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# RLUK/SCONUL digest of scholarly communication news

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Group on Scholarly Communication for internal dis-  
tribution 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.*

## **US INITIATIVES ON PUBLIC ACCESS TO RESEARCH OUTPUTS**

From mid-December to mid-January 2010 the Obama administration ran an open consultation on public access to federally funded research outputs. Our US colleagues regard this initiative as very significant, the 'request for information' (RFI) procedure used signalling the administration's serious interest in making a policy change. The announcement in the *Federal Register* of 9 December 2009 posed a variety of questions about public access to which any individual or organisation with experience in the area was invited to submit information either by e-mail or to a blog set up for the purpose. At times the blog became dominated by comment rather than by information but substantial quantities of relevant information were submitted by US and non-US organisations, including JISC (Joint Information Systems Committee). In the words of the administration staff members organising the RFI, 'The response

to this endeavor has been truly outstanding – almost overwhelming – and we at OSTP [Office of Science and Technology Policy] are very happy that our approach to gathering input on this issue was so well received.’ Such a substantial response indicates the importance of access to US research for researchers working collaboratively worldwide and also mirrors the response to the European Commission’s request for comment on open access in 2006. More information is available at <http://blog.ostp.gov/category/public-access-policy/>.

A related US development in January 2010 has been the publication of the report of the ‘scholarly publishing roundtable’ set up under the auspices of the committee on science and technology of the House of Representatives. This report identifies five ‘shared principles’ leading to a ‘core’ recommendation in support of free access to federally funded research reports, plus seven further recommendations urging collaboration between stakeholders, a wide range of embargo periods and attention to long-term digital preservation. The roundtable’s report is available at <http://science.house.gov/press/PRArticle.aspx?NewsID=2710>.

The US government has subsequently issued an up-date through a White House blog set up at <http://www.whitehouse.gov/ostp/blog>. All of the blog posts and their respective comments, as well as never-before-seen submissions that were sent directly to a public-access e-mail box, are now available through the site, at <http://www.whitehouse.gov/blog/2010/03/08/public-access-policy-update>. White House staff are currently sifting through ‘the mounds of fantastic input’ they have received. They were very gratified by the amount of participation the forum generated and are diligently scouring through the data to find common themes, dissenting opinions, concerns and suggestions that will ultimately help craft policy recommendations. The volume of interest generated is again similar to the interest in open access expressed from many organisations and individuals in the consultation held by the European Commission in 2006.

#### **CHANGE IN ARXIV BUSINESS MODEL**

Cornell University library has asked institutional users to help pay the US\$400K per annum it takes to maintain the high energy physics preprint database, arXiv. Financial pressures appear to be the motive for the request as there is no suggestion that Cornell is weakening its support for

arXiv. Many of the major institutional users have already pledged support (Cornell has suggested US\$4000 per institution), and as high energy physics researchers use arXiv as their main resource and publish in journals only for academic recognition, there seems little doubt that the database will continue.

#### **UUK SUPPORTS OPEN ACCESS FOR REF CONTENT**

As part of the Universities UK response to the Higher Education Funding Council’s consultation on the research excellence framework (REF), UUK’s response to question 2, about the assessment of outputs, contains the following endorsement of an open-access approach to the assessment process: ‘UUK supports the move toward “open access” of research outputs and, although not mentioned in the consultation, would encourage the REF guidance to require that all submitted outputs are available through some form of open access mechanism. This would build on good research and information management practice. Work currently being undertaken by JISC and other stakeholders can support this process.’

#### **RIN REPORT CONFIRMS RESEARCHERS’ CONCERNS ON ACCESS TO CONTENT**

A new report from RIN (Research Information Network) entitled ‘Overcoming barriers: access to research information content’ –available at <http://www.rin.ac.uk/our-work/using-and-accessing-information-resources/overcoming-barriers-access-research-information> – confirms the finding from earlier studies that access to research information is a major concern for researchers. This new report examines the different reasons for access problems in considerable detail and brings together the findings from five studies by various consultants. Section 6 in the report identifies the key message as ‘that access to research information content issues must be addressed if the UK research community is to operate effectively’. Linked to the results from each study are a range of recommendations addressed to stakeholders in the research information process aimed at improving access to publicly funded research.

Jorum open

A valuable long-standing service that is gradually adapting to an open-access world is the JISC-funded service Jorum. The service has recently launched a service called JorumOpen, specifically designed for content it is able to make available on open access. The new branch of the service runs alongside the traditional JorumUK service.

JorumOpen contains features such as a creative commons licence for deposit and re-use and not does require user registration (registration is a barrier to use of any content source). For more information see <http://www.jorum.ac.uk/>.

