2014

ATG Interviews: David McCune, SAGE; Jason Hoyt and Peter Binfield, PeerJ

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ATG Interviews David McCune, Jason Hoyt and Peter Binfield

Director, SAGE Publications and Co-Founders of PeerJ

by **Tom Gilson** (Associate Editor, *Against the Grain*) <gilsont@cofc.edu>

and **Katina Strauch** (Editor, *Against the Grain*) <kstrauch@comcast.net>

ATG: *It was recently reported that SAGE and O'Reilly had invested an undisclosed amount in PeerJ. Can you give us a ballpark figure on how much money was involved? How did the deal come about? Who initiated the negotiations?*

JH: We had already talked previously on a general business-to-business level prior to any investment discussions, in part, because our London offices are near each other and because **Pete** had previously worked at **SAGE**. So there was already a relationship there, and the investment opportunity naturally arose out of informal conversations to start.

DM: We've been intrigued by **PeerJ's** mission and business model since its founding and have followed it closely. As **Pete** and **Jason** developed their individual and institutional membership models, our interest became enthusiasm. We expressed that enthusiasm to **Pete** last year and said that if there ever were another round of investments, **SAGE** would be interested. When the time came, **Pete** and **Jason** contacted us.

**David McCune, Director
SAGE Publications**

The fact that **O'Reilly AlphaTech Ventures** was a seed investor and that **Tim O'Reilly** was on the **PeerJ** board was also attractive to us. **Tim** has been one of the most innovative, challenging voices in publishing, open source, and technology transfer. On a

personal level, I was a C coder many years ago, spending my nights wrestling unruly Unix boxes to the mat. **Tim O'Reilly's** books saved me from many a sleepless night. He's been an idol of mine ever since.

ATG: *This is the second round of outside funding that PeerJ has managed to attract. Can you give us some details on the first round of funding? We believe that O'Reilly AlphaTech Ventures and O'Reilly Media were the primary investors, correct? What have they received for their investment?*

JH: Yes, **OATV** and **O'Reilly Media** were the lead investors of the Series Seed round in 2012. They were impressed with how well things have gone over the past two years and decided to re-invest as a consequence. **Tim O'Reilly** retains his position on **PeerJ's** Board of Directors.

ATG: *Part of the new deal also includes another investment from O'Reilly. How do they fit into the current mix?*

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JH: Structurally, nothing changes from the previous round other than **David McCune** joining the Board. Probably the most exciting change now though is the different dynamic you get with a new Board makeup. **David McCune** and **Tim O'Reilly** both come from very successful, yet varied, publishing backgrounds. It's early days of course, but so far it's been an excellent combination that is already impacting how we think. One example of that is in how we think about approaching different market segments. **Tim** and **David** each have experience with different segments (or entire markets), so it's very beneficial to draw upon those perspectives as we chart our own course. It's difficult to imagine a more suited makeup for a small start-up board aimed at 21st-century academic publishing; we're really quite lucky in that regard.

ATG: *We understand that it was PeerJ's "innovative model" that caused SAGE to make the investment. That strikes us as a fairly broad explanation. Are there more specific reasons to invest in PeerJ? Were there other "innovative models" besides PeerJ that were considered for possible investment?*

DM: **SAGE** is constantly searching for ways to increase the creation and dissemination of quality, scholarly research. We also look for ways to foster active dialogue and debate among scholars, and seek sustainable models to do this. OA can be an important ingredient in reaching this goal. We work in close concert with our primary constituents: scholars, scholarly societies, libraries, research funders and students, and any model for better dissemination of research needs to be of value to all of these groups. **PeerJ's** model of rigorous review, low-cost memberships, and very fast publication seems attractive, especially in the natural sciences. With our rich history of publishing in the social sciences, we are intrigued to see whether some variation of the model can work in the social sciences and humanities, where the funding picture is very different from STM.

ATG: *Does this mean that we can expect to see a future version of PeerJ for the social sciences and humanities? Has the possibility of such a journal been part of your discussions? That would be an exciting development, and we'd love to hear more about it.*

PB: At the moment we have no plans to move into the Humanities and Social Sciences. Our cost-effective pricing structure is very attractive to researchers in those areas, and so we get this question a lot. However, we launched in the Biological/Medical/Health/Life Sciences (already a very large field to cover), and when we start to expand we will most likely do so by expanding out from our current core areas.

