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Interview with John Cox

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Interview with John Cox

President, Carfax Publishing

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by Katina Strauch (College of Charleston)

I was trying to recall the first time that I met the urbane and erudite John Cox. I think it was over the telephone — my first transatlantic one, no less! — when he called to introduce himself as John Merriman's replacement at Blackwells. How much has happened since then! — KS

ATG: Do you want to start at the beginning? How did you get into the publishing business?

JC: By a circuitous route. When I went to university, I intended to be a lawyer. I read law at Oxford. I became an expert on freeing slaves in ancient Rome. I was not taught to deal with practical legal matters like divorcing my wife or selling my house, but I came away with a trained mind. Such was the Oxford law course. I became a barrister in 1969, but by then I had been sidetracked into publishing because my father told me to go away and earn my own living. My first job was with a company that provided marketing services for academic textbook publishers. My formative publishing experience was my ten years with **The Open University** in the 1970s. A small group of us were responsible for selling the Open University's distance learning materials worldwide - books, films of television programs, audiocassettes of radio programs, and complete courses. A number of universities in the United States ran complete Open University courses for their own students, in spite of the differences in language and university curriculum. At the end of that decade I helped set up **The Open University Press**, which is now a reputable and successful UK monograph publisher in the social sciences.

In 1980 I moved to **Butterworths**. I had responsibility for selling computer systems to lawyers and was also involved in marketing **Lexis** in the UK; Butterworths was the agent for Lexis. Within two years I became managing director of **Scholastic's** UK company. We published children's books, and professional magazines and books for primary school teachers. We operated Scholastic's book clubs in schools. It was great fun for seven years.

It was then time for me to move on. When I joined **Blackwells** as director of the Periodicals Division, I knew little about

academic journals, although I had some experience of periodical publishing. I had to learn quickly, and I am indebted to the many librarians who made me so welcome and gave me so much of their time. In 1990 I was appointed managing director of **B.H. Blackwell**, consisting of the subscription agency and library bookselling businesses. Running a service business is quite different from producing tangible products like books and journals. I was fascinated to see how publishers handle their own cus-

"It is very difficult to manage a fixed budget on a pay-as-you-go basis."

tomers service — with varying degrees of success! I also realized how much I missed producing books and journals. I'm a simple soul; I like producing things. I like to clutch something in my hand and say, "Look what we did this week." I also like the whole process of working with authors and editors. I like dealing with the intellectual challenges of copyright and changing technology, as well as the subject matter of what we publish.

ATG: I was thinking that you really took a big detour when you went to **Blackwells**.

JC: Yes, I think that's true. I enjoyed

my Blackwell experience. It is a fine company, and I learned a lot. But it removed me from the process of creating products.

ATG: It must have been quite a head hunter that talked to you.

JC: He did a lot of talking, that's certainly true. But then I met the people at Blackwells and I enjoyed their company and thought that I could achieve something there. It worked out very well for four years. Then **Duncan Spence** came along.

Duncan invited me to join **Carfax**, the company he set up some twenty years ago. I have known Duncan for 25 years. He was a printer, and I was a customer. We had met each other on and off since then. When he said that he was looking for a managing director and asked me if I wanted to come back into publishing, I said yes, albeit rather slowly, because it took us about seven meetings to sort out all the details. I've now been at Carfax for just over a year and I've thoroughly enjoyed every minute of it. I'm back into publishing which I like and I'm back in a smaller business environment where I actually do things myself as well as organizing other people to do things. There's a sense of remoteness in big companies. It has its attractions. Lots of things get done for you. It's very comfortable. But it can be stultifying because you can't get your hands on anything directly. In a small business you have to. You have to roll up your sleeves.

Carfax is a growing company. We started as a publisher of education journals and now Carfax is the UK's largest publisher of educational research. We've broadened our horizons into the social sciences. We're very strong in geography and planning, in gender studies, and in politics and economics. And the most rapidly growing part of our program is in STM. We've got a health care list and we're cautiously expanding into the natural sciences, particularly biology, because of its synergy with our health care publishing. We have 130 journal titles in our 1995 program, with more to come in 1996. And we expect to be an electronic journal publisher in the next year.