## **IBSS**

The International Bibliography of the Social Sciences, one of the world's longest-running information sources (it began in 1951), has been acquired by ProQuest. The database is still the leading source for social science abstracts and more than 120,000 new items are indexed each year. The IBSS has been housed at the London School of Economics library with funding from the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC), but the change in ownership has been made inevitable by the withdrawal of ESRC funding. IBSS is a valuable resource, and it will be in ProQuest's interests to maintain its quality, but there can be no doubt that users will soon be charged for access to the database.

## **KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE LICENSING INITIATIVE**

The collaboration between four national information organisations through Knowledge Exchange (KE) is resulting in a number of significant initiatives, amongst them a consortial negotiation for the licensing of content. The design of a multi-national licensing tender led to five publishers offering their digital subscriptions at significant discounts to institutions in KE countries. The five offers received were from Scientific World, Multi-Science Journal, BioOne, Swets/ALPSP and Wiley InterScience Online Books. As an example of the value of the KE approach, the Netherlands now has a national license for BioOne, and for the second year of the contract (2010) BioOne has lowered its prices again by a further 50 per cent. The expectations are that this will help Germany also to agree on a national license.

## **AGGREGATORS AND SOLE-SOURCE CONTRACTS**

Concern by the US library community is being expressed about strong rumours of the acquisition by Ebsco of sole rights to the distribution of certain key magazines published by Time Warner and used heavily within US public libraries. The rumours are undoubtedly well founded (see [www.libraryjournal.com/article/CA6716120.html?rssid=191](http://www.libraryjournal.com/article/CA6716120.html?rssid=191)) but the usual commercial secrecy prevents a clear understanding of the implications for libraries, particularly those who use aggregators other than Ebsco. In one sense this is not a

new phenomenon – journal titles often move from one publisher to another – but for libraries who place a high proportion of their content acquisition with aggregators the move could have major consequences, not least on how much they pay for sole-source contracts.

## **NEW SPARC GUIDE TO OA FUNDS**

SPARC (the Scholarly Publishing and Academic Resources Coalition) has released a new guide and supporting web resource exploring campus-based open-access publishing funds. Authored by SPARC consultant Greg Tananbaum, these new resources survey the current North American landscape of open-access funds and explore key emerging questions on how such funds are considered and developed on college and university campuses. The new guide, 'Open-access publishing funds: a practical guide to design and implementation' and the web resource contain a wealth of background information to inform libraries, authors, administrators and interested others on the practical considerations surrounding open-access funds. The site features up-to-date information on active open-access funds at the University of California at Berkeley, the University of Calgary and several other institutions, as well as guidance on setting up and implementing policies. To ensure that this resource stays current, readers are invited to contribute their experiences through the online commenting and discussion features that are available. The resource is online at <http://www.arl.org/sparc/openaccess/funds>. This new information from the US provides a valuable addition to the Nottingham experience in setting up a central OA publication fund, which can be read at <http://www.biomedcentral.com/download/info/FinalNottinghamCaseStudy.pdf>.

## **SPARC HONOURS OA JOURNAL FOR SUCCESSFUL BUSINESS MODEL**

In 1997, the Optical Society of America launched Optics Express, an open-access journal that has stood the test of time to become both a scientific and a financial success. The journal is consistently ranked among the top titles in its field and has proved to be such a successful financial venture that the society is publishing three more titles that follow the same open-access business model. This success has brought the Optical Society of America an award as the first SPARC Innovator of 2010. The quick turnaround, along with creative ways to highlight content, have made Optics Express a sought-after publishing choice for authors. The SPARC Innovator programme recognises

advances in scholarly communication initiated by an individual, institution or group.

#### **CHINESE ACADEMY OF SCIENCES ENTERS INTO BioMed**

##### **CENTRAL AGREEMENT**

The Chinese Academy of Sciences has long been recognised as a supporter of open access and has recently announced details of a membership agreement with BioMed Central to cover publication costs for research articles published by researchers at its institutions. Under the terms of the arrangement, the academy will, through its library, cover half of the article-processing charge for its researchers should the article be accepted for publication in one of BioMed Central's 205 peer-reviewed open-access journals. BioMed Central has seen significant growth in the number of published articles from authors based in mainline China and the Far East. Just 1.5 per cent of all submissions received in 2004 came from the region, compared to 6.2 per cent in 2008. The academy signed the Berlin Declaration in 2004 and in October 2010 will be hosting the Berlin8 open access conference.

