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Something to Think About? -- Recycle Bin

Editor

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national and international attention with SPARC's focus on Open Access. Initially, the advocacy program focused on outreach targeted at stakeholder groups internal to the scholarly communications community (e.g., librarians, faculty, and editorial boards), along with communications and public relations activities. In recent years, though, it has been greatly expanded to include an extremely active public policy focus. SPARC has been outspoken on policies that pertain to public access to federally funded research results, in particular on the recent NIH Public Access Policy.

The focus on public access to federally funded research led SPARC to spearhead the formation of an unprecedented alliance of leading library groups, public interest organizations and patient's advocacy groups, the Alliance for Taxpayer Access. This group quickly coalesced into a growing voice in the Open Access movement, calling for greater access to taxpayer-funded research to help drive the return on investment of public funds.

In what ways is SPARC poised to make the biggest impact over the next 2-3 years?

HJ: I think that SPARC's biggest opportunities will center around our ability to effectively combine a continued, aggressive, focused public advocacy campaign on Open Access with concrete, market-based activities that support the kind of changes that a successful campaign are likely to bring.

For example, I often hear the concern that small, society publishers who have traditionally been "good citizen" players in the scholarly communications arena are among those at greatest risk should funding agencies mandate a move to Open Access. As someone who has spent the majority of my career working to support scholarly societies, I am not unsympathetic to that concern. I believe that SPARC is uniquely positioned to leverage its education and outreach programs to focus on identifying and implementing market-based initiatives that can help create the kind of market conditions in which scholarly society (and other non-profit publishing organizations) can continue to play a vital role.

The challenge is to find ways to keep the development of SPARC's three strategic areas driving in the same direction, and at roughly the same pace. It's the combination of our efforts in education, advocacy and incubation that have the potential to truly effect the greatest change.

In your view, how well has SPARC partnered with the commercial publishing world?

HJ: I'm not sure that I'd say we really have! The focus of SPARC's extensive partnership program over the past seven years has been, deliberately, on partnerships that support non-profit publishers, particularly scholarly societies. It's never really been part of SPARC's goal to work explicitly with commercial players. One notable exception: SPARC has partnered with BioMedCentral, a commercial venture with an Open Access business model, in an effort to promote experimentation on a wide variety of Open Access publishers.

What is your view of the open access movement, in particular its economics?

HJ: I'm completely supportive of the aims of the Open Access movement. Creating barrier-free access to scientific and scholarly research can only advance the process of scientific discovery and scholarship, which has been at the heart of SPARC's agenda since its inception. As far as the economics go — whenever I'm part of a discussion about the economics of the movement, the first thing I usually hear is "there is no proven Open Access business model," and the second thing I usually hear is a claim that any Open Access model is likely to cause economic harm to some subset of the scholarly communications community. While I agree that much more work needs to be done to create viable, market tested models, I think these kinds of statements only look at half of the issue — the potential costs of Open Access.

I would like to see us focus our energies on the other side of that equation — the potential benefits of an Open Access model. I think it will be important for us to find a way to examine, and to try and quantify what the potential

return on investment is that we, as a society, can realize by making the results of scholarly and scientific research openly accessible. I think that generating some data on this side of the equation would be a very enlightening and important exercise.

What are some alternative forms of scholarly communication beyond launching new low- or no-cost journals that institutions should consider?

HJ: Well, I think institutional repositories are potentially rich breeding grounds for new kinds of scholarly communication activities. A trick will be for the community to throw out conventional thinking when considering how to populate them, and with what types of materials. Again, I think that turning the question over to researchers, and directly asking them what they need will be the key to developing the next wave of resources.

Greg Tananbaum is president of The Berkeley Electronic Press. Email questions, comments, or suggestions to <greg@bepress.com>.

Something To Think About? — Recycle Bin

Column Editor: Mary E. (Tinker) Massey (Serials Librarian, Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University) <Mary.Massey@erau.edu>

It sits as a small icon on the desktop, crouched beneath all the others. Looks like a trash can and is sometimes empty. I nonchalantly drop things into it as calmly as I throw paper in that blue bin by the desk. Forgetting that it is there, I sometimes put material into its confines that could be of use. Time and time again, I open it up and look at the stuff I've discarded. Sometimes I reinstate a few messages or articles or ideas, but more than likely, what I drop in remains until the day when I clean its contents. Once a week, say Friday, I like to peruse the trash and decide what goes away. I remember the days, as a child, that I used to dumpster dive. I still have that urge to look into the bowels of the large metal containers and see what others find unworthy. I have retrieved lamps and books (of course), bread wrappers with those coupons for contests, and an occasionally interesting table or piece of busted jewelry. Hours of rehab time are spent on those gems and sometimes they prove very worthy of the efforts.

