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Group Therapy

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resolution on price ceilings, of course. But serials pricing issues are such old news that book publishers actually generated an equal amount of discussion at **Janus**. "Does anyone think that was a friendly question?" quipped **Sandler**, when asked from the floor why his vision of electronic publishing on campus made no mention of the university press. He said that at **Michigan** the library was disappointed in university press reaction to the **Google** digitization project. (The **Association of American University Presses** has been outspoken in complaint over what publishers see as massive copyright infringement.) Revenue generated by the **University of Michigan Press** has been a "road-block," as **Sandler** put it, to the transformative projects only possible by working on a scale enabled by **Google**. "It's not the football team, after all," he said, referring to that revenue, and describing a "tense time" in university press-library relations.

"We're all mesmerized by **Google Print**," remarked **Ross Atkinson**, **Cornell's** Associate University Librarian for Collections. "We're like rabbits caught in the headlights." Or did he say "headlines"? No matter, the point is the same: It's not libraries that are shaking the foundations of scholarly communication, but an

outside force, **Google**. **Atkinson**, the last major speaker at **Janus**, is a spare and intense individual, given at once to abstract ideas, references to philosophy, and dry humor. He spent his hour on stage, just before the room divided into working groups to address the challenge statements, barely stopping at the podium, instead pacing, gesturing, reflecting with arms folded, his voice rising, falling, then rising again.

Those statements can be read as a précis of many arguments for radical change that **Atkinson** has made for years in writings and presentations. In many ways the conference was a tribute to him. A brochure announcing a forthcoming collection of **Atkinson's** writings was included in the conference packet, and he received a standing ovation on the final day of **Janus**, just before the conference broke up. Recently **Atkinson's** health has not been good. Sometimes at **Janus** he looked drawn. But he seemed energized on the stage, and every moment of his years at **Cornell** since 1988 must, to him, have seemed to precede that hour.

"**Heidegger** says," he said at one point, and at others referred to "notification sources," "vertical contingency," and the "axis of non-equivalence," using simple Zen-like figures projected in black and white onto a screen to diagram tensions within scholarly communication. "Maybe we can't do it," he acknowledged in a moment of decrescendo;

but in the next, appealing to "the people in this room," colleagues for more than twenty years in collections meetings everywhere else who this time had traveled to Ithaca, **Atkinson** exhorted these librarians to take what he said might be the one opportunity — by cooperating rather than competing with one another — to reshape not just collection development, as **Edelman** and his generation had, but the entire system of scholarly communication.

"So that's what we want to do this afternoon," said **Atkinson** at the end of the hour, finally standing still, his voice dropping, not a sound in the room, collections librarians from most of the great academic libraries in North America about to find out, in the months and years to follow **Janus**, whether they had attended just one more conference, or had enlisted in a crusade. 🍌

Group Therapy

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GRIPE: Submitted by **Helen M. Aiello** (Serials/Electronic Resources Librarian, Wesleyan University Library)

Now that **Scopus** has entered the sci/tech database field, I wonder what institutions who subscribe to **ISI's World of Science** are planning to do? Since I suspect that many schools do not have the financial resources to run both products, if **Scopus** proves to be a viable product this may present a difficult choice down the road, and, further compounded by the fact that many subscribers have purchased "perpetual access rights" to **ISI**. Any comments on how your school may be approaching this topic will be most appreciated.

RESPONSE: Submitted by **Rick Anderson** (Director of Resource Acquisition, University of Nevada, Reno Libraries)

Like many schools, we were recipients of a full-court marketing press from **Elsevier** when **Scopus** was released. Their sales pitch was completely appropriate, and the arguments and strategies they used to strengthen the sales pitch were reasonable: they enumerated some of

Scopus's obvious strengths as a product, offered us a significant discount (technically because we're **Science Direct** subscribers, though I suspect the discount would have been extended even if we weren't), gave us multi-year payment options, and even offered to give us a year of free access, following which we would have the option of cancelling without penalty. To **Elsevier**, this last offer was really the trump card. A year's worth of no-strings access at no charge — what, they asked, did we have to lose?

