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 October and December 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.

Major US commitment to open access publication

Five important US institutions of higher learning – Cornell, Dartmouth, Harvard, the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and the University of California, Berkeley – have announced their joint commitment to a 'compact for open-access publication', to be known by the acronym COPE. An account of the motivation for the compact can be found in an article by Stuart Shieber of Harvard published in 'Public Library of Science Biology' at http://www.plosbiology.org/article/info%3Adoi%2F10.1371%2Fjournal.pbio.1000165. Shieber points to the inelasticity of demand and hyperinflation in the present journal-publishing model, and recommends that institutions enter into a compact with their researchers to provide the funds to enable them to publish in fully open-access journals, so that they can make a choice between publishing in subscription or open-access journals. The 'level playing field'

approach is that, while academic research institutions support traditional journals by paying their subscription fees, no analogous means of support has existed to support open-access journals. The compact supports equity of the business models by committing each university to the establishment of durable mechanisms for underwriting reasonable publication fees for open-access journal articles written by its researchers. The discussions leading to COPE began before the current economic crisis but they have undoubtedly been given impetus by the need to find an affordable structure for research publication. The significance of COPE does not lie in its novelty – many universities across the world are considering support for open-access journals – but in the academic strength of the institutions making the commitment and in their making it together, not seeing any threat to their own competitiveness vis-à-vis other institutions in making the commitment to funding open-access publication. Additional universities are encouraged to visit the compact website, http://www.oacompact.org/, and sign on.

ENABLING OPEN SCHOLARSHIP

Enabling Open Scholarship (EOS) is a new organisation for senior management in universities and research institutions, providing a forum for the promotion of the principles and practice of open scholarship. EOS aims to provide the higher-education and research sectors around the world with information on developments and with advice and guidance on implementing policies and processes that encourage the opening up of scholarship. It also provides a forum for discussion and debate amongst its members and will be taking that discussion into the wider community. Although EOS membership is for senior institutional managers, the EOS website will be a resource open to all, providing background information, data and guidance material on open-scholarship-related issues. The EOS board (chaired by Professor Bernard Rentier of the University of Liège) is composed of people who have designed or instigated the kinds of changes in their own institutions that herald the benefits of the open scholarly communication system of the future. For more information visit the Enabling Open Scholarship website at www.openscholarship.org.

OASPA

No, nothing to do with taking the healthy waters of OA (as in OA-SPA), nor with any convoluted comparison between the beauty of Cleopatra and the beauty of OA (as in O-ASP-A), but, prosaically, the Open Access Scholarly Publishers Association. This is an association that is long overdue, in that it has been difficult to know who to talk to about specific OA issues, the long-standing publishing organisations not being keen on the idea of OA (although always willing to talk about it). It is good to see that the OASPA membership includes some hybrid subscription-OA publishers, as this may be a growing sector of the market. OASPA has a 'mission and purpose', with clear objectives such as exchanging information and setting standards, but is still forming ideas about how to put those objectives into practice. The association held a very successful conference in Lund in September 2009, attended by a variety of stakeholders from 29 countries. Publishing conferences are often dominated by publishers, just as library conferences are dominated by librarians, but there was a healthy mix of attendees from different backgrounds at the OASPA conference. For more information about OASPA go to http://www.oaspa.org/.

DARWIN DIGITISED

This 'Digest' cannot allow 2009 to pass without some reference to Charles Darwin, and the opportunity presents itself in a press release about a digitisation project funded by NEH (National Endowment for the Humanities) in the US and JISC in the UK. The hand-written annotations Charles Darwin made on 700 of the books in his personal library were painstakingly transcribed in the 1980s. Now, thanks to high-resolution digital imagery and an international partnership between academic bodies in the US and the UK, Darwin's marginalia will be digitally married to the texts they describe, allowing students to learn his thoughts on a wide range of topics. Additionally, other grants recently awarded through the JISC/NEH program will allow researchers to have access to archaeology collections previously separated by the Atlantic, and a shared online reading room for Islamic manuscripts. A web services application will be developed to allow researchers to cross-search metadata records held by the Digital Archaeological Record (tDAR) in the US and the Archaeology Data Service (ADS) in the UK, covering the archaeology of the United States and England. In a second stage, a richer and deeper cross-search web facility will be developed for databases recording animal remains in the United States and England, providing a valuable research tool for archaeologists in both countries. The project will