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ATG: *What road are you going down with that? What form of journal publishing?*

JC: We don't intend to launch new, wholly electronic journals. We will start by making some of our existing titles available online and then build up our capabilities and our understanding of the medium, by making the most of the electronic media to do things that we can't do in print alone. The journal's print and electronic versions will complement each other. The great challenge is less to do with what we need to do technically to create a worthwhile product and support our customers, but how we can make a commercial enterprise out of publishing electronically.

We are in business; we have to make money to survive. I think the future lies in pricing electronic products according to the way they are going to be used. CD-ROM publishers have pioneered the site license, and given us a workable model. You could have anything from a single-user license for an individual to a license for a consortium of libraries that are providing a networked facility to patrons belonging to a number of institutions. The challenge is to identify the price point that makes it viable for us, and that our customers are prepared to afford. There's nothing new in that idea. In the serials community, we have not generally understood and accepted precedents, no established parameters. We are all virgins. We will make mistakes. But we need to figure out how to do it.

ATG: *That's what I was going to ask—is there a model that you've seen that is helping you to focus?*

JC: I think there are two models that make sense. One is the subscription model, using the site license. This needs to be flexible enough to provide for individualization because individual institutions have different profiles and different needs. The other is the document delivery model where an individual may simply want to view and then print or download a particular item from within a database. We have to price both at an acceptable level and then ensure that people get what they pay for, no more and no less. The people who don't pay can't get access to the data. Security, both of electronic networks and of databases, is important. Many of the processes involved in producing, acquiring and delivering information can be automated: password control, collecting money elec-

tronically using credit cards, and so on. They reduce administrative costs, which, you might think, leads to less expensive products. The great disadvantage of print, of course, is that it is a physical product that you have to transport from one place to another; whereas in the case of an electronic journal you just fire a bunch of electrons at a node at the other end. That of itself doesn't cost very much. What costs real money is the infrastructure to prepare and deliver those electrons. I suspect that most libraries will want to stay with the subscription model because it provides unlimited access. Think of your institutional print subscription. It's a bit like a site license. It provides for use by a large community of people. It allows, through fair use, photocopying of individual articles. I think a subscription-based site license to a journal is an attractive model because it allows predictable and controllable budgeting. Librarians want to know with certainty what financial commitment is being incurred. It is very difficult to manage a

"Bit-mapped images are the electronic equivalents of the horse and cart."

fixed budget on a pay-as-you-go basis. Nobody wants a situation where nine months through the financial year you have to tell people that they can't access particular material because you've spent what was allocated to it. Nevertheless, we must also pay attention to the occasional user who wants to come in and use a specific item; that is the document delivery model.

ATG: *Are any of your journals available through any of the full text providers like IAC, EBSCO Publishing or UMI?*

JC: Yes, we have signed agreements with **Information Access, EBSCO Publishing, and UMI**. We are also doing things ourselves. First, let me tell you about the agreements with IAC, EBSCO and UMI. In each case individual articles will be selected, rather than whole journals. What those companies publish is directed at school markets and public library markets rather than at the academic community, so they will be able to reach users that would not have ready access to the complete journal. It's too early to tell whether we are extending our reach in this way, as those licenses were only signed a matter of months ago.

Secondly, we will become a full text provider ourselves. We have talked to a number of companies with what they describe as complete publishing software

packages. **OCLC's Guidon** software is very impressive. A couple of the others have effective-looking packages. But what concerns most publishers is all the practical processes that are needed: operating the software, providing the service and training the staff. Most of us need the electronic equivalent of the warehousing and distribution company, like a lot of book publishers put their books into a warehouse owned by another company that specializes in handling the physical storage and movement of their publications.

We have now chosen a new British company, **CatchWord**, to handle our online publishing. **CatchWord** is run by a former Blackwell colleague, **Simon Inger**. It has developed a suite of software that processes Postscript output from our typesetters, and makes it available on the Internet through a network of file servers in the UK, North America, and Australia. **CatchWord** appears to have mastered some really thorny problems of data compression and the way the page image is rebuilt on the user screen so that delays in response time are minimized. The text is fully searchable. It is multimedia compliant, which is important for us as we become more expert in adding sound, moving pictures and 3D models

in the future. It is also much less expensive than the competitors, which enables us to keep prices at a reasonable level.

