

2016

1science Profile

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and the question is, how can we support and help that model grow in a sustainable manner? At the top end of the market, I don't know how much competition there will be there in ten years considering the consolidation we are likely to see. Let's hope we continue to see regional players who can deliver high-quality value at a good price point as an alternative to the dominant firms who are likely to continue to increase their price.

I must admit that my main concern at the moment is the growing cleavage we might see between those who can publish in the best journals and get all the credit, and those who can't. There are big deals being negotiated that have an influence on author order and who becomes the corresponding author. We can progressively see the wealthiest countries extending their advantage by virtue of wealth rather than scholarly merit. This certainly warrants attention.

ATG: *Do you think that an OA model will be successful in displacing paid subscriptions? If so, where does that leave libraries? Where does it leave Iscience?*

EA: I certainly think so. Paid subscriptions to scholarly journals have become an aberration, as most of the research they publish is funded by public monies. This knowledge is meant to be public, there is no justification for locking it in. This has nothing to do with profits. I don't mind publishers earning a profit provided access to knowledge is not curtailed. Knowledge should be publicly owned, but it's only fair that value-added services receive commensurate income for the original value being created.

Iscience was created with a view to an open publishing world. We live in messy times, and our objective is to create order out of this chaos. That said, it is an uncomfortable position to be in. We see our role as bringing knowledge to users in an unencumbered manner, not as policeman. However, a lot of material on the web should not be presented in the way it is. Authors — and mea culpa, myself included — often post the final version of record of papers with the publishers' page layout. This creates a situation whereby a lot of papers on the web are infringing copyright because we want to post the version with the nice page layout. All progressive publishers accept that the post-print version — that is, the final accepted version without the page layout (and sometimes copy proofing work) — can be posted online: the most progressive do so without an embargo, the most conservative after an embargo period. The situation is therefore quite absurd, as in the end the infringement is essentially on page layout. I look forward to the day that **Iscience** doesn't have to contend with such a shallow problem, especially considering how huge the mission of creating an open access world is.

ATG: *Impact factor has been a standard tool used in evaluating journals. How does impact factor apply to the OA publishing? Or*

against the grain company profile

1science

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AFFILIATED COMPANIES: Science-Metrix

KEY PRODUCTS AND SERVICES: oaFindr, oaFoldr and oaFigr.

CORE MARKETS/CLIENTELE: Academic libraries and universities.

NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES: 10

HISTORY AND BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF YOUR COMPANY PROGRAM: **Iscience** is the leading provider of software tools and analytics to accelerate the transition to open access. The company's solution currently comprises three products. With **oaFindr**, library patrons can easily discover green, gold and hybrid open access scholarly articles published in peer-reviewed journals. **oaFoldr** continuously updates institutional repositories with open access papers produced by the institutions' authors, and published anywhere in the world. **oaFigr** presents bibliometric and open access indicators to support subscription management and strategic planning. **Iscience**, headquartered in Montreal, Canada, is affiliated with **Science-Metrix**, a leader in the bibliometrics and research evaluation community. 🌱

do you think altmetrics is sufficient alternative? If so, why?

EA: Impact factors have been grossly misunderstood. These are the instruments that have been the most widely dissected and criticized in bibliometrics and as a result have developed a bad reputation. Many people who criticize the impact factor then use the h-index, which is an appallingly deficient indicator that should strictly be used to compare two perfectly identical individuals. Altmetrics promised much and delivered little: there are no properly calibrated, reproducible, transparent altmetric indicators widely in use today.

It is possible to correct for the main flaw of the impact factor relatively easily and this is what professional bibliometricians have been doing for decades. There are also alternative indicators of journal impact, which are also based on the use of citations, and I much prefer those with all their limits compared to using the h-index of a journal or black-boxed altmetrics. We just need to enlarge the citation network to include the 60% of journals currently excluded from the mainstream bibliographic databases — this will also bring to the fore the scholarly contribution of the South and the increasingly important production of Far Eastern countries.

ATG: *From where you sit, what do you see as the key opportunities and challenges facing open access scholarly publishing?*

EA: I think access and diversity are the key challenges. We are shifting the problem of access from the capacity to read articles to the capacity to publish — this is the consequence of the APC model, which may further lock out less wealthy researchers from publishing in the best journals, even if they have very

good research. The problem of diversity is not linked with open access per se but is rather a continuation of the current industry consolidation trend. I sincerely hope we can find some ways to maintain diversity — ideas created in universities are not meant to be controlled by large firms.

ATG: *Leading a new, innovative company like Iscience is a challenge that demands a lot of time. But everyone needs a chance to recharge. What fun things do you like to do? What outside interests or activities do you enjoy?*

EA: I know it can be difficult to comprehend, but I truly love to work. This is why I can be so passionate about what I do. Otherwise, I'm a simple man. I like spending time with my family, going to the cinema with my wife, canoeing in the summer, snowshoeing in the winter, and just taking long walks in the spring and autumn when nature reveals its subtler details, when things are busy changing. I love spring, it is so full of hope, change and growth, and the light is particularly nice to take pictures. When I need a break, I go and work on our wooded lot, where I love to tend the forest. I love to work intellectually, but I replenish with manual work.

ATG: *Eric, thanks so much for taking the time to talk to us. We really appreciate it.*

EA: Thank you, it was truly a pleasure discussing these important issues with you. 🌱