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ARL Resolution

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Publisher Mergers and Rising Serials Costs Compel ARL Resolution

Released by ARL, June 13th, 1991

Expressing concern over several recent publishing company mergers, the Association of Research Libraries' Board of Directors passed a resolution at its May membership meeting to support and encourage diversity and competition in the scholarly publishing arena.

The latest issue of the *ARL Statistics* (1989-90) revealed that in the past four years, the average price of a serial rose a shocking 52%. Consolidation of scholarly publishing companies has led to concerns about the possible monopolization of the scientific, technical, and medical (STM) journals publishing industry. As these publishers continue to charge unprecedented fees for serials, libraries are increasingly unable to maintain subscriptions at previous levels, resulting in diminished services to library users. These trends continue along the lines documented in ARL's 1989 publication, *Report of the ARL Serials Prices Project*.

With its resolution, ARL is dedicated to fostering the provision of "a wide array of publication outlets for scholars, reasonably priced information of high quality," and ready access to research resources in ARL libraries for students and scholars. ARL's Office of Academic and Scientific Publishing (OSAP), founded in February 1990, monitors monographic and serials publishing, conducts research and publicizes problems, and promotes fair practices in the field.

The Resolution on Diversity of Scholarly Publication Sources was drafted and passed by the ARL Committee on Scholarly Communications on May 15, 1991 and amended and passed by the ARL Board of Directors on May 17, 1991. The resolution reads as follows:

WHEREAS,

The last decade has seen a consolidation of scholarly publishing outlets, most heavily in scientific, technical, and medical (STM) journals; and

There have been significant price increases for scholarly publications, most notably in STM, during that same period; and

In the most recent four years, for example, the average price of serials to ARL university libraries has increased by 52%; and

Research libraries are able to purchase a diminishing portion of the rapidly increasing universe of the scholarly literature;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT,

The Association of Research Libraries affirms that a wide diversity of scholarly publication sources and the broadest competition in the information marketplace are vital in order to foster

- a wide array of publication outlets for scholars,
- reasonably priced information of high quality, and
- the availability of research resources in ARL libraries for students and scholars;

And further, that the Association of Research Libraries supports and encourages such diversity and competition within the scholarly publishing arena.

The Association of Research Libraries represents 119 research libraries in the United States and Canada. Its mission is to identify and influence forces affecting the future of research libraries in the process of scholarly communication. ARL programs and services promote equitable access to, and effective use of recorded knowledge in support of teaching, research, scholarship, and community service. These programs include annual statistical publications, federal relations and information policy, and enhancing access to scholarly information resources through telecommunications, collection development, preservation, and bibliographic control.

The ARL Office of Management Services (OMS) provides consulting, information and training in the management of human and material resources in libraries. The Office of Scientific and Academic Publishing works to identify and influence the forces affecting the production, dissemination, and use of scholarly and scientific information. The Coalition for Networked Information (CNI), formed by ARL, CAUSE, and EDUCOM, promotes projects and linkages for the provision of information resources on existing and future telecommunications networks. ■