The problem for the early pioneers of electronic publishing, whether they are service providers like OCLC or publishers themselves with their well-publicized projects, is that it is expensive to start with. Then other people move in and the whole process gets better and cheaper at the same time. This always happens with new technology. It has already happened in our industry, as we begin to use our typesetting data effectively. It will be much cheaper and much more efficient than using bit-mapped images. Using bit-mapped images is the electronic equivalent of taking a photograph of each page; it consumes vast amounts of data storage and band width, and you can't search on it. Bit-mapped images are the electronic equivalents of the horse and cart.

Nineteen **Carfax** titles will be available online before the end of 1995. More will be added next year. 1996 subscription prices allow a combined print/online subscription at a modest supplement over the print subscription rate. We'll also be able to supply documents to all of those secondary publishers, document delivery companies, and so on, from our fileserver, so that we don't have to send them printed copies of journals. We can just send the

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data. That ought to improve the speed and time limits of delivering documents from services like **UnCover**.

ATG: *So the document would eventually be delivered electronically from your fileserver.*

JC: Right. Even though it might end up on the customer's desk as a fax. But I think electronic document delivery is going to come, using the Internet. There are issues we need to tackle. The first concerns security and copyright protection. The second revolves around the culture of the Internet, whether we can systematically use the Net to deliver commercial services, even though they are designed for the academic community. And all the indications are that it's happening already.

ATG: *So you've had to change, I suppose, some of your agreements with authors.*

JC: Yes, we're in the process of changing our agreements, both with societies that own journals, and with authors of individual articles. As a publisher I no longer think of **Carfax** as being a publisher of printed journals. We're actually an administrator, sorter, presenter and packager of intellectual information.

If we stop linking the publishing process with these paper products, it becomes much easier to consider what we really do as custodians of intellectual property. We add value to information by establishing its quality and by ensuring that the material that our authors and editors expect us to publish is disseminated in the most suitable medium to all the people in the community for whom it is likely to be of interest. We need agreements that reflect this new environment. Generally, we are not talking about high-priced journals in the social sciences, humanities and education. They contain narrative text. For actual use, print is still the right medium. It is still, to me, best for browsing literature, and for getting ideas and inspiration from a casual scrutiny of some other discipline. Chemical engineers read economics journals. Sociologists read geography journals. A lot of researchers I've talked to confirm that if they confine themselves just to the literature of their own particular specialty they will lose out. Many are actually very ambivalent about electronic journals. I see print being around for a very long time.

The challenge in electronic journal pub-

lishing is not simply to replicate what is available in print now, but to add more value, to make them interactive, to use sound and moving pictures, to enrich the data that is there. We have journals in media studies that potentially are natural for development using multimedia. Any historical journal could be enriched by the judicious use of archival footage. We publish journals in a variety of medical disciplines, in nanotechnology and in toxicology that could be developed with video footage and moving models based on data from the research that is being reported. All it needs is some creative imagination and a willingness to take risks and learn from the mistakes that will inevitably be made. Nevertheless, I think it will be a long time before we here at **Carfax** will ever publish a journal in electronic form only. It will have a print component because our authors and editors demand it, a lot of our readers want it, and because librarians still need to archive the information the journal contains.

ATG: *When you say electronic, are you including CD-ROM?*

JC: Yes, I am. It's digitized data however its stored or delivered.

"We're actually an administrator, sorter, presenter and packager of intellectual information."

ATG: *Tell us about Carfax — how many people work there, how is it organized...*

JC: As I said, we're 20 years old and we've really grown substantially in the last five years. We publish 130 titles. We will add another 30 titles to that program for 1996. Some of those will be acquired from other publishers because publishers trade journals rather like football teams trade players, and some of them will be new starts where we spot an emerging discipline and we can put a journal together with the right editorial board.

We have 40 staff including myself, **Duncan Spence** as Chairman, **Pauline Smith**, Finance Director, **Julie Stevens**, Commercial Director, and our Publishing Director, **David Green**. The glass ceiling has already been busted at **Carfax**; 40 percent of the board is female. We feel quite good about that. Some of the journals we own outright — they are our journals because we started them, and put the editorial boards together. Other journals we publish under contract to a society or university.