##### **CONSORTIA MERGERS**

In the UK we tend to think of US consortia as being vast, but many are smaller than – for example – NESLi2 (National e-Journals Initiative). Some US consortia are now feeling that they are too small to achieve economies of scale. In 2009 a new consortium called LYRAsIS was formed, consisting of over 4,000 libraries down the eastern seaboard of the US previously in membership of SOLINET, PALINET and NELINET. LYRAsIS has recently appointed Tom Sanville of OhioLink to head the new giant consortium. And, on a smaller scale, the Michigan library consortium and INCOLSA – an Indiana consortium – have merged, with a combined membership of over 1,300 institutions. The need to save money on OCLC fees and on administration appears to be the main driver behind these mergers, and it remains to be seen whether the larger consortia achieve more favourable pricing and licensing terms from publishers.

##### **OPEN GOV.UK**

Not mentioned in the TV adverts for the UK government web-site 'gov.uk' – but hopefully a part of that web-site which will prove as useful as other sections of it are lauded to be in providing information on pensions and jobs – a new section of the web-site at [www.data.gov.uk](http://www.data.gov.uk) offers

'a collaborative relationship with you' – yes, you! – on openness to government data.

#### **NEW REPORTS AND NEW PROJECTS**

The publication last year of the Houghton report, 'Economic implications of alternative scholarly publishing models: exploring the costs and benefits', has stimulated a great deal of activity, both in following up the Houghton conclusions and in examining aspects of scholarly publishing relevant to but not directly related to the Houghton report. John Houghton and his co-authors in Australia and in the UK examined the costs and benefits of alternative publishing models at a macro-economic level, and one response to this approach was 'What does this mean at an institutional level?' The report, commissioned by JISC from Key Perspectives Ltd to answer this question, has now been published. Alma Swan's report on 'Modelling scholarly communication options: costs and benefits for universities' is available at <http://ie-repository.jisc.ac.uk/442/> and the methodology can be applied in any institution through an online model. Further projects arising from both criticism of and support for the Houghton report are being undertaken through a group of organisations (including two organisations representing publishers) led by RIN and JISC. These collaborative projects will cover a number of important topics around change in scholarly communication, beginning with projects on a transition to e-only and on access gaps in current provision.

#### **OPENAIRE: EUROPEAN OPEN ACCESS INFRASTRUCTURE**

OpenAIRE (Open Access Infrastructure for Research in Europe), a three-year project funded by the European Commission under FP7, the Seventh Framework Programme, is now under way, uniting 38 partners from 27 European countries. The main goal of OpenAIRE is to support the open-access pilot, launched by the European Commission in August 2008. This open-access pilot, which covers about 20 per cent of the FP7 budget, commits researchers from seven thematic areas (health, energy, environment, information & communication technology, research infrastructures, socio-economic sciences and humanities and science in society) to deposit their research publications in an institutional or disciplinary open-access repository, to be made available world-wide in full text. OpenAIRE will establish underlying structures for researchers to support them in complying with the pilot through European Helpdesk System, build an OpenAIRE portal and e-infrastructure for the repository networks

and explore scientific data-management services together with five disciplinary communities. The project web-site is at <http://www.openaire.eu/>.

#### **SCIYO BUSINESS MODEL**

Part of the open-access movement has always been encouragement for new publishing business models, and the open-access publisher Sciyo – based in Croatia – has announced a model which rewards successful authors. As yet Sciyo – [www.sciyo.com](http://www.sciyo.com) – has only launched three journals and published 151 books, but its unique selling point for authors (no need for a selling point for readers as all content is OA) is that authors will be paid according to the number of downloads of their papers. The payment per download is not huge, but then neither is Sciyo's article processing charge at 470 euros. Economist Jan Erik Frantsvag has examined the business model (see his article at <http://www.sciecom.org/ojs/index.php/sciecominfo/article/viewFile/3550/3129>) and concluded that, despite the risk to Sciyo through abuse of the download system by authors wishing to make a profit, the business model is viable. Let us see whether other OA publishers adopt it.

#### **ONLINE OA CURRICULUM ON COPYRIGHT LAW**

The Berkman Center for Internet and Society at Harvard University has launched a new service, 'Copyright for Librarians', an online, open-access curriculum on copyright law, developed in conjunction with eIFL.net (electronic information for libraries). The curriculum, which is available at <http://cyber.law.harvard.edu/copyrightforlibrarians/>, includes modules on the scope of copyright law, exceptions and limitations and managing rights. 'Copyright for Librarians' aims to inform librarians about copyright law in general, as well as the aspects of copyright law that most affect libraries, especially those in developing and transition countries.

