
RLUK/SCONUL digest of scholarly communication news

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This is taken from the 'Research Libraries UK/SCONUL Digest of Scholarly Communication News' of June and August 2009. This online newsletter (supplied to SCONUL representatives in member libraries) is a service provided by the RLUK/SCONUL group on scholarly communication for internal distribution to staff of library and information services in SCONUL institutions.

The group also encourages the use of the digest to inform academic staff within universities in the UK and Republic of Ireland of developments in scholarly publishing.

UK RESEARCH COUNCILS' REPORT ON RESEARCH OUTPUTS

Research Councils UK has published its report on 'Open access to research outputs', available at: <http://www.rcuk.ac.uk/cmsweb/downloads/rcuk/news/oareport.pdf>. The report is dated September 2008 but was not published until April 2009, which may reflect lengthy discussions within the research councils about how support for open access in principle might be worked out in policies. The report itself supports OA developments but in a very cautious way, the final paragraph of the report concentrating upon risks rather than upon opportunities, the risks being to learned societies and to OA journals if funding proves to be unsustainable. Despite the cautious approach, the report has enabled the research councils to move forward in their support for open access to outputs from the research they have funded.

HARVARD-APS AGREEMENT

The Harvard Office for Scholarly Communication and the American Physical Society (APS) have announced that they have entered into an agreement to facilitate faculty compliance with the university's open-access policies when Harvard faculty members publish in the APS journals. As a result of the new agreement, APS recognises Harvard's open-access licence and will not require copyright agreement addenda or waivers, in exchange for Harvard's clarification of its intended use of the licence. In general terms, in exercising its licence under the open-access policies, Harvard will not use a facsimile of the published version without permission of the publisher, will not charge for the display or distribution of those articles and will provide an online link to the publisher's definitive version of the articles where possible. The agreement does not restrict fair use of the articles in any way. This agreement is a most encouraging development and it is to be hoped that other publishers will follow this path of reaching an agreement rather than opposing or attempting to undermine universities' open-access policies. Also there is no reason in principle why any UK or Irish university should not reach a similar agreement with APS.

BIOSCIENCES FEDERATION

A further encouraging statement from a publisher is that the Biosciences Federation has announced support for the recommendations made by the recent UUK (Universities UK)/RIN (Research Information Network) report on open-access publishing. This report lays out guidelines to make it easier for researchers to access funds to satisfy funding bodies' open-access mandates. The report makes recommendations for all stakeholders, including that higher education institutions should each set up a dedicated budget to pay author-side open-access publication charges and that funding bodies should clarify how they will provide support for researchers to meet their open-access policies. An earlier statement by the Biosciences Federation identified that, although funders were increasingly insistent on published research being open access, researchers experienced considerable difficulty in accessing the appropriate funds to do this. The Biosciences Federation now feels that if the report of the UUK/RIN working party (on which the Federation was represented) can be implemented, a sustainable business model for OA publishing is possible.

BLOOMSBURY ACADEMIC PUBLISHES NEW BOOK SERIES ON OPEN ACCESS

A sign of change in the academic book publishing market comes with the announcement by Bloomsbury Academic of a new 'Science Ethics and Innovation' series, edited by Sir John Sulston. The series will be available free for non-commercial use over the internet under a creative commons licence, with the publisher estimating that the cost of publication can be recouped through sales of printed copies. Given the nature of the series and the prestige of the authors, this business model has a reasonable chance of success, and represents a willingness by the publisher to trial a new business model in the face of continuing falls in sales of research monographs to libraries.

DOUBTS OVER WILEY-BLACKWELL POLICY ON SELF-ARCHIVING

The reply to a query from the Open University on behalf of one of its authors depositing in the OU repository appears to show that the new Wiley-Blackwell management are adopting a harder line on self-archiving in a university repository than the former Blackwell management. The position from the merged company appears to be that authors may only deposit the version they submitted to the publisher, not the version after peer review or even the author's final draft. However, the policy may still be more relaxed in respect of some of the titles the former Blackwell agreed with learned societies, where a licence to publish would allow self-archiving of other versions. The hard-line Wiley-Blackwell policy could bring the publisher into conflict with funders' and institutions' mandates, and further information on repositories experience would be welcomed.