ATG: *What proportion have you started and what proportion have you bought?*

JC: It's about half and half. With the society journals, we compete with other publishers for the publishing rights. Sometimes those journals change hands. We gain a journal from another publisher and indeed, we may lose a journal. The process is actually quite beneficial because it keeps us all on our toes and it means that societies get the best deals that they can; they're not locked into one publisher forever.

ATG: *It's sort of like a bid process.*

JC: Yes. We get the right to publish that journal for three years or five years. It is then renegotiated, or put out for bid again. If the society-publisher relationship is good then the two can work together harmoniously for many, many years. It is a partnership. We've got society journals that go back much more than ten years. Another aspect of this is the loyalty academics display to their society journal. Their loyalty is to their discipline and to the professional society of which they are a member rather than to the university where they are employed. As a result, I'm very skeptical about ideas that universities should hold the copyright in the articles written by their faculty.

ATG: *Is that happening in England the way it is in the United States?*

JC: Not to the same extent. It's much more a U.S. phenomenon. Obviously scholarship is a global activity, and there are people in the United Kingdom who raise copyright issues. There are great misapprehensions about the nature of copyright and what it is designed for. When you identify the real cause for concern, it turns out not to be about controlling the rights and making money. It's about making sure that material is not distorted; it's about making sure the author or authors are properly identified and it's about making sure that the author's work is widely disseminated. Authors and editors are concerned to ensure that the publisher does a professional job and pays a royalty on the journal income to the society that owns it rather than to each individual author.

ATG: *How many society journals do you publish and are they largely UK societies?*

JC: About half are society journals and

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they are published for UK, European, Australian and American societies. The majority are based in the UK. A growing number are pan-European, as the European Union grows more important. And they vary in size and scope. I'm constantly surprised at how many societies there are.

ATG: You pay copyright fees to the society then. What if it's not a society journal, but your journal? Do you pay authors copyright fees?

JC: No. The quid pro quo in the author-publisher relationship is that we will ensure, to the satisfaction of the editorial board, that the article is published professionally, that the journal looks good and that it is as widely distributed as it is possible to be. Remember, in the case of any journal that we own ourselves, we took the risk by starting it, we've invested in it, we probably incurred five years of losses, if not more, before it started to break even on a year-by-year basis. So it takes even longer to pay back that original investment. Journal publishing has always been essentially a very long-term investment. With the development of electronic media, because of the up front costs that those involve, I think it's going to become an even longer-term investment.

ATG: You were talking about your future activities at Carfax earlier? Could you elaborate?

JC: Our ambition is to double Carfax in size in five years. That will partly be through expanding our journal publishing, partly through exploiting new media, and also through simply getting better at what we do already. We still believe that there is plenty of room in the scholarly environment to develop more journals. Research activities change, new subjects, new disciplines, new areas of activity emerge and old ones fade away, so there is a continual cycle of decay and renewal in publishing. We intend to be part of the renewal process. We'll leave decay to others!

We don't publish books, and we are determined not to be a book publisher. Specializing in journals actually gives us great strength and credibility. Most publishers who publish both books and journals find that books attract the glamour and the attention of the trade and the trade press. As a result, journals are sometimes

taken for granted, even in companies with quite substantial journal publishing programs. So we're a journal publisher. We're set up to do journals and nothing else. That means we've nowhere else to go. We have to try harder.

ATG: So you are a lean organization.

"[P]ublishers trade journals rather like football teams trade players."

JC: Yes, we try to be. We're very informal. For instance, none of us have secretaries.

We have two staff who provide secretarial services to anybody who needs them. So I answer all my own phone calls, make my own coffee and do my own filing. We behave like a small company and we turn our hand to anything and everything.

Our objective as a company is compactness. We are developing the electronic office. Everybody is on internal e-mail. Most of the systems that we're developing are devised so that we don't have to send instructions or memos to each other. If I want the warehouse to send a sample issue of a journal to somebody, I don't send the warehouse manager a memo or a note, I fill in a screen which gives him all the information and then it's done. Being able to process that transaction in one electronic system is very efficient. Ultimately, we'd like to do away with paper in the office, but that's never going to be possible.

