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A Website Review--Cabell's International: A Welcome Tool in a World of Predatory Journals

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AW: Oh, I love this program — thanks for asking about it! There are now over 130 titles in our Production & Hosting publishing program (http://www.elsevierpublishingsolutions.com/production_hosting.asp), and more information is available on the Website. In a nutshell, we partner with universities, societies, and governments who publish impactful journals in their regions with the aim of helping them grow their quality and readership to wield greater international influence. It's a great way to leverage our digital publishing expertise and resources. Publishing costs are typically covered by a sponsoring government agency or the journal owner, so the articles can be made available open access immediately upon publication. This model holds appeal worldwide but is currently most actively used in Brazil, China, and in the Middle East.

ATG: You also mentioned that it was very clear to you how CHORUS and SHARE (the publisher and library led approaches to addressing U.S. funder mandates) can work together. Can you elaborate? How do you see CHORUS/SHARE cooperation evolving?

AW: While both CHORUS and SHARE were stimulated by the policy environment that led to the creation of public access policies by U.S. federal funding agencies, both have continued to develop and evolve. CHORUS leverages existing infrastructure and investments to identify and facilitate public access to articles, ensure digital preservation, enhance discovery, and report on compliance. SHARE has developed its Notify service to inform interested stakeholders when research release events occur, including the publication

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of articles and the dissemination of research data. And indeed they are working together and with shared partners — for example CHORUS metadata will be helpful in the SHARE notification service and will complement SHARE by providing public access to full-text. It might be quite fun to interview the Executive Directors of both initiatives about this synergy. From where I sit, it is terrific that they are using similar standards — e.g., DOI, FundRef, Orcid.

ATG: Alicia, we know how busy you are and want to thank you for taking this time to talk to us. We're also looking forward to seeing you at the Charleston Conference where we hope to get another opportunity to get together and chat, perhaps for one of our Penthouse Suite Interviews.

AW: Looking forward to it. Thanks for the chat! 🐾

A Website Review — Cabell's International: A Welcome Tool in a World of Predatory Journals

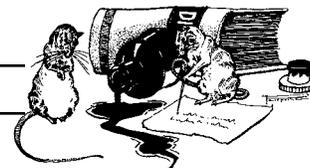
by **Burton Callicott** (College of Charleston) <CallicottB@cofc.edu>

Despite a wordy alert about the use of cookies that distracts the eye, the new **Cabell's International** database interface is spacious and bright — you can easily click the cookie message away. Website designers at **Cabell's** have done their homework and utilize color, shades, intuitive tabs, and dropdowns to save space and keep things clean. At my institution, the site defaults to a basic "Journal" search. Words keyed in here result in a keyword search. Because there is little description beyond the journal supplied "Aims and Scope" or any meta-data other than the assigned discipline and topic categories, users not looking for a specific journal need to search using broad terms in order to get results. Clicking on the advanced search option greatly expands your options and allows for customized filtering: by discipline (and then by topic within discipline), difficulty of acceptance, peer review type, acceptance rate, time to review, and more.

The database is geared for three main user groups: scholars looking to identify a suitable journal for their work, librarians involved in collection development, and tenure committees looking for additional measures upon which to judge the value of a candidate's work. Scholars may initially be excited to see a special search tab entitled "Calls for Papers," but after getting little or no results here, they may abandon this tab. Searches for "algebra," "sustainability," and "ocean" resulted in zero hits. Or rather, the searches resulted in an ominous field of white where presumably there would be a list of results — it would be nice to at least get an indication that there were zero results and, even better, to get a suggestion for a different but related term that might bring up some hits. A search for "marketing" did bring up two journal titles.

A third search tab, Institutional Publishing, or IPA (Institutional Publishing Activity), is

geared to appeal to administrators — Deans, Department Heads, and even Provosts and Presidents — or scholars contemplating a move to another institution. Although I am not in a position where institutional level information would be useful, this search tab too has limited use in my opinion. If one is able to filter for a discipline and topic area that is relevant, you only get a list of institutions broken down into three somewhat elusive categories reminiscent of cup sizes at Starbucks: Premier, Significant, and High Influence. There is also another category "Accredited" where "those institutions whose faculty members publish in journals without citation counts but are accredited by national accreditation associations." Although it is possible to filter here for Humanities, you get no results. It is unclear why this is even an option since there are no humanities journals in the database. The list





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of journals included is limited to a somewhat random collection of disciplines including: business, education, psychology & psychiatry, mathematics & science, computer science, and health & nursing. Fortunately access to these disciplines can be purchased à la carte and the costs are clearly stated on the site. At the time of this review, the database includes records on nearly 11,000 journal titles.