DSpace AND FEDORA COMMONS ANNOUNCE MERGER

Fedora Commons and the DSpace Foundation, two providers of open-source software, have announced that they will join their organisations to pursue a common mission. The merged organisation, named 'DuraSpace', will sustain and grow the existing repository platforms – Fedora and DSpace. DuraSpace will also expand its portfolio by offering new technologies and services. The first new technology to emerge will be a web-based service named 'DuraCloud', a hosted service that takes advantage of the cost efficiencies of cloud storage and cloud computing, while helping to ensure longevity and re-use of digital content. The DuraSpace organisation is developing partnerships with commercial cloud providers

who offer both storage and computing capabilities. DuraSpace will focus on supporting existing communities and will also engage a larger and more diverse group of stakeholders in support of its not-for-profit mission. Together Fedora and DSpace make up the largest market share of open repositories worldwide, serving over 700 institutions. DuraSpace will support both DSpace and Fedora by working closely with both communities and, when possible, will develop synergistic technologies, services and programs that increase interoperability of the two platforms.

E-BOOKS FOR FE

The 'e-books for FE' project, funded by the Learning and Skills Council (for England) and JISC (Joint Information Systems Committee) will make over 3,000 e-books freely available to every further education college in the UK, for five years. The e-books available cover subjects as diverse as fashion design and software engineering, health and social care and automobile electronics, beauty therapy and practical lambing. For some time use of e-books in higher education institutions has been growing, and now the value to be found in e-books is being extended to all students in the UK studying at further education colleges. Further education colleges across the country helped to choose the e-books, casting 80,000 votes. The e-books will be available from the start of the next academic year on the ebrary e-books platform. Colleges will have the opportunity to buy additional e-books at specially discounted prices to add to the collection. This will enable each college to build a digital library of e-books tailored to meet the needs of its students. For further information on the use of e-books see the report on 'Textual analysis of open-ended questions in E-book National Observatory study' at: <http://www.jiscebooksproject.org/wp-content/jisc-freetext-report.pdf>.

UKRDS FEASIBILITY STUDY

HEFCE (Higher Education Funding Council for England) has agreed that the full UK research data service (UKRDS) feasibility study can be made public. It is on the UKRDS website, <http://www.ukrds.ac.uk>, where the link is in the left-hand column marked 'The Project's Final Report'. The UKRDS project management board has continued to meet and there are discussions under way with HEFCE and JISC as to the next steps in this project. The likelihood is that there will be some funding available for a further interim phase, to work with some case-study

universities and their researchers and with some of the existing providers in the research-data spectrum, leading to a more detailed proposal for the 'Pathfinder' phase towards late-2009/early-2010.

PUBLISHER RESPONSES TO LIBRARIES' FINANCIAL PROBLEMS

A split is appearing between the responses from small publishers and the responses from large publishers to libraries' current financial problems. Many small publishers – both commercial and learned societies – are pledging 0% price increases on their journal subscriptions for 2010, whereas the larger publishers are either going ahead with price increases across the board or are hiding behind statements that 2010 pricing will vary according to each local situation. Springer (who are rumoured to have financial problems of their own) are believed to be sticking to a 5% increase for existing consortial deals. Elsevier have placed a statement on their web-site at:

http://www.elsevier.com/wps/find/journal-pricing.cws_home/supporting_libraries, using the argument that 'each institution is subject to a unique set of circumstances and opportunities' to justify moving away from consortial pricing towards pricing for individual institutions. Elsevier's new pricing model appears to be their own estimate of an institution's ability to pay, with an example given that a library in Indonesia might pay less for a particular journal than a library in the UK. Wiley-Blackwell have also been talking to librarians about dealing with any local concerns about pricing on a case-by-case basis rather than offering any across-the-board concessions, due to the financial crisis that is affecting libraries throughout the world. In statements from the large publishers emphasis is also being placed upon libraries' opportunities to seek more funding from their institutions, as though librarians are not already doing their best in that regard.