DM: We launched a Social Science and Humanities mega-journal, *SAGE Open*, more than three years ago. It has since published more than 600 papers and established a firm

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against the grain publisher profile

SAGE

SAGE Publications USA, 2455 Teller Road, Thousand Oaks, CA 91320
Phone: 1-800-818-7243 • Fax: 1-800-583-2665 • www.sagepub.com

AFFILIATED COMPANIES: CQ Press www.cqpress.com; Adam Matthew <http://www.amdigital.co.uk/>; Corwin www.corwin.com; MD Conference Express www.mdconferencexpress.com; Learning Matters <http://www.uk.sagepub.com/learningmatters/>.

OFFICERS: Blaise R. Simqu, President & Chief Executive Officer; Tracey A. Ozmina, Executive Vice President & Chief Operating Officer; Chris Hickok, Senior Vice President & Chief Financial Officer; Stephen Barr, President of SAGE International; Ziyad Marar, Global Publishing Director; Mike Soules, President, Corwin Press; Phil Denvir, Global Chief Information Officer.

ASSOCIATION MEMBERSHIPS: **SAGE** has forged strong partnerships with societies and associations for nearly half a century, publishing on behalf of more than 290 societies. Read more at <http://www.sagepub.com/socAssn/testimonials.htm>.

VITAL INFORMATION: Celebrating its 50th anniversary in 2015, **SAGE** has been a privately owned company since its founding. Our founder and executive chairman, Sara Miller McCune, has guaranteed the company's independence indefinitely.

KEY PRODUCTS AND SERVICES: Journals, books, and digital media.

CORE MARKETS/CLIENTELE: Academic, educational, and professional markets.

NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES: More than 1,200.

NUMBER OF BOOKS PUBLISHED ANNUALLY: 800+

TOTAL NUMBER OF JOURNALS CURRENTLY PUBLISHED: 700+

HISTORY AND BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF YOUR COMPANY/PUBLISHING PROGRAM: Guided by an unwavering dedication to academia and an entrepreneurial spirit, the passionate and determined Sara Miller McCune founded **SAGE** in 1965 just a few months shy of her 24th birthday. With the help of her mentor and future husband George McCune, Sara set out to start a publishing house that would allow scholars to disseminate quality research in their own voices, often breaking ground in new or emerging areas of study. Simultaneously, Sara and George endeavored to support the dissemination of useable knowledge by publishing innovative, high-quality scholarship and pedagogical content. Their company's name — **SAGE** — is derived from the first two letters of their names.

Nearly 50 years later, **SAGE** remains an independent company that shares with librarians the belief that flourishing educational programs and engaged scholarship create healthy minds and healthy societies. Our publishing program ranges across the social sciences, humanities, medicine, and engineering and includes journals, books, and digital products for academic and professional markets. We value working closely with librarians to achieve shared goals, including partnering on white papers and research projects to ensure that together we meet the changing needs of students and researchers.

ADDITIONAL ITEMS OF INTEREST TO ATG READERS: Earlier this year, **SAGE** acquired The Goodwin Group International, LLC, publisher of *MD Conference Express*, the first publication to subject medical conference highlights to the rigorous test of peer review.

MD Conference Express reports are written entirely from primary source materials, with content selected in partnership with the scientific planning committees of the conferences themselves. The presenting faculty is invited to review and comment on the short summaries, which are then subjected to rigorous peer review by an advisory board of experts from top medical institutions around the world.

Core to **SAGE's** mission is the belief that authors should feel at liberty to express their unique points of view without restriction. As part of this mission, we are the proud publishers of *Index on Censorship*, which promotes and defends the right to freedom of expression. We are also active supporters of ALA's Banned Books Week Effort.

With feedback from librarians and their patrons, we commission, select, and curate the highest quality content on easy-to-use platforms to create innovative digital products. So far in 2014, we have launched manipulative data and statistical tools such as **SAGE** Stats and US Political Stats, an interactive research resource, **SAGE** Research Methods Cases, and later this year, we will be launching a new streaming video program with high-quality pedagogical content to meet both curricula and research needs. Other upcoming digital products for **SAGE** include in-depth reports written by expert journalists in business, health, and education as well as business and management-focused products with real-life case studies and reports for students.