I am not sure why they call it a "recycle bin" on the computer screen. Do we recycle the material in it? I don't think we turn the document over and type on the other side. Do we? Do we reprocess the material typed into something better or different? I don't think I have ever done it or would know where to begin that

process. "To adapt to a new use" is the meaning, but all I can understand is that we may be cleaning space to be reused. I think we do not recycle the messages. Could it be like the "Delete" button? Where do these things go? Are we sending these messages to another place in the universe where they might be used better? Fixed, rehab-ed for a better life in another existence? My last venture asking about "Delete to Where" brought some interesting comments from savvy computer gurus. The rings of Saturn have been loaded with the deletes of our present and past. Now there are rings forming around Jupiter to house the many discarded items, phrases and numbers we bump out of our computers. Data mining? I leave that to your fantasies, but I am assured we will be retrieving these things when we reach those planets. Will they be useful then? I wonder! Perhaps the recycled materials go there too. After all, it is another name for the trash, isn't it? I, for one, hope there is a deep dark void where these things are stored. I do not want to revisit my mistakes or the many words strung together in manufactured articles. How many tables and lists have you flung into the ether? How much verbiage have you contributed to the Rings?

Recycle bin, Trash bin, whatever we call it, we must think seriously about the way we use it and where the information goes. If I can find that location, I will dumpster dive the theories of the future to find the right words to retrieve and remake for future articles. Perhaps there will be some gems of wisdom or some ideas to help fix the problems in the serials field. Some



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ATG Special Report — How to Beat the Serials Crisis

by **Helle Lauridsen** (Head of Serials Services, State and University Library, Aarhus, Denmark) <hla@statsbiblioteket.dk>

There are a few rock solid facts in a serials librarian's life: journals increase with a considerable percentage every year; there are more journals out there than ever — due to the pressure to publish; and for most of us, our yearly budgets are decreasing more often than increasing.

The **State and University Library** was founded by law in 1897 as the second **Danish Legal Deposit Library, Centre for the Danish Public Libraries** and the **University Library for Aarhus University**. With so many diverse tasks on our plates, it is no surprise that our stacks — reaching 17 floors above the University and for miles of subterranean rabbit warrens below — are filled to bursting. New stacks are being built,

but also these have a very definite number of shelves, all reserved for the **Danish Legal Deposit** material.

The hard facts of budgeting and storage problems made it high time to take a very close look at the library's strategy as stated in our contract with the Danish Government, which is to strengthen our digital procurement of text, pictures, and sound on the Internet. Roughly translated: Go online if at all possible!

I took the word "online" a little bit further and decided to take a closer look at e-only. Not just by canceling present print journals, but — I am sad to say — discarding older non-Danish print journals. This took quite some consideration from the entire management, as we are fully aware of the archival problems in online publishing. But, as the pressure was on to save money, save space, and still provide even more information to our students and faculty, we decided that the Danish print collection was the library's primary preservation obligation — NOT the journals printed outside Denmark.

The decision was clear:

- First to cancel subscriptions to all unused print titles as well as all print journals having a reliable e-access.
- Later to go through our entire print collection and discard all journals with secure e-access and archiving.

This was a daunting task and would not have been possible just a few years earlier.

First I needed to weed out the print subscription of all e-journals with a license including perpetual access, which is all our "Big Deal" licenses, as well as a few more giving a total of 5,712 "secure" online titles. This list had to be checked against our total list of subscribed journals (3,872 titles); the total overlap was 1,165 titles representing a value of almost 900,000 USD. As all of these journals are part of Big Deal packages and the online editions still have to be paid, the actual savings after cancellation is about 10 percent.


This left just over 2,700 print titles, including titles where the electronic access is less secure and print has to be maintained.

I then started looking at the usage of these current subscriptions. Because our stacks are closed, all journal articles must be photocopied by a member of staff and handed to the user, and a new automated system keeps track of orders. Thus it is possible to extract comprehensive usage stats giving number of copies per journal title, current as well as cancelled. This "print copy" statistics list has altogether 3,496 titles from which

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words would be welcome, to say how vendors and librarians and publishers can work together better. Perhaps those words have been trashed earlier and can now be recycled into the present day effectiveness of our work. I will explore and get back to you with some different slants on our everyday tasks. If you have some ideas, don't delete — just post them to me and I will study them further. Thanks. 

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