Libraries are advised to query any price quoted to them about which they have doubts. A cautionary tale appeared recently in relation to price increases announced by Sage, in which Sage were forced to issue the following apology: 'Sage would like to clarify that the 12 journals switching to e-only for 2010 have had a price increase of 4% not 15%. An error appeared on our 2010 journals price list but has now been rectified. We apologize for any confusion.' One UK library also successfully challenged a price quoted to them by a publisher who had restricted to US libraries a price concession made following the worldwide International Coalition of Library Consortia

(ICOLC) statement. 'Caveat emptor' is the clear message.

SHARING PRICING INFORMATION?

Confidentiality clauses imposed by publishers upon librarians have long created difficulty for libraries in ensuring that they are paying a fair price. Although not directly applicable in the UK, the following information from the Association of Research Libraries (ARL) web-site may be of interest: 'An injunction filed by Elsevier to block release of information included in a licensing contract between the publisher and Washington State University (WSU) was denied by a court in the state of Washington last week. A public-records request for contract terms had been submitted to the university by researchers gathering data on the terms of large publisher-bundled contracts. Whitman County Superior Court, State of Washington, ruled Friday, June 19, 2009, in favor of full disclosure for a public-records request submitted to Washington State University by Ted Bergstrom, Paul Courant, and Preston McAfee for license information regarding the WSU-Elsevier contract. On June 9, Elsevier had filed a Motion for Injunction against release of the data.' ... Last month, the ARL Board of Directors supported a resolution to encourage its members to refrain from signing nondisclosure agreements with publishers and to share information about their agreements, insofar as possible, with each other. Tom Leonard, President of ARL and University Librarian, University of California, Berkeley, said, 'By responding to an open-records case in this manner, Elsevier has only increased our resolve to push for both open contracts and public disclosure of terms in our negotiations. This case is a telling example of why we should not be signing these nondisclosure agreements.' See <http://www.arl.org/news/pr/elsevier-wsu-23jun09.shtml>.

ACS JOURNALS GO E-ONLY?

The American Chemical Society (ACS) is taking steps towards turning most of its academic journals into online-only publications. According to a letter seen by Nature that was sent by Susan King, senior vice-president of the ACS's journals publishing division in Washington DC, to ACS associate editors, the move has been prompted by the 'accelerated decline in demand for print subscriptions and the diminishing financial return from the print format'. This appears to be a straightforward commercial decision unrelated to the global economic crisis. The *Nature* story (which has not been denied by ACS) is at: <http://>

www.nature.com/news/2009/090617/full/news.2009.576.html.

GROWTH IN PLoS ONE

The Public Library of Science open-access journal *PLoS One* is projected to publish about 4,300 articles in 2009, making it the world's third-largest journal (and already the world's largest non-physics journal). In 2010, *PLoS One* is anticipated to publish 8,000 articles, which would make it the world's largest scholarly journal, by far. Whatever anybody may think about the *PLoS One* policy of publishing all articles submitted to them after they have passed the journal's high peer-review standards, authors clearly welcome the opportunity of fast publication without being tied to a traditional journal's editorial policy.

JISC COLLECTIONS GROWING ARCHIVES

Any librarian who has not looked at the JISC Collections catalogue recently may be surprised by the wide range of valuable content now available to UK higher education institutions at no or low cost and on good licence terms. Typical of the recent purchases is the Institute of Physics journal archive 1999–2006. This new resource extends the coverage of the existing IoP journal archive 1874–1998, which is freely available to JISC Collections members. The new archive is offered to institutions as a one-off, in-perpetuity purchase, with prices starting at £500. The value of the collection as a whole lies in the broad subject coverage and in the acquisition of content a single library may not consider worth purchasing but for which the cumulative use across all HEIs justifies its acquisition. The JISC Collections catalogue is available at: <http://www.jisc-collections.ac.uk/catalogue.aspx>.