The main thing that **Cabell's** does, it does well. To my knowledge (as well as **Cabell's**), no other company provides the kind of journal publisher assessment that can be found here. In addition to information that can be found in other places such as impact factor, type of peer review (blind, double blind, etc.), and audience, **Cabell's** provides its own unique Contextual Influence Report (CCI), which "calculates the average citations per article for each journal from the preceding three-year period... This yields, for each discipline and topic that any journal publishes in, an individual ranking environment that consists only of the titles that publish therein... Journals with insufficient citation activity to be included in the citation database are marked as either 'Qualified' or 'Novice,' depending on how long they have been publishing." A given journal's CCI is displayed using a sliding scale. This can be a bit deceptive as the bar seems to slide to only one

of three stopping points: "high," "significant," and "premier." Given that the scale is not more nuanced (able to register points between high and significant), it may have been more honest to display this information the way they do the Difficulty of Acceptance with a simple "Rigorous," "Significantly difficult," and "Difficult" designation. The method used for calculating the difficulty of acceptance struck me as confusing, if not a little biased: "To generate the DA, we calculate the average number of times an article from a top performing institution publishes in each journal, then analyze them across a z-score transformed distribution for each discipline." The information that I would imagine most scholars would most like to have is the actual acceptance rate. Under the category of "Submission Process and Experience" in the "Journal Details" section that can be accessed using a dropdown, there is a slot for this information as well as a host of other types of information that would be valuable such as "Time to Review," "Turnaround Time," and "Plagiarism Screen." Unfortunately, other than the Plagiarism Screen, this information was missing from every journal that I sampled (actually the acceptance rate provided was 0%). One would hope that over time this information would be filled in. Those who manage institutional repositories as well as scholars who care about open access will be happy to find a color-coded, easy-to-read designation for titles that are, "Open Access," "Hybrid," or "Traditional."

Other features include a dropdown for "Journal History" and "Personal Profile." The benefit for the Journal History was elusive — most of the journals I sampled apparently had no history, and the few that did only had the CCI information, which can also be found in the details. There is also a compare journals tool that generates a spreadsheet that could be handy for someone trying to make a decision about what journal would hit the sweet spot in terms of rigor and likelihood of acceptance among those in the database, although this feature is somewhat compromised by the lack of data provided for most journals. Users can create a "Personal Profile" that will enable them to "create custom lists of journals in which they are interested and allow users to rate their experiences with individual journals." This may have value to some highly productive scholars, but I would doubt that it gets much use. As I understand it, the plan is that this option will eventually become public and enable more crowd sourced information such as personalized journal recommendations, custom call for paper alerts, user forums, and ORCID integration. If enough users buy in, this would be extremely helpful.

In short, with the disturbing rise of predatory journals, any tool that allows librarians and scholars to distinguish between quality and sham journal titles is welcome and necessary. Outside of **Beale's List**, there are little to no objective methods for cross checking

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- 4) changes to delivery of traditional reference services;
- 5) unfilled positions in conjunction with their ultimate removal of the line item, and staff and user resistance to change;
- 6) how budget cuts, natural disasters, and horrific staff reductions, while devastating, can lead to tremendous positive changes;
- 7) how changes in library leadership and shifts to the university's strategic plan are opportunities to solidify the library's impact and relevance;
- 8) how to align divergent department cultures to facilitate change; and finally
- 9) the need to create new spaces which can facilitate sharing and creation of knowledge.

Each of the libraries facing these issues find their own unique solutions to address their problems. The results are cost savings which prevent other resources from being cut, streamlining and movement of many services to the Internet, patron self-service, movement away from job silos to shared workloads, and focused training. The libraries learn the importance of utilizing data to make a point about service reductions and partnering with patrons to get buy-in to change. Another outcome is that library systems are now more flexible with constant evaluation being done for their usefulness and viability. In the process, patrons actually gain access to resources which they could not easily access before.

One lesson that the book discusses is the importance of adequate staff training. Libraries find that collaborations, broader skill sets, gaining library staff, and student buy-in are invaluable. Broader skill sets benefit libraries and add marketable skills to their employees. Many library personnel now find themselves with time freed up for less mundane tasks. Library staff can work in a smaller space, which then frees up a larger space that can be used by faculty and students to learn from each other and to create new knowledge in an informal setting.

Letting Go of Legacy Services is an excellent book that addresses problems and possible solutions that can be used by any library. While the case studies primarily discuss the experiences of academic libraries, the problems are faced and shared by libraries of all types.

Molaro, Anthony and Leah L. White, (Eds.).
The Library Innovation Toolkit: Ideas, Strategies, and Programs.
Chicago, IL: American Library Association, 2015.
978-0-8389-1274-4. 216 pages. \$55.00.

Reviewed by **Amanda Vocks** (Technical Services Specialist,
Olin Library, Rollins College) <avocks@rollins.edu>

There is one common theme that the book *The Library Innovation Toolkit: Ideas, Strategies, and Programs* conveys: innovation takes collaboration with colleagues. Being innovative means understanding innovation and encouraging everyone to be a part of it. Moreover, the

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the validity of an ever growing number of scholarly publications. For the price, I would think that **Cabell's** would be worth it for most institutions that have even a modest publication record. We can only hope that **Cabell's** will continue to expand the number of disciplines it covers and the number of journals it includes as well as the information provided about those journals. In an email exchange with a representative of **Cabell's** I was assured that: "**Cabell's** is always looking to expand its coverage according to the needs of the academic community. We recently added over 4,000 titles from the fields of mathematics and science. Our next focused collection effort, too, will be geared toward satisfying the desires of current and future users." 🌿

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