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RadioGraphics

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reputation in the community. We envision that in social science disciplines where there are low levels of direct research funding there will be multiple revenue streams that support OA publications, and **PeerJ's** model addresses that by developing an entirely new revenue source through its membership model. We have no plans right now to roll out a similar model for *SAGE Open*, but it is not beyond the realms of possibility that at some point in the future a community membership scheme might form part of the mix.

ATG: *Up until now, other than David serving on the PeerJ board, SAGE had no direct involvement in PeerJ. Will that change? What is the nature of your relationship now that SAGE has a vested interest?*

DM: SAGE has no operational involvement in **PeerJ** whatsoever. We are a minority investor. At the board level, and indeed in less formal conversations between **Pete**, **Jason**, **Tim O'Reilly** and myself, we have exciting, wide-ranging conversations about scholarship, academia, research and publishing. To the extent that **Jason** and **Pete** find these conversations valuable, perhaps the board will have some strategic influence on the future of **PeerJ**. But that is entirely up to **Jason** and **Pete**.

ATG: *When we interviewed Peter at the Charleston Conference in November 2012,*

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against the grain people profile

CEO and Co-Founder, PeerJ • P.O. Box 614, Corte Madera, CA 94976
Phone: (415) 413-4596 • [<jason@peerj.com>](mailto:jason@peerj.com) • www.peerj.com

Jason Hoyt

BORN & LIVED: Born in Santa Clara, California, USA. Live in London, United Kingdom.

EARLY LIFE: Earned a doctorate from **Stanford University** in Genetics working on adult blood stem cell therapy in the lab of **Michele Calos**. Prior to this, earned a bachelor's degree in Microbiology from **BYU**.

PROFESSIONAL CAREER AND ACTIVITIES: At the end of my doctorate I launched a startup designed to provide academic literature recommendations based on papers academics had bookmarked. Eventually this was scuttled in favor of joining **Mendeley** in early 2009 as Head of R&D to develop the data mining team and various products. In 2011, I left **Mendeley** to start **PeerJ**, where **Peter Binfield** joined as a co-founder prior to the official launch in May 2012.

FAMILY: I live in London with my partner and three children.

IN MY SPARE TIME I LIKE TO: Run, do indoor climbing, explore the Welsh and English countryside, and long for California weather!

FAVORITE BOOKS: *Gene Dreams* — read while an undergraduate and inspired me to pursue an industry career post-graduate school; *We* — Russian dystopia that inspired *1984*.

PET PEEVES: You're either early or late; there is no on-time.

MOST MEMORABLE CAREER ACHIEVEMENT: Getting our first \$100 payment from a **PeerJ** fan before we officially launched, especially since he never wanted to publish, but stated that he was motivated by the mission of the journal.

GOAL I HOPE TO ACHIEVE FIVE YEARS FROM NOW: Have dramatically lowered the average cost for both APCs and subscription charges across the industry so that it is more affordable to researchers. 🐼

he was excited about PeerJ's innovative membership business model and relatively low membership prices. How successful has your membership model proven to be? Given that you had to seek a second round of outside funding, we wonder, is this model sustainable? Are you committed to maintaining the low pricing?

JH: Becoming a highly respected publisher doesn't happen overnight — it takes both time and capital. Just look at **PLOS**, which went through \$12M in its first few years, and **eLife** took on a rumored \$40M. **PeerJ** is a David in a world of Goliaths. We're doing it with far, far less, but most successful businesses go through multiple financing rounds — via bank debt financing, grants, or venture capital. New capital doesn't come unless you've demonstrated growth in one or more metrics, which we have in both publications and revenue. At the same time, it can take more capital than current cash flow allows to expand and really grow — this is why businesses take on new rounds of financing. A "Seed Round," which we took on in 2012, is like a starter lab grant and is really there just to prove that academics believe in **PeerJ** before taking on more capital to grow the concept, which we're now doing.

