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I Hear the Train A Comin' -- All I Really Need to Know...

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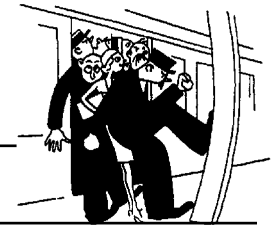

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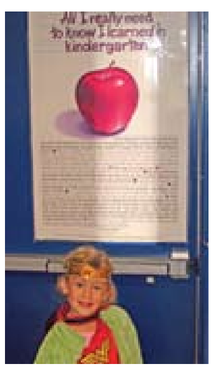
This November I had the distinct pleasure of convening the annual **"I Hear the Train A Comin' – LIVE"** session at the **Charleston Conference**. The goals of the column and the session are one and the same — to take a look around the bend, into the future of scholarly communication. To get a diverse and informed perspective on what's next in our space, I was joined onstage by two esteemed soothsayers: **James Neal**, the Vice President for Information Services and University Librarian at **Columbia**, and **John Sack**, the Director of **HighWire Press**. I hope to distill the essence of their insightful presentations on these pages in the issues ahead. For the purposes of this column, though, I would like to recount the key points of my own brief remarks.

Since the last **Charleston Conference**, I have had the pleasure of working with a number of publishers, libraries, information providers, trade groups, startups, and learned societies on a variety of consulting projects. I have also had the pleasure of seeing my older daughter enter elementary school. Each day as I drop her off, I am confronted with a poster on the classroom wall that summarizes the keys to life on the playground. It may well be overexposure to the Elmer's glue fumes at her crafts table, but over time these rules have started to make sense to me in a professional context. In any event, I have become increasingly convinced that "All I Really Need to Know about Scholarly Communication I Learned in Kindergarten." As it turns out, a surprising number of the homespun homilies in **Robert Fulghum's** 1989's best seller intersect with some important big picture issues we face in the scholarly communication space. For example…



Share Everything. As we have seen in a host of presentations, reports, and publications, the Web 2.0 behavior of the consumer Internet is starting to have an impact on scholarly communication. People spend their time on the Internet sharing things — pictures, videos, theories, gripes, and so forth. Our space is no exception. Scholars, especially students and younger professionals, want access to more raw data, more unfettered communication, and more real-time information — formal or informal. And they want it with lower barriers — quicker, at less expense, delivered in a format and medium of their choosing to a device of their choosing. The challenge for publishers and information providers is how to create business models around this increased sharing. It is worth noting that this puzzle of how to make money off of people's desire to share is not unique to scholarly communication. **Facebook** has 38 million unique US visitors every month but has struggled mightily to figure out how to monetize their interactions. Eyeballs are great, but you still need to have a plan for what you are going to do with them in order to pay your bills. I suspect we will be talking about this issue in both theoretical and practical terms for several **Charleston Conferences** to come.

Play Fair. Fairness, it must be said, is in the eye of the beholder. Funding agencies and other sponsors of research are increasingly saying that what is fair is for the world to have access to the research they are supporting. At last check there were 37 distinct mandates from a dozen countries listed in the **SHERPA JULIET** database. In general, these policies dictate that funded research must be made available for free in an open access repository, although some allow for embargoes and other limited carve-outs. Many publishers believe this is not playing fair. They feel that their editorial and production teams add substantial value to these research outputs, and free access to the content, even after an embargo, unfairly penalizes them. They are starting to push, the funding bodies are pushing back, and authors are increasingly caught in the middle. How this issue plays out will be fascinating to watch. It has the potential to impact how information is disseminated, how publishers can sell subscriptions, whether multiple versions of a work can have equal meaning, and a host of other issues. I can only advise the parties as I would my five year old when she is locked in conflict with one of her fellow kindergarteners: Use your words. Talk this through to see if we can establish some common ground. For example, there is some anecdotal evidence to suggest that embargoes of 6 months or less do indeed harm publisher sales, while 12 month embargoes might not. There is also some evidence to suggest that depositing a postprint version in an OA repository will allow wider access to research findings while preserving the journal article as the version of record. Let's use our words to work through the areas of conflict, conduct research to confirm or dispel our assumptions, and go from there. The recently announced **PEER (Publishing and the Ecology of European Research) Project** is a great example of this type of collaboration. A collaboration among the **International Association of Scientific, Technical & Medical Publishers**, the **European Science Foundation**, **Göttingen State and University Library**, the **Max Planck Society**, and **INRIA**, **PEER** will investigate the effects of the large-scale, systematic depositing of authors' final peer-reviewed manuscripts on reader access, author visibility, and journal viability, as well as on the broader ecology of European research.

Don't Take Things That Aren't Yours. Copyright is a funny issue, isn't it? Nearly everyone in the scholarly communication chain — including authors, publishers, librarians, and end users — is expected to know enough about copyright to obey both the letter and the spirit of copyright agreements. As part of a recent consulting engagement I had occasion to speak with point people from each link of the chain, and I was not entirely surprised to find that their understanding of copyright subtleties was limited at best. I say I wasn't surprised because we are talking about a very complex set of legal issues here. It is unreasonable to expect that a production editor or a biology researcher or an acquisitions librarian should have a firm grasp on the ins and outs of copyright. Most of the professionals with whom I spoke do have a general sense that copyright means "don't take things that aren't yours." The question we face in the space is, at least in my opinion, whether this vague notion of copyright parameters is sufficient. Is a general desire by all parties to do the right thing enough, or do we need to provide better and/or more simplified information to those who most directly touch copyright? Should authors be given a very clear FAQ by publishers explaining what their author agreements do and do not provide for? Should at least one person on a journal's staff be given professional training on copyright issues? In short, how do we most efficiently establish common knowledge as to what things are yours and what things shouldn't and can't be taken? This takes on increasing importance as data sets, supplementary files, and the types of informal communication I mentioned earlier become more tightly entwined with the journal article as units of currency. As what constitutes content becomes more complex, so, too, will copyright issues.

When You Go Out In The World, Watch Out For Traffic, Hold Hands And Stick Together. Earlier in this column I mentioned that behaviors of the consumer Internet are trickling into the scholarly realm. One clear manifestation of this phenomenon is online communities. On sites like **Facebook**, **LinkedIn**, **Second Life**, **Ning**, and **Twitter**, communities of academics holding common interests are springing up organically. 381 law librarians and counting on the law library **LinkedIn** network. 797 members in the future marine biologists group on **Facebook**. 356 members in the **Ning** online learning in higher education social network. People with shared interests and experiences are finding ways to get together. How will this transform scholarly communication? Will it encourage collaboration by forging deeper personal and professional connections among community members? It seems quite likely. Will it create new, parallel tracks for information exchange from which those holding more

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