build a suite of tools that will analyse the digitised manuscripts and cross-reference them with supplementary materials, an infrastructure which will serve as a model for other special collections and libraries rich in manuscripts and related reference materials.

EUROPEAN ECONOMISTS ONLINE PROJECT NEARING COMPLETION

For the past two years the European economics research library consortium, Nereus – which has 23 members across ten European countries, with one member each from the US and Australia –has been working on the 'Network of European Economists Online' (NEEO) project, partly from its own members' resources and partly with a million-euro grant from the EC. The project (which finishes in February 2010) is building what will be possibly the biggest single free online subject repositories in the world. They are on target to reach their aim of 50,000 items (though not all of them will be on open access). The content for 'Economists Online' is harvested directly from the institutional repositories of the member libraries. The project takes an international, subject-oriented approach which is setting standards and guarantees the quality of information needed by economists. For more details visit the NEEO website at http://www.neeoproject.eu.

RIN / JISC REPORT ON COMMUNICATING KNOWLEDGE

A new report from RIN and JISC on 'communicating knowledge' examines the motivations, incentives and constraints that lead UK researchers in different subjects and disciplines to publish and disseminate their work in different ways. It also explores how and why they cite other researchers' work, as well as how their decisions on publication and citation are influenced by past and anticipated research assessment. Not surprisingly, the report points to the influence of the RAE (Research Assessment Exercise) upon authors' choices, and particularly as a disincentive to forms of publication other than the journal article or the monograph for humanities researchers, or practice-based outputs in the arts. The report – which is available at http://www.rin.ac.uk/our-work/communicating-and-disseminating-research/communicating-knowledge-how-and-why-researchers-pu – contains recommendations for stakeholders, such as that 'researchers should receive more consistent and effective guidance on their use of different channels' for the dissemination of research.

RESEARCHGATE

ResearchGATE, which describes itself as 'the world's largest online scientific platform', is now around 18 months old, and it is still difficult to estimate how valuable this online database will be. Recently it launched its self-archiving repository, which will contain either the published version of articles or the author's preprint, depending on the copyright situation (checked against SHERPA) in each case. It has 140,000 members, so if researchers do take to ResearchGATE and deposit with it, it could be a formidable part of the open-access environment. Depositing as well as access will be free of charge, and the aim is to make the service viable through job advertising. The website is at https://www.researchgate.net/.

REJECTA MATHEMATICA

It is a good feature of the current turmoil in scholarly communication that new products and services are emerging – but is all that is new good? This question might come to mind in considering the first issue of a new journal called Rejecta mathematica, which publishes only papers that have been rejected by peer-reviewed journals in the mathematical sciences. Will it be a dustbin for mathematical rubbish? Will it contain misleading information and give respectability to that information? Or will it correct some of the bias that occurs in traditional peer review, for example bias against authors from developing nations or bias against negative results? Only time will tell, but you can read more about the mission of Rejecta mathematica on its website at http://math.rejecta.org/.

OPEN-ACCESS MONOGRAPHS

Research monographs are one of the growth areas in the open-access world. Several large traditional publishers are already in this market, and newer publishers from an academic background are also developing substantial programmes. The Open Humanities Press is a good example of the new entrants and has recently announced the launch of five new book series in a partnership with the University of Michigan library's scholarly publishing office. The innovation in such developments lies partly in the partnership approach (rather than a university press or other publisher handling everything alone) and partly in the business model adopted. All of the new OHP books will be freely available in full-text digital editions and the cost will be recovered through the sale of reasonably priced paperbacks.