As for pricing, we are not changing the \$99 per author for life promotion — it's here to stay; that's the price point that we base all of our decisions around (hiring, process innovation, technical innovation, etc). This is the real magic behind **PeerJ**, or at least the advantage of being a new publisher. Instead of taking all that we do and tallying up how much it costs and therefore how much to charge, we did the opposite. We started with a price point of \$99 and asked ourselves, "What must happen in order to afford that?" Well, for starters that's why we make heavy use of cloud computing, and why we decided to build the submission and reviewing platform ourselves (to rapidly iterate improvements) instead of licensing it.

ATG: *Peter was also very high on PeerJ's preprint service, which was eventually launched as PeerJ Preprints. Are members effectively taking advantage of this service the way you hoped? Are there plans to enhance it as you gain more funding?*

PB: People are definitely using preprints in a wide variety of ways, which is exactly what we hoped when we launched it. The functionality is deliberately very accommodating of different submission types — it simply accepts PDFs, and those PDF files can be articles, opinion pieces, posters, Powerpoints, or even simple abstracts. We have preprints from amateur scientists through to people at the top of their field, and we have seen people use **PeerJ** PrePrints to showcase the abstracts of their conference (and even to be the official submission route for their conferences and symposia); to contain contentious "discussion" pieces; to gain feedback

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David McCune

Director and Shareholder, SAGE

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Phone: (805) 499-0721 • <David.McCune@sagepub.com>

BORN & LIVED: Levittown, Pennsylvania.

EARLY LIFE: Grew up in PA. Went to Sweden at 16 on an exchange program. Loved it. Lived seven years in Sweden, where I went to agriculture school and journalism school.

PROFESSIONAL CAREER AND ACTIVITIES: 1979 to 1981: Wrote in Swedish and English for various newspapers and magazines. Great fun!

1981 to 1983: Writer/editor at **Time, Inc.** in New York. We created one of the world's first electronic publishing platforms. It was an exciting, innovative newsroom. I worked for an inspirational editor, a virtuoso manager, an idol of mine ever since.

1983 to 1988: Independent software developer. C and assembler guru. Hired gun. Did battle with corporate COBOL programmers. I loved code more than I loved English.

1989 to 1998: CEO of **SAGE**. We're an education company, and we're passionate about that mission. My job was to build a culture and team of people who shared that passion and then give them the freedom to do great work.

1999 to present: Director and shareholder at **SAGE**

FAMILY: First wife, **Susan**, gone forever. Our son, **Doug**, a gift beyond words. Second wife, **Gunilla**, who taught me there is life after grief. **Gunilla's** daughter and grandchildren. **Doug's** wife and children. I thank them all every day for valuable lessons learned.

IN MY SPARE TIME: I enjoy long-distance singlehanded sailing.

FAVORITE BOOKS: *The End* by **Anders Nilsen**. I lost my first wife to cancer. This is the book I wish I could have written.

PET PEEVES: Life is too short.

PHILOSOPHY: Every day, learn something new and teach someone something.

MOST MEMORABLE CAREER ACHIEVEMENT: Being a good father and husband while building **SAGE**.

HOW/WHERE DO I SEE THE INDUSTRY IN FIVE YEARS? I will answer this question in two ways: where I would like to see the publishing industry and where I do see the publishing industry in five years.

I would like to see a world where there is vastly more open and transparent, back-and-forth debate in the development, dissemination, review, and evaluation of scholarship. The "review-comment-revision" aspect of research should be extended, more collaborative, more open, and celebrated. I am excited to see startups that incorporate and advocate for pre-pub peer review, open-access dissemination, post-publication debate and review, and new forms of evaluation (i.e., altmetrics). I would love it if these efforts had a real impact on the scholarly process in the future.

I would also like us to have figured out a sustainable business model for the wide dissemination of rigorously reviewed research, particularly in the social sciences. When you publish a piece of research, its potential positive impact has no limits. Open access greatly expands the audience for scientific research and when done correctly, incorporates an extensive and rigorous review-and-revision process — how could this not be a good thing?

Also, all who take part in these processes — peer reviewers, commenters, revisers — should be identified publicly for their interactive role in each part of the process. In fact, I believe that they should be credited, celebrated, and even rewarded (e.g., towards tenure) for these efforts. (Yes, I understand that peer review needs to be blind sometimes, such as when a junior scholar reviews a senior scholar's work, but that should be the exception, not the rule.)

