similar to other peer-to-peer file sharing online. Implications for library services including instruction, outreach, and interlibrary loan are discussed.

• Dan DeSanto and Aaron Nichols. "Scholarly Metrics Baseline: A Survey of Faculty Knowledge, Use, and Opinion about Scholarly Metrics." *Abstract:* This article presents the results of a faculty survey conducted at the University of Vermont during academic year 2014–2015. The survey asked faculty about familiarity with scholarly metrics, metric-seeking habits, help-seeking habits, and the role of metrics in their departments' tenure and promotion process. The survey also gathered faculty opinions on how well scholarly metrics reflect the importance of scholarly work and how faculty feel about administrators gathering institutional scholarly metric information. Results point to the necessity of understanding the campus landscape of faculty knowledge, opinion, importance, and use of scholarly metrics before engaging faculty in further discussions about quantifying the impact of their scholarly work.

• Clara Y. Tran and Jennifer A. Lyon. "Faculty Use of Author Identifiers and Researcher Networking Tools." *Abstract:* This cross-sectional survey focused on faculty use and knowledge of author identifiers and researcher networking systems, and professional use of social media, at a large state university. Results from 296 completed faculty surveys representing all disciplines (9.3% response rate) show low levels of awareness and variable resource preferences. The most used author identifier was ORCID, while ResearchGate, LinkedIn, and Google Scholar were the top profiling systems. Faculty also reported some professional use of social media platforms. The survey data will be used to improve library services and develop intra-institutional collaborations in scholarly communication, research networking, and research impact.

• John Wenzler. "Scholarly Communication and the Dilemma of Collective Action:

Why Academic Journals Cost Too Much." *Abstract:* Why has the rise of the Internet—which drastically reduces the cost of distributing information—coincided with drastic increases in the prices that academic libraries pay for access to scholarly journals? This study argues that libraries are trapped in a collective action dilemma, as defined by economist Mancur Olson in T*he Logic of Collective Action: Public Goods and the Theory of Groups*. To truly reduce their costs, librarians would have to build a shared online collection of scholarly resources, jointly managed by the academic community as a whole, but individual academic institutions lack the private incentives necessary to invest in a shared collection. Thus, the management of online scholarly journals has been largely outsourced to publishers who have developed monopoly powers that allow them to increase subscription prices faster than the rate of inflation. Many librarians consider the open access movement the best response to increased subscription costs, but the current strategies employed to achieve open access also are undermined by collective action dilemmas. In conclusion, some alternative strategies are proposed.

• John P. Wilkin. "How Large is the 'Public Domain'?: A Comparative Analysis of Ringer's 1961 Copyright Renewal Study and HathiTrust CRMS Data." *Abstract:* The 1961 Copyright Office study on renewals, authored by Barbara Ringer, has cast an outsized influence on discussions of the U.S. 1923-63 public domain. As more concrete data emerge, from initiatives such as the large-scale determination process in the Copyright Review Management System (CRMS) project, questions are being raised about the reliability or meaning of the Ringer data. A closer examination of both the Ringer study and CRMS data demonstrates fundamental misunderstandings and misrepresentations of the Ringer data, as well as possible methodological issues. Estimates of the size of the corpus of public domain books published in the United States from 1923 through 1963 have been inflated by problematic assumptions, and we should be able to correct mistaken conclusions with reasonable effort.

• Daniel G. Tracy. "Libraries as Content Producers: How Library Publishing Services Address the Reading Experience." *Abstract:* This study establishes baseline information about the ways library publishing services integrate user studies of their readers, as well as common barriers to doing so. The Library Publishing Coalition defines library publishing as the "set of activities led by college and university libraries to support the creation, dissemination, and curation of scholarly, creative, and/or educational works." This area includes traditional as well as novel publication types. Results suggest that discussions of library publishing underrepresent engagement with readers, but that ample room for increased attention remains. Existing reader-related efforts vary widely and may in some cases be happenstance. These efforts also face key barriers in lack of prioritization, lack of expertise, and lack of control of out-of-the-box platforms.

• Juan-Carlos Fernández-Molina, João Batista E. Moraes, and José Augusto C. Guimarães. "Academic Libraries and Copyright: Do Librarians Really Have the Required Knowledge?" *Abstract:* A solid professional performance on the part of academic librarians at present calls for adequate knowledge about copyright law, not only for the development of their own tasks without infringing the law, but also to guide and provide pertinent advice for library users (faculty and students). This paper presents the results of an online survey of Brazilian academic librarians, with the objective being to determine the level of knowledge about basic questions on copyright related to their professional activities. The case of Brazil is especially relevant, as it is one of the few countries still not including library exceptions and limitations in its copyright law. Our results make manifest important gaps in knowledge about copyright, underlining the need for a training program to remedy the situation. Moreover, because training is needed for current as well as future professionals, it should be implemented in both the professional and the educational sector. ℳ