ATG: You mentioned education as a publishing strength of Carfax? What other subject areas do you publish in?

JC: Geography and planning, politics, economics, sociology, gender studies, health care, science and technology. Our flagship titles include *Addiction*, *Urban Studies*, *Third World Quarterly* and *Comparative Education*. We still publish a considerable number of education journals; this is where Carfax started and where we probably enjoy the greatest reputation. It continues to provide a focus for a large amount of publishing. And it's a dynamic field.

ATG: Do these types of materials circulate in the U.S.?

"[T]he printed journal is here to stay for a very long time yet."

JC: Yes. The USA is our largest market. Because education is so culturally and nationally specific, there are a number of titles that don't travel very well. The U.S. and the U.K. education systems are quite different. But we have titles in philosophy of education, moral education, and a vari-

ety of areas of methodology, which do travel. And we're quite strong in comparative education which by definition is international in character.

ATG: You mentioned your investments?

JC: We are a small private company so we don't have long decision chains to go through. We don't go through committees. We make decisions as a board of directors very quickly and that means that we can respond to opportunities. So we, for instance, have worked closely with Charles Germain to enable him to buy back his company (PCG) from Faxon. Indeed Carfax is using PCG, Charles's company, to sell our journals in the United States. We are also looking at other opportunities, acquisitions or start-ups of new businesses where they complement what we do already as a straightforward, traditional journal publisher, and that process will continue.

ATG: What sort of markets do you deal in?

JC: As a publisher we sell journals worldwide, but our publishing until now has been based in the U.K. As I mentioned earlier, we do publish some journals for some American societies and we have a couple of Australian journals that we publish out of the U.K. It's our ambition to develop publishing units in other countries. We've just established our first in Australia, where we've been undertaking some research on the ground for the last year. The opportunities appear to be considerable. We appointed a publisher, based in Sydney, in March this year. At some point in the future I'd like to do the same in the United States and have a U.S. publishing company. The timing of that really very much depends on how successful we are in Australia and what other calls on our resources there are.

ATG: When you say you've appointed an Australian publisher what does that mean?

JC: When I say a publisher, it's as a person, an editor. Somebody who will

run our publishing operation. We've recruited Jerry Mayer, who spent many years as Managing Director of Pergamon Press in Australia. He is an experienced publisher. He is, for the moment, a one-man band. His brief is to develop an Aus-

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tralian journal program that will complement what the rest of Carfax is doing already. His job is quite special. He has to know what to look for in a journal, how to produce that journal to the finished copy and how to sell it. We have already signed up six Australian titles, which join the Carfax list in 1996.

ATG: What do you think the future holds for the scholarly publishing industry? Will we become a network of universities distributing information with traditional publishers playing a secondary role?

JC: If I just listened to the rhetoric at library conferences, I'd probably go away and take up agriculture or something like that. Doom and gloom are mixed with hopes — and fears — that the only future is that of the electronic journal. I think the future is brighter than that. It's also more complex. I think that the printed journal is here to stay for a very long time yet. There are things you can do in print which you can't do in any other medium. It's the best medium for narrative text publishing; it's the best medium for browsing. Print on paper is a technology which is uniquely portable and doesn't need special equipment. The advantages of print have almost become clichés, and are being ignored because of that. It is still a very good way of conveying information, particularly to large and geographically widely-spread groups of people.

My view is that the publisher is going to have to think very carefully about the variety of media that are available for putting a particular journal. In philosophy or education, or some of the social sciences, print will probably be the principal medium. In a variety of subjects, for example urban planning, mechanical engineering, molecular biology, cardiology or surgery, you can do things in other media that really add significant value by making it more searchable, or by adding multimedia components — moving pictures, sound, three-dimensional and moving models and so on. We have to become expert in not just print, but in a variety of media. I suspect that a lot of publishers will find that hard. We will find that difficult as well, but we are determined to try and make that

work. The great strength of a well-run small company is that it can respond to those challenges much more quickly than larger companies which tend to have bureaucracies and procedures to go through. We're a low-cost operation and we'll continue to be so we can make things work that other bigger companies sometimes can't for a variety of reasons. That's not to say that they're better or worse than we are; it's just to say that we're different. And I like that difference.