Where do I believe we will actually be in five years? Through experimentation with various open access, review, and new metric models (e.g., **PeerJ**), in five years, scholars will have developed publishing programs that increase the access of scientific research to a broader public, but there will still be a need for more experimentation. Subscription-based journals will still be published for some time, especially within the social sciences and humanities, where funding for open access is scarce.

The current system of anonymous, uncredited peer review — along with an over-reliance on the sheer number of publications a scholar accumulates in impact factor journals — is overdue for disruption. The incentives and power structure within the academy change very slowly. It will take some time before the current system changes, though I hope to be able to find new ways to support improvements in the system for more open collaboration. I encourage any entrepreneur who has a plan to open up scholarly communication to get in touch. 🐼

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before submitting as a journal article; to get an article out rapidly when there was a chance of being scooped; to republish old pieces which had never seen the light of day and so on. Therefore, I think it is clear that amongst the almost 500 preprints we have published there has been a great deal of experimentation with the format and the community norms — exactly what we wanted to see.

Certainly we plan on enhancing **PeerJ PrePrints** — but I should say that these enhancements aren't dependent on funding so much as on the requirements of the community who are adopting it. So expect to see plenty of activity on our preprint site in the future!

ATG: Jason has been quoted as saying that the second round of new capital will enable **PeerJ** "to further develop our offering, as well as promote ourselves much more broadly." What will that entail? What new developments should participating members expect? How will your promotional efforts change? Will **SAGE** have a say in these new initiatives and strategies?

JH: To date, we have done very little in the way of marketing outreach. It's all been word-of-mouth as we've focused resources on building out the publishing platform. When

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against the grain publisher profile

PeerJ

PeerJ, Ltd., 341-345 Old St, Third Floor, London, EC1V 9LL, UK
PeerJ, Inc., P.O. Box 614, Corte Madera, CA 94976, US
<business@peerj.com> • www.peerj.com

KEY PRODUCTS AND SERVICES: **PeerJ** and **PeerJ PrePrints**.

CORE MARKETS/CLIENTELE: Researchers in the fields of biological and medical sciences.

NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES: 10

HISTORY AND BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF YOUR COMPANY/PUBLISHING PROGRAM:

PeerJ was launched in February 2013 to establish a highly credible, scientifically sound, peer-reviewed OA journal for as low a cost as possible. We wanted to show the world that it doesn't have to cost thousands, either through subscription charges or OA fees, to publish quality science. Our authors truly value the fact that they can publish with us at low cost and high speed, whilst we take pride in the high-quality submission and transparent peer-review process their research undergoes.

PeerJ provides academics with two Open Access publication venues: **PeerJ** (a peer-reviewed academic journal) and **PeerJ PrePrints** (a "pre-print server"). Both are focused on the Biological and Medical Sciences. Q&A + annotations provide a second route to gaining credit for knowledge-share.

PeerJ starts at \$99 — for lifetime publishing, and public **PeerJ PrePrints** are free to publish. It is always free to read, download, and reuse **PeerJ** articles. 🐼

we say “promote ourselves more broadly” we know that many academics have not yet published in **PeerJ** simply because they haven’t heard of us yet, so we’ll be spending more energy on those efforts than in the past where it was all about finishing the product. A key change we’re working on already is in communicating how **PeerJ** works more easily. This is a bigger challenge than it appears at first glance, since although we do have an APC model, it works slightly differently than authors are used to seeing.

DM: Again, **SAGE** has no operational involvement in **PeerJ**, so all decisions regarding execution of **PeerJ**’s business plan are entirely in the hands of their team. We do expect to share thoughts and information between the two companies, and I look forward to talking and debating ideas, but **SAGE** in no way controls the way **PeerJ** operates.

ATG: Obviously, this infusion of money will allow new development and promotional opportunities. Are there any other benefits that **PeerJ** accrues?

JH: We’re hoping for a lot of sage advice, sorry for the pun. :)

ATG: How will all of this impact **SAGE** and its publishing program? What financial benefits does **SAGE** expect to reap from the new **PeerJ**? How will these benefits affect **SAGE**’s bottom line?