SUSTAINABLE STRATEGIES FOR DIGITAL RESOURCES

Huge sums are invested each year by government agencies and private foundations to develop and support digital resources in the not-for-profit sector. One issue is whether these digital resources will be able to survive and thrive in the current economic situation. A new study by Ithaka S+R and the JISC-led Strategic Content Alliance illustrates the varied and creative ways in which leaders of digital initiatives, particularly those developed in the higher education and cultural heritage sectors, are managing to identify sources of support and generate revenue. 'Ithaka case studies in sustainability' consists of twelve examples of digital resource projects and a final

report, 'Sustaining digital resources: an on-the-ground view of projects today'. The full report and case studies are available online at: <http://www.ithaka.org/ithaka-s-r/strategy/ithaka-case-studies-in-sustainability>. The case studies describe the strategies of twelve digital initiatives across Europe, the Middle East and North America. The final report serves as a guide to the cases, and argues that sustainability entails much more than simply covering the costs of putting a resource online. Equally important is ensuring the ongoing development of the resource to suit the continually evolving needs of its users. The studies demonstrate that, while many projects are attempting to generate some revenue through subscription, pay-per-view and a range of licensing arrangements, their overall financial picture still depends heavily on receiving direct as well as in-kind support from the institutions that host them.

AVAILABILITY OF PUBLIC SECTOR INFORMATION

The US National Academy of Sciences has published a report on 'The socioeconomic effects of public sector information on digital networks', available freely online at: http://www.nap.edu/catalog.php?record_id=12687. While governments throughout the world have different approaches to how they make their public sector information (PSI) available and the terms under which the information may be re-used, there appears to be a broad recognition of the importance of digital networks and PSI to the economy and to society. However, despite the huge investments in PSI and the even larger estimated effects, surprisingly little is known about the costs and benefits of different information policies on the information society and the knowledge economy. The report summarises discussions at a workshop organised by the US national committee for CODATA (Committee on Data for Science and Technology) and the OECD (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development), identifying the strengths and weaknesses of the current assessment methods and their underlying criteria for making PSI content available.

US COPYRIGHT LAWSUIT TESTS LIMITS OF FAIR USE

In April 2008 Oxford University Press, Cambridge University Press and SAGE filed a lawsuit in the US claiming that Georgia State University officials are 'systematically enabling professors to provide students with digital copies of copyrighted course readings published by the plaintiffs and

numerous other publishers without those publishers' authorization'. The lawsuit claims that GSU distributes unauthorised materials through its electronic course reserves service, its Blackboard/WebCT Vista electronic course management system and its departmental web pages and hyperlinked online syllabi available on the websites and computer servers it runs. While many US colleges and universities work with university presses and other publishers to ensure their uses of published materials are in accordance with US copyright law, the lawsuit alleges that GSU has rebuffed efforts to reach similar agreements. The copyright infringement lawsuit is ongoing and largely takes place in private. One recent development has been announced, however. The judge in the case has ruled that the publishers cannot claim damages for copying already done under GSU's former policy, and that the publishers can only claim an injunction limiting future copying under its new policy, which is more in line with policies in other institutions. Opinion is that this makes the final decision in the case more likely to support fair use as commonly practiced in the US, but the lawsuit is still ongoing. For more information see the blog at: <http://library.duke.edu/blogs/scholcomm/2009/07/01/interesting-development-in-georgia-state-case/>.

CERN STUDY ON USE OF ARXIV CONTENT

CERN (the European Centre for Nuclear Research) library and Open Access staff have published a study on 'Citing and reading behaviours in high-energy physics: how a community stopped worrying about journals and learned to love repositories'. The title says it all, but the analysis of citation data in the report demonstrates that free and immediate online dissemination of preprints creates an immense citation advantage in high energy physics (HEP), whereas publication in open-access journals presents no discernible advantage. In addition, the analysis of clickstreams in the leading digital library of the field shows that HEP scientists seldom read journals, preferring preprints instead. As always, we have to enter the caveat that the HEP community is unique in its use of research papers. Appropriately, the report is most readily accessible in the Arxiv database at: <http://arxiv.org/abs/0906.5418>.

AND FINALLY...

A little piece in the eIFL (Electronic Information for Libraries) newsletter caught your author's eye. It illustrates the good work eIFL are doing to bring scholarly communication benefits to coun-

tries such as Palestine, and also the value of open access in situations in which there are still physical as well as electronic barriers: 'Open access is a viable solution to existing problems in scholarly communication – this statement is especially relevant in Palestine where geographical barriers, walls and checkpoints are a restriction to movement.' See <http://www.eifl.net/cps/sections/news/newsletter/no40>.