The answer is that we stood to lose plenty. The problem is not with the product itself; **Scopus** looks like a wonderful tool, and subscribers whose opinions I trust have told me that they and their patrons all love it. I have no reason to doubt them. The problem is the price, combined with our budget situation. Our materials budget is flat this year, which means that we will have to find cuts matching the rate of inflation in order to avoid going into deficit. The purchase of a new citation index at a price in the tens of thousands of dollars is simply not

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feasible right now — and making it available to our patrons for a year would only set us up for a political firestorm later, when we have to cancel a product our patrons have gotten used to having (because we still won't be able to afford it).

We do subscribe to **Web of Science**, which is more expensive than **Scopus**. Is it possible that we might cancel **Web of Science** in favor of **Scopus**? Yes. But not without consulting extensively with the affected faculty at our institution, many of whom are deeply attached to **Web of Science** and may or may not agree that

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Scopus represents an improvement. That consultation will involve some kind of trial access, but it will have to be controlled. We have just hired a new science librarian, and she will take the lead in any future consideration of the **Scopus** question.

RESPONSE: Submitted by **Julie C. Blake** (Collection Management Coordinator) and **Keith Ewing**, (Systems Librarian) at St. Cloud State University

In summer, 2004, we were offered the chance to be one of five trial sites in our regional consortium (48 nationwide) to test a new **Elsevier** database called **Scopus**. **Elsevier** isn't our favorite vendor, but they are far from the worst. The trial ran through fall, 2004. At that point we provided relatively few science indexes; despite undergraduate programs in a wide array of sciences and Master's programs in biology, computer sciences, engineering, environmental and technological studies, and math, the only science databases we then subscribed to were **Applied Science and Technology Index**, **BasicBIOSIS**, **GeoRef**, **SciFinder Scholar** (**Chem Abs**), and **ScienceDirect** (heavily subsidized by our consortium and more for full-text than indexing). Instead, students tended to use **EBSCHost Academic Search Premier** (also provided by our consortium), broad enough to include sciences, but not sufficient for research needs. Despite numerous faculty requests, we were unable to add sources like **BIOSIS**, **Compendex**, **Inspec**, or **Web of Science** due to financial constraints — and we didn't want to get into battles over which department should get its database first. **ISI's Web of Science** (**WoS**) has always been well out of our price range, costing more than the sum subscription costs of most of our current databases. In addition, we primarily support student curricular and research needs where citation searching is under-utilized; so, while **Elsevier** was marketing **Scopus** as a competitor to **WoS**, we never really viewed it that way. Instead, we viewed **Scopus** as a means of getting broad science indexing coverage, although a number of social science titles are included as well — not altogether different from **WoS** in content except for the interface and potential pricing. Because we were an early tester and subscriber, we were able to get a very nice three-year contract for **Scopus**. We agreed to make the commitment to do so, although when the cost returns to the normal pricing model at the end of the contract, still projected to be less than the quote for **WoS**, we don't know whether we'll be able to sustain access.

We opened the trial across campus, and patrons over all were favorably impressed. They liked the interface and the idea that we had much more science coverage than ever before. Even the engineering faculty agreed that it was much better than nothing. We also compared coverage and searching to a number of other databases. According to our Engineering Informa-