DM: We hope that **PeerJ** will be a huge success and that it will help to develop OA as a rigorous, efficient and affordable publishing program. If **PeerJ** continues to see significant growth and proves that its innovations are sustainable, then it will be an immensely valuable company. **SAGE** owns a minority share, and I suppose it is possible that that share could become valuable as well.

SAGE is a long-term investor. We never invest in anything — book programs, journals, digital research tools, databases, or whatever — with the intent of selling. We are exclusively an education company, and we will remain an independent, growing academic publisher for the long-term future. We believe that quality research improves the world, and we are dedicated to supporting the creation of scholarship as well as its vast dissemination. **PeerJ** is an exciting innovation on that front, and we are proud to be associated with the **PeerJ** team.

ATG: **SAGE** had an open-access joint-venture with **Hindawi** from 2007-2011. Are there any similarities between that arrangement and the current **SAGE**-**PeerJ** relationship? Will there be a joint OA publishing venture between **SAGE** and **PeerJ**?

DM: There are no real similarities between the **Hindawi** joint venture and our investment in **PeerJ**. With **Hindawi**, we entered into a formal partnership where we benefitted from access to their custom-built OA Publishing workflow and low-cost base, while they benefitted from access to our extensive international editorial networks and

against the grain people profile

Peter Binfield

Publisher and Co-Founder, **PeerJ**
P.O. Box 614, Corte Madera, CA 94976

Phone: (415) 413-4596 • <pete@peerj.com> • www.peerj.com

BORN & LIVED: In the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, and the USA.

EARLY LIFE: After winning a prize for poetry in secondary school (my highest literary accomplishment), I went on to do a degree in Physics with Astrophysics at **Manchester University** and managed to complete a Ph.d. in Underwater Holography (which is actually a lot less interesting than it sounds) in Aberdeen.

PROFESSIONAL CAREER AND ACTIVITIES: Career publisher who has worked on academic books, conference proceedings, reference works, and online journals in both subscription and open access publishers. Previous publishing companies include the **Institute of Physics**, **Kluwer Academic Publishers**, **Springer**, **SAGE Publication**, **PLOS** and now **PeerJ**. Board Member of **OASPA** (the **Open Access Scholarly Publishers Association**) and on the International Advisory Board of the **ISMTE** (**International Society of Managing and Technical Editors**).

FAMILY: My wife and two young kids are kind enough to put up with me in their house.

IN MY SPARE TIME: I have no spare time.

FAVORITE BOOKS: The *Dune* Series (all except the 2nd and 3rd installments). The first half of the *Amber* Series. **EE Doc Smith**’s the *Skylark* Series (seriously — try it — it has coruscating beams of pure intensity!)

PET PEEVES: Never being able to find the right charging cable for any given gadget. And when you do, the cable isn’t long enough...

MOST MEMORABLE CAREER ACHIEVEMENT: Co-founding **PeerJ**! **PeerJ** launched from nothing just two years ago, but is now regarded as an innovative, well respected, international publishing operation which has the potential to significantly change the publishing industry.

GOAL I HOPE TO ACHIEVE FIVE YEARS FROM NOW: To have contributed to a significant change in the publishing industry!

HOW/WHERE DO I SEE THE INDUSTRY IN FIVE YEARS: Within the next five years (possibly in as little as three years) the majority of articles in any given year will be published in a “born open access” mode, being paid for via some sort of APC fee. Because of that shift, authors will start to regard themselves as customers, and begin to demand “value for money” from the publishing services they are now paying for. This will place a competitive pressure on the industry to provide better service at lower cost to the customer, and so there will be a period of experimentation and re-alignment within the industry to accommodate this change.

Already, **PLOS ONE** publishes approximately 3% of the STM literature, and every major publisher is launching their own **PLOS ONE** clone. There is a very real chance that the “**PLOS ONE** megajournal” model will therefore start to eat into the market share of the current ecosystem of 25,000 niche journals. As a result, it is conceivable that a large number of lower-tier journals will go out of business and a small number of megajournals will begin to publish an increasing majority of content. When this happens, the concept of the journal as a container for academic articles may well come under threat. 🐘

global marketing abilities. Consequently, we shared ownership of the journals we developed together.