#### **INITIATIVES ON OA MONOGRAPHS**

E-book initiatives are developing apace. A new survey from Project OAPEN, available at <http://www.oapen.org/images/OpenAccessModels.pdf>, confirms the variety of approaches in the initiatives already under way. While still in an experimental phase, some trends and patterns have started to emerge. Although it is too early to identify long-term business models, it is clear that a measure of external funding will be required for e-monographs to be viable. Three ambitious initiatives to deliver free online access to scholarly

monographs were featured at a recent SPARC-ACRL (Scholarly Publishing and Academic Resources Coalition – Association of College and Research Libraries) forum, 'The ebook transition: collaborations and innovations behind open-access monographs'. The market-based business model for scholarly monographs, long under pressure due to decreased library purchasing, must now accommodate a transition to e-books. Many non-profit publishers, including university presses, are actively exploring new publishing models to support scholarly monographs, including open-access distribution and collaborative initiatives with university libraries. This SPARC-ACRL forum, reported at <http://www.arl.org/sparc/meetings/ala10mw/>, featured three pioneering initiatives to deliver free online access to scholarly monographs, and highlighted opportunities for libraries to support innovations in this important area. Also, HighWire Press has released the full results of a 2009 survey of 138 librarians from 13 countries on their attitudes and practices related to e-books. The responses underscore the significant growth librarians expect in e-book acquisitions and point to their current preferences and possible trends in this evolving area. Some of the conclusions are that simplicity and ease of use seem to be more important than sophisticated end-user features, that DRM (Digital Rights Management) seems to hinder e-book use for library patrons, that ability to print is essential and that the most popular business model for librarians is purchase with perpetual access. The full report can be found here: <http://highwire.stanford.edu/PR/HighWireEBookSurvey2010.pdf>.

#### **SPRINGER AGREEMENTS**

Springer have announced two new agreements with library groups, one involving 'Open Choice' (Springer's OA option), the other only covering subscription content. The University of Hong Kong libraries and Springer have reached an agreement that allows researchers at the affiliated institutions of the University of Hong Kong to publish their research in Springer journals using Springer Open Choice. Springer's Open Choice programme offers full and immediate open access (free to the reader) for articles that are accepted for publication after peer-review. Accepted HKU articles will appear as usual in Springer print journals, and will be published electronically using open access on SpringerLink, PubMed Central and the HKU institutional repository, the HKU Scholars Hub. The pilot project will run from March 2010 to March 2011. For the past two years the Max Planck Society have had a similar agreement with

Springer, but the new agreement is only for the purchase of some subscription content without an OA option.

#### **NPG OA PRICING POLICY**

Nature Publishing Group (NPG) has issued its OA pricing policy for 2010, based upon complete data on the uptake in 2009 of open-access publishing options for NPG journals. NPG currently sets a threshold of 10 per cent OA content in a journal in a given year, at which point site-license prices will be reviewed. NPG currently publishes fifteen journals with an OA option, of which three have published more than 10 per cent OA content in 2009. In 2012, NPG's intention is that site-licence pricing for journals with an OA option will be determined by the percentage change in the amount of subscription-access articles. This means the subscription price will be based on only the amount of subscribed content, independent of the OA content. In April, NPG launches *Nature Communications*. This is a born-digital journal with an immediate OA option. Therefore it has no existing price to reduce, and NPG have set a site-license access price based on the amount of subscription content and the expected quality of the journal. All content published in *Nature Communications* will be freely available until October 2010, after which time subscribed access content will be put behind a paywall. The article processing charge (APC) for *Nature Communications* has been set at \$5,000, with a 20 per cent launch discount. Early indications suggest a high rate of submissions, with approximately 25 per cent of authors interested in choosing open-access publication. An APC at this level is far higher than the cost of publishing could justify, but NPG are clearly relying upon the law of supply and demand, in other words that there will be a high demand from authors to publish in this journal. Time will tell whether competition from equally prestigious journals, such as some of the Public Library of Science journals, will reduce this price.

#### **AND FINALLY, FINALLY ...**

After eight years, the time has come for a change in the way the RLUK/SCONUL Scholarly Communications Group distributes news items. No longer will this 'Digest' be published, but instead individual items of news will be sent out on liscconul as 'Scholarly Communication News-Bites' as they appear on various web-sites. This will give news items more currency instead of their being up to two months old – and also incidentally make life much easier for the editor of this

'Digest', who very inefficiently has struggled to keep track of items of news and bring them together into a 'Digest' every two months for the past eight years. Feedback suggests that the 'Digest' has been appreciated, and hopefully the new format will still prove useful.