Transitions in scholarly communication

A major new programme of work on transitions in scholarly communication has been approved by the wide range of stakeholder organisations represented in the RIN research communications group. An outline of the new programme is in the joint statement on the RIN website at http://www.rin.ac.uk/our-work/communicating-and-disseminating-research/transitions-scholarly-communications-portfolio-res. Of the four projects in the programme the one entitled 'Dynamics of improving access to research papers' has already been scoped and an invitation to tender for the work will be issued early in 2010. Running almost in parallel will be the 'Gaps in access' project, with the other two projects to be scoped at a later date. Obtaining agreement from such a wide range of stakeholders on the sensitive issues to include in such projects has not been easy, but there is a willingness to collaborate and to model sustainable transitions to enhance access. As the joint statement expresses the situation, 'There are shared ambitions for significantly enhanced access but no consensus on how best to achieve it.'

Google books settlement

A further round of negotiations between Google, the (US) Authors Guild and the Association of American Publishers has resulted in a revised settlement intended to end their long-running legal case. Whether it will do so depends largely upon the reaction of the US Department of Justice to the new settlement, as anti-trust issues were the main legal obstacle, particularly in the DoJ's wish to allow competition in access to orphan works. The revised settlement is available at http://thepublicindex.org/docs/amended_settlement/amended_settlement_redline.pdf and a user-friendly analysis is available in the 'Library Journal' at http://www.libraryjournal.com/article/CA6707181.html. It appears that Google has made some concessions to user interests, particularly in allowing for access from more than one terminal per library building and in allowing for creative commons licensing. However, the publishers have successfully blocked the inclusion of most foreign-language books in the database. It is reported that a judge hearing the case has given preliminary approval to the revised settlement, but there is to be a further hearing to allow further arguments to be put to the court.

Open-ness report

Valuable support from a commercial source for open-ness in higher education has come in the form of 'Harnessing openness to improve research, teaching and learning in higher education', a report by the digital connections council (DDC) of the US-based Committee for Economic Development. (The report is freely available at http://www.ced.org/images/library/reports/digital_economy/dcc_opennessedu09.pdf.) CED's digital connections council is a group of information technology experts from a variety of well-known companies, and was established to advise the CED on the policy issues associated with cutting-edge technologies. The report recognises that the internet has vastly expanded open-ness of information, official processes and institutions. The report compares the degree of open-ness in service industries such as finance or entertainment, and concludes that higher education has not embraced open-ness to the same extent and has not realised the potential gains from open policies.

OS maps to be freely available online?

Gordon Brown announced on 17 November 2009 that the government will look at ways to make OS maps freely available online. The news was reported in an article in The Guardian of the same day (see http://www.guardian.co.uk/technology/2009/nov/17/ordnance-survey-maps-online). The newspaper gives the government's reason for a change of heart as being to benefit business and local government: 'The online maps would be free to all, including commercial users who, previously, had to acquire expensive and restrictive licences at £5,000 per usage, a fee many entrepreneurs felt was too high. Local authorities also spend a lot of money getting access to Ordnance Survey. Swindon recently had to pay the OS £38,000 a year to use its addresses and geographical data, even though it had collected much of the data.' No doubt the government was also influenced by a study from a team at Cambridge University, who concluded that making all OS data free would cost the government £12m and bring a net gain of £156m.