The nature of our minority investment in **PeerJ** is very different; we have no plans for a joint OA publishing venture between **SAGE** and **PeerJ**. Both companies are involved in OA, and while I would like to encourage debate and cross-pollination, I like the idea of the teams working independently, each toward its own business model. Sometimes the teams will cooperate while at other times they will compete. That seems healthy to me.

ATG: As the open access space expands and matures do you see similar partnerships emerging? Who do you see as your biggest competitors?

DM: OA is just one part of the scholarly enterprise. Very broadly, we would like to support more innovation in the ways scholarship is funded, evaluated, and disseminated. There is a lot of innovation going on within the scholarly, pedagogical and research ecosystems now, and we hope to be a leader in many of those innovations. To that end,

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Interview — SAGE and PeerJ from page 62

SAGE will be an active participant, whether via our own internal innovation, start-up launches, or investments in other companies. We would welcome a potential collaboration with any entrepreneurs that have ideas for increasing the amount of quality scholarship and research and for improving teaching in the world. This is an exciting, optimistic time in the education field, and we are proud to be part of it.

ATG: *Business relationships are also learning experiences. So far, what is the key thing that SAGE has learned from PeerJ? What has PeerJ learned from SAGE?*

DM: In addition to learning about their membership models and their innovative publishing system based on open-source software, it is a lot of fun to watch a couple of creative, passionate entrepreneurs innovate. The feedback loop between trial, evidence, reevaluation, and retrial is currently very short for **PeerJ**. **SAGE** is a fairly large organization that is operationally very efficient, but our trial-error-retrial loop is longer; while we are constantly innovating, our innovation cycle takes longer. Perhaps we can learn from watching **PeerJ**. By the same token, **PeerJ** will likely have to scale up to many, many times its current size, and being efficient often becomes a challenge as organizations grow. **PeerJ** may learn from **SAGE**, which is proud

to employ one of the best management teams on the planet.

SAGE has decades of experience talking to all of the various stakeholders in higher education, whether they be senior scholars, newly-minted Ph.D.s, librarians, students, scholarly societies, university administrators, or research funders. These stakeholders share the broad goal of education, but they also have somewhat divergent agendas, experiences and incentives. **SAGE's** experience building coalitions among these educational groups may prove valuable to **PeerJ**.

JH: Despite its size, **SAGE** is still a family-owned publisher, and that means they can still behave in many ways that are similar to a start-up or small publisher (as opposed to a publicly owned company). That's a tremendous advantage that was a delight to learn about as we got to know them better. We're expecting to learn a lot going forward since they've been through the growth stages that we'll eventually see. In fact, it is that family-owned aspect that was a key decider in taking on investment from **SAGE**.

ATG: *If we were gazing into a crystal ball, what would the SAGE-PeerJ relationship look like in two to three years?*

JH: The normal course with investments like this is that over the course of time the investor and investee develop more trust and third-party connections. It would also be great if some of our streamlined business processes could find their way into **SAGE**

eventually — in areas that make sense for them. And likewise, there's such a wealth of knowledge that **David McCune** brings that we can hardly anticipate where exactly we'll draw from, but we know that we will undoubtedly do so.

DM: **PeerJ** will be a huge success, having proved that the individual and institutional membership model of paying for OA works and meets the needs of various stakeholders in the educational process. **SAGE** will still be a minority shareholder, and a very happy one at that! 🌱

Rumors from page 46

which we all deal with on a regular basis. In fact I just saw that one of the exhibitors, **SPiE** is making research papers (100 in all) published by six 2014 Nobel Prize recipients freely available in the **SPiE Digital Library**. The new Nobel Laureates are **Isamu Akasaki**, **Hiroshi Amano**, and **Shuji Nakamura**, who were awarded the Physics prize for their invention of blue light-emitting diodes (LEDs), and **Eric Betzig**, **Stefan Hell**, and **William Moerner**, recipients of the Chemistry prize for the development of super-resolved fluorescence microscopy.

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Speaking of which, I am very excited that the awesome **Regina Reynolds** is coming to

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