What Can Our Readers Teach Us?

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WHAT CAN OUR READERS TEACH US?

Speaker: John Sack - Associate Publisher and Director, HighWire Press, Stanford University Libraries and Academic Information Resources

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Based upon studies conducted by HighWire Press via interviews with Stanford University researchers, students, faculty, clinicians, and other scholars, Sack urged Charleston Conference attendees to find “the motivation to think outside the box” of publishing and librarianship. Their most recent studies, which spanned various disciplines, have shown that mobile is not yet a dominant tool for researchers. While all respondents indicated their primary use of laptops for online research, they Google searches too broad without good filtering capabilities, yet did not mention library catalogs or publisher portals among their web-based tools. Most found many journal sites littered with tools that did not fit their needs, often obscuring the editorial themes within issues. Sack concluded that our industry has been focused on various containers of research – such as the journal, the book, the web – but, to survive, he recommends we move beyond these to embrace a wider communication landscape, where we mobilize and integrate mainstream tools into the academic community we essentially represent.

I HEAR THE TRAIN A COMIN’ - LIVE

Speakers: Greg Tananbaum - CEO, Scholarnext; **Joseph J. Esposito** – CEO, GiantChair

Reported by: Ramune K. Kubilius (r-kubilius@northwestern.edu) - Northwestern University, Galter Health Sciences Library

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Tananbaum (“Against the Grain” columnist and Charleston Conference regular) posed questions related to the scholarly communication crisis and how libraries will support the proliferation of resources. Is this an opportunity or a challenge? Niche publishers are an important part of the ecosystem-what happens if they go away? Does traditional scholarly publishing still matter and what is the tradition (is it a matter of form vs. function?). The future of scholarly communication can be exciting, different, vital, experimental, etc., and it’s a matter of moving from talk to action. Esposito asked what happens when the train stops? What will publishing be after the apocalypse? Quoting Niels Bohr (“Prediction is always difficult, especially about the future”) and reminding the audience that “disrupters do not disrupt themselves,” Esposito trend spotted through funding, library bypass, supply side publishing, direct marketing, proprietary systems. Co-opt the supply side of publishing, beware and identify who will profit in the new equilibrium. (The point of the “Big Deal” is to push out other publishers.) One Esposito pronouncement echoed the rest of the conference: a literate person can read about 7000 books in a lifetime. Another question he raised: Is the music industry a model for publishing? His