tion (EI) representative, all of **Compendex** is included in **Scopus** because both are owned by **Elsevier**. However, a title-by-title comparison did not hold this to be true as of April, 2005. In the first half of the A's, 19 titles listed as "core" in **Compendex** were not included in **Scopus**. The representative promised to look into this, but we have received no explanation. All but two titles in **BasicBIOSIS** were also in **Scopus**, and those two didn't seem to fulfill needs of local programs. When a **Thomson/ISI** representative paid a sales call to pitch **Web of Science**, we did some comparative searches as well. In almost every search in the sciences, **Scopus** showed more results than **WoS**. **WoS** appeared to be focusing more on indexing the **ISI** high impact factor journals, while **Scopus** provided a broader range of results, including high impact factor journals such as *Accounts of Chemical Research* or *Advances in Physics*, for example. **Scopus** also works well with our OpenURL link resolver (**SFX**) and (of course) in providing links to **ScienceDirect**. It is less friendly in sending citations to **RefWorks**, our bibliographic citation manager, primarily because we have not opted at this time to purchase the special **RefWorks** support for **Scopus**. The two databases provoke very different emotional responses in the acquisition decision. **WoS** is from **ISI**, a highly respected company that for a long time had a monopoly, which didn't seem to bother librarians, on citation indexing. **Scopus** is from **Elsevier**, a company that does not garner much respect in the library community, largely because of monopolistic pricing for some of its journals, despite their high impact factors. Emotion aside, **WoS** and **Scopus** are very comparable in many areas, with **Scopus**, so far, having the edge in interface and price.

RESPONSE: Submitted by **Elizabeth L. Winter** (Electronic Resources Librarian, Georgia State University Library)

This is clearly an issue that academic libraries will be investigating in the future if they have not already done so, as evidenced by the recent (September) discussion on this topic on the **SERIALST** list (archives available at <http://list.uvm.edu/archives/serialst.html>).

Since most institutions will not have the funds to subscribe to both **Web of Science** and **SCOPUS**, all but a few, fortunate libraries will likely have to make a choice between the two products — or sacrifice the purchasing of other resources in order to subscribe to both. I agree that this issue is complicated by the fact that some subscribers have made large one-time purchases to obtain perpetual access to backfile content from the **Web of Science**. For those who already own large amounts of this backfile content, I find it difficult to believe that dropping **Web of Science** altogether would be a viable option. Even though **Georgia State** has

purchased a relatively small portion of the available backfile, I'm certain that this will be a factor for us in comparing the two products.

We haven't yet begun a trial of **SCOPUS**, but as we contemplate the opportunity, one of the primary issues we're beginning to raise is the coverage — breadth, depth, and inclusion of core journals — that **SCOPUS** provides in comparison with **Web of Science**.

Core title coverage between **SCOPUS** and **Web of Science**, thus far, has been difficult to compare efficiently. **SCOPUS** offers a list of titles in **Excel** format (available at <http://info.scopus.com/aboutscopus/contentcoverage/index.shtml>), but **Web of Science** only provides a browsable list in **HTML** format, and you've got to click through page-by-page to see all titles (available at <http://scientific.thomson.com/mjl/>), so we haven't yet found an

efficient way to put the title lists side-by-side to determine the amount and type of overlap and to identify unique titles.

Another content issue that may factor in for some potential adopters is that **SCOPUS** does not contain Arts and Humanities citations as **Web of Science** does, but instead focuses on Science and Social Science journals. Whether this is a concern for your library would likely depend on the types of programs offered at your university and how heavily you rely on **Web of Science** for Arts and Humanities coverage. Also with regard to content, we're concerned about the completeness of the coverage in **SCOPUS**. As of August, **Elsevier** claimed that cited references were complete back to 1996 and that **SCOPUS** contained abstracts back to 1966 for 81% of the journals indexed.

In addition to the content-related issues I've mentioned, there are several other criteria on which to compare the two products. Two important ones we'll be looking at are pricing (including both the actual amount you'll spend and value — what you'll get for what you pay) and interface (including overall usability as well as the suitability of search and results-management features for your particular user population).

For an in-depth comparison of the two products, take a look at the review by **David Goodman** and **Louise Deis** published in the January 2005 issue of *The Charleston Advisor*. This review compares **SCOPUS** and **Web of Science** in great detail across a number of facets related to coverage, usability, pricing, and contract. I recommend this thorough analysis for any library evaluating the two products head-to-head, with the caveat that the review was done in early December 2004, so the coverage information in the review, particularly for **SCOPUS**, is certain to be out-of-date now. **Elsevier** has made adding content a significant priority during 2005, and **Goodman** and **Dies** note that, "when the publisher demonstrates that the basic data has been loaded we will reevaluate the product" (p.5). 🐼