High-level US academic support for public access

The presidents of six public universities in New England have issued a letter of support for the Federal Research Public Access Act, demonstrating that commitment to public access to publicly funded research is supported at the topmost level of administration of US research institutions. The

Federal Research Public Access Act (FRPAA) was introduced by Senators Joe Lieberman and John Cornyn to require eleven US federal agencies with extramural research budgets of $100 million or more to implement policies that deliver free online access to the published results of the research they fund, no later than six months after publication in a journal. The presidents' letter, addressed to Senator Lieberman on 20 November 2009 reads, 'Online public access to publicly funded research facilitates the candid discussion needed to accelerate research, share knowledge, improve treatment of diseases, and increase human understanding.' The FRPAA has also received support from 41 Nobel Prize winners in medicine, physics and chemistry, who also pointed out to Congress that their recent letter was the fourth time in five years that they had had to call for open access to publicly funded research.

Open access week

The week beginning 19 October 2009, designated 'Open access week', demonstrated the world-wide research community's commitment to OA. Many local events were held in universities, attended by staff and students from all disciplines, and 5.5 million US students signed a 'Student statement on the right to research'. Key events from the week included the announcement of new open-access policies by institutions – including Salford University – and research institutes – such as the US National Center for Atmospheric Research, which recognised the need to make its climate change research available quickly and freely. JISC released a guide to its 15 years of work in supporting change in scholarly communication – see http://www.jisc.ac.uk/openaccess – and the Wellcome Trust announced the provision of a further £2 million to support open-access publication, together with a challenge to journal publishers to be transparent in reducing subscription prices as their OA income increases.

Open-access petition to German parliament

A valuable feature of the German constitution is the right of its citizens to gather a certain number of signatures on a petition, the subject of which has then to be discussed by the German parliament. A German scientist, Lars Fischer, supported by German scientific organisations, has launched a petition, the English version of which reads: 'The German national parliament [*Deutscher Bundestag*] should decree that scientific publications that result from public funding should be openly

accessible. Those institutions that are autonomous should be called upon by the *Bundestag* to set up and enforce suitable regulations and to install suitable technical preconditions to ensure that this is the case.' At the time of preparing this 'digest', the petition had received around 15,000 signatures in five weeks.

ARL e-sience survey

The Association of Research Libraries' (ARL) e-science working group surveyed ARL member libraries in the autumn of 2009 to gather data on the state of engagement with e-science issues. An overview of the initial survey findings was presented by e-science working group chair Wendy Lougee at the October ARL membership meeting. Her briefing explored contrasting approaches among research institutions, particularly in regard to data management. The briefing also summarised survey findings on topics such as library services, organisational structures, staffing patterns and staff development and involvement in research grants, along with perspectives on pressure points for service development. Specific cases of activities at six research institutions were described in the briefing. An audio of the briefing, along with slides and a handout, are available as part of the proceedings of the 155th ARL membership meeting (see http://www.arl.org/resources/pubs/mmproceedings/155mm-proceedings/index.shtml#esci). The ARL has also compiled a set of resources provided by survey respondents. Examples of a range of campus and library documents, tools advancing e-science support, needs assessments and position descriptions, among other items, are listed on ARL's website at http://www.arl.org/rtl/eresearch/escien/esciensurvey/index.shtml.

Generational change in information-seeking

Emerging findings from a major three-year research study into the information-seeking behaviour of doctoral students have highlighted the need for far greater understanding of the generation born between 1982 and 1994 – commonly dubbed 'Generation Y'. 'Researchers of tomorrow' was commissioned by the British Library and JISC to establish a benchmark for research behaviour, against which future generations can be measured – and also to provide guidance for librarians and information specialists on how best to meet the research needs of Generation Y scholars. Earlier this year 70 full-time doctoral students at 68 UK colleges and universities were recruited for a longitudinal study of their research habits during the

course of the next three years. The longitudinal study will be supported by a number of surveys to establish the wider context of the doctoral-research landscape. The first of these surveys has just been completed; it surveyed a representative sample of all doctoral students in the UK and yielded a number of significant interim findings (see http://www.researchersoftomorrow.net).

And finally …

After years of the UK press giving open access minimal coverage, it was good to read the substantial article 'Learning to share' by Zoe Corbyn and Matthew Reisz in the *Times Higher Education* of 12 November 2009.