ATG: What about the universities, copyright and the NII?

JC: If universities take over copyright and the distribution of intellectual property, then they will become publishers themselves. There is actually a very low barrier to entry into journal publishing. That's why there's competition, and so many publishers. In my experience, however, universities are not equipped to run these sorts of businesses. They're good at research, but they aren't willing, or able, to

"Journal publishing has always been a very long-term investment. With the development of electronic media it's going to become an even longer-term investment."

make the long-term investments. They are bureaucratic and averse to risk-taking. The organizational structure's different. I know this from ten years at the Open University where we were running a commercial operation within the university. Eventually it had to be spun off into a separate company simply because the cultures of publishing, business, and the university world are very different. That's not a criticism of either one. I just don't believe that universities are going to be effective at this process.

For professional purposes, a faculty member wants to be published in the journal he or she chooses. Partly that choice is based on confidence in the publisher to do a professional job. And that faculty member may have no confidence in the university's ability to do it as effectively. If the university retains copyright, and itself deals with publishing the journal, licensing CD-ROM and document delivery companies, and managing copyright permissions, it will need to duplicate existing publishing structures. I don't think the demand for this is coming from faculty. It's coming from university administrators and from librarians because it is seen as being a way of reducing journal costs, or at least getting away from the treadmill of yearly

price increases. But it's not what the faculty want. And I don't think that it will necessarily serve the interests of scholarship. To run headlong into making assignment of copyright in journal papers (but not textbooks?) to the university a condition of academic service, is not going to be acceptable. Where do you draw the line between a journal article and a monograph and a textbook?

There would be some universities who might make it work and others who won't. That's just the normal process of success and failure in business. But I would stack up my company's ability any day to publish an article effectively to the community for which it is intended against any university that will simply put it on the network and share it with colleagues within other institutions. Scholarly material has to be marketed and packaged. Universities would have to acquire a whole range of publishing skills. Most articles need editorial work on them. We rarely receive a piece that we can just publish as it is without some alterations to be made in style or extent, to fit it into the available space. There's no law that says that a scholar, eminent in his field, will automatically be able to write in a good readable style. Part of the value that the publishing process adds is to take raw manuscript material and make it readable. Publishing skills are often underestimated, partly because publishers think that everybody else understands what they do. I believe in people concentrating on what they're good at rather than trying to do everything themselves.

University presses have been a problem for universities for years, because most of them have needed constant subsidy. Those larger university presses that actually make substantial profits, like **Oxford University Press**, for instance, are run as commercial publishers in everything but name. OUP is a very successful scholarly publisher.

ATG: But with the electronically delivered product many of the costs of traditional publishing are minimized. It seems like the intellectual product is moved to the front of the class, so to speak. Can we talk for a minute about rights to intellectual property and contracts? You're paying more attention to them than you used to as a publisher, aren't you?

JC: Because of my legal background, I pay a lot of attention to these things anyway. If you or your institution says it retains the copyright, what I, as a publisher, need is exclusive publishing rights,

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so that I can actually do my business and get that article distributed. Exclusive publishing rights means, in the context of publishing a journal article, that you will license the publisher to do everything. So owning the copyright becomes no more than a fig leaf. To do my job properly as a publisher, I need the right to respond to changes in the market very quickly. And I can't be limited to publishing articles just in the physical printed journal. I have to consider the CD-ROM as well, for example. I need all these rights as a package. It's just too costly to keep going back to the author, or the university, for each one of them. **UnCover**, for example, has a database of four million articles. If each of those articles has an average of four authors, that's 16 million permissions. Do we really have to go back to the authors, four of them, for permission to sell one copy of that document for which **UnCover** will be paid \$8.50. It just doesn't stack up for the publisher. It doesn't make sense for the author or the university to have to handle thousands of transactions, each of which may only involve a few pennies.

ATG: Well, I have to put on my author hat right now. If I'm the author of something and you as a publisher deliver it — let's put aside CD-ROM for now — if you deliver it electronically in a way that people can download it, manipulate it so that it is unrecognizable, perhaps still with my name on it, I don't think I would like that. So why should I have to give you the rights for everything (even if I don't know what I am giving you the rights for) in one fell swoop?

JC: That's a very good point, but I think it's a different issue. What you are concerned about is not being distorted, plagiarized or misrepresented. In other words it's about the integrity of the product as written and published. That is no more than any good responsible publisher would try to ensure for his authors anyway. One of the publisher's responsibilities is to take action to protect the material from abuse, if necessary by taking legal action. But we have to recognize that most people will put their own private libraries together, electronically or otherwise. They do it now on paper. They will take a couple of paragraphs from an article and copy it and put it in their files because it's important and interesting.

An important component of the author's copyright assignment for us is that under U.K. copyright law the author asserts his

moral rights. Now moral rights don't exist in U.S. copyright law. It's a concept that really started in France. Moral rights are concerned with the rights of authorship: the author being identified with his work and having the right to take action if that work is distorted in any way. Moral rights represent what we and most publishers insist on in any case. The issue does not change in the electronic environment. There is no real problem with researchers using material for private research library purposes. They've done it on paper ever since research started. What both the publisher and the author will be concerned about is if the article then reappears in a distorted form or if it is misrepresented in some way, or comes out under another name. That really has nothing to do with electronics. Plagiarism has been a problem since universities were invented. The Net

"[T]here is plenty of room in the scholarly environment to develop more journals."

just might make it easier. So the mechanisms for control within the academic community itself need to be reviewed.

ATG: What about the new phenomenon of the World Wide Web? Does Carfax have a homepage? And is SGML being used in the URL tagging for homepages? SGML was the rage just six or nine months ago.

JC: Yes, Carfax does have a homepage. Just connect to: <http://www.carfax.co.uk>

SGML is an international standard. It assumes that the data may appear in an unlimited range of formats — not just the page. The publisher's problem is that tagging your data with SGML codes is a very laborious, time-consuming, expert and expensive process. If journal publishers found a way of achieving the electronic output they need without the labor and the expertise, and therefore the expense, most of them would drop SGML as being a very cumbersome way of achieving the result.

We have chosen **CatchWord** as our electronic publishing service provider because it does not involve SGML tagging, yet gives us the result we want for our journals. Other publishers are working with **Acrobat** to a similar end. I am now sure that an alternative to SGML exists. We're convinced that SGML will turn out to be irrelevant so far as learned journals are concerned. Whether you go with SGML, or **CatchWord**, or **Acrobat**, the set up and processing costs are still significant. Electronic publishing requires skills that are

still being developed. Expertise is expensive. It's the principal reason why I would argue with anyone who thinks that electronic publishing is going to be cheaper than print.

At **Carfax**, we keep all our typesetting in Postscript form. We supply that to **CatchWord** for processing into its own system. Ultimately, we want to end up with a database of all the material we publish directly from our typesetting. We can then use it for print purposes, for mastering a CD-ROM, or for online publishing from our document server. It all comes out of the same process.

ATG: After this heavy conversation, can we talk about your life? You must like to travel.

JC: Yes, I love it. I treat a long flight as a refuge from reality. I can sit and read a book or just stare into space and think. I don't actually have to do anything. There's nothing much I can do, unless I've got a case full of work with me. And I'd rather not work on planes, because it's not the right environment. I must have traveled over 100,000 miles last year. When you confine your travel to one or two airlines and they give you the coveted gold card, they give you occasional upgrades and special deals. They do try to look after you as a frequent customer. Still, there are occasions when you need assistance and then, of course, luck being what it is, there's no one within ten miles. The major airlines have become much better at dealing with their customers, following the example set by British Airways in the mid 1980s. Domestic travel in the U.S. is quite efficient. Traveling internationally involves immigration and customs procedures, which are always a hassle. But it's gotten much easier in the last ten years.

Quite a lot of my travel is either to the U.S. or to Australia. When I was at **Blackwells**, I traveled a lot. When **Dan Tonkery** and I were representing **Blackwells** in the negotiations that led to setting up the **UnCover Company**, I made several two or three day trips from the U.K. to Denver. I'm doing less traveling now. My colleagues say I should stay at home and do some proper work instead.

Okay, y'all. I am so excited! Just received word that **John Cox** and **Duncan Spence** will be attending the **1995 Charleston Conference**! Now you can supplement this interview by asking them questions in person! — KS