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## Things that Keep Us Awake At Night

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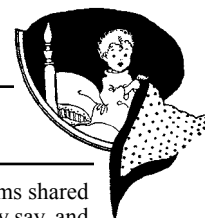


# Against the Grain

*"Linking Publishers, Vendors and Librarians"*

ISSN: 1043-2094

## Things That Keep Us Awake at Night



by **Alicia Wise** (Director of Access and Policy, Elsevier, The Boulevard, Langford Lane, Kidlington, Oxford, OX5 1GB; Phone: +44 (0) 7823 536 826) <a.wise@elsevier.com>

**Katina Strauch** and **Tom Gilson** paid me a huge compliment earlier this year with their invitation to guest edit this issue of *ATG* around the theme of things keeping me awake at night. This theme was specially chosen in honor of a terrific article on the same theme that the supremely talented **Karen Hunter** did 20 years ago. Welcome fellow insomniacs!

The context in which that article was written was in the interim between the end of Project Tulip and the eventual launch of the ScienceDirect digital publishing platform which flowed in part from it. **Karen** was at the nexus of a huge transformation in scholarly communications, though no one could be certain of that at the time. What was clear, however, were some of the challenges that needed to be tackled.

Fast forward 20 years, and there are epic shifts underway again. I enjoy an interesting perspective within **Elsevier** which is well on its way through a transformation from publisher to information analytics company that improves research performance. What that exactly means continues to develop and become more clear, and we'll see the eventual impact and outcomes. At least two things are different this time around: I am not nearly as awesome as **Karen Hunter**,

and the epic shift is not happening in the same environment of collaboration between libraries and publishers. Indeed, a theme I often reflect on with real sadness is the rather parlous state of this fundamental, and potentially hugely powerful, strategic relationship. Now it too often feels the relationship is defined, at least by some, as a competitive one rather than as a symbiotic one. Neither community has made a radical transformation to the benefit of our shared users without the other. Anyway, while this is honestly something that does keep me awake at night, I have discovered that my sleeplessness by itself does not lead to change on this front.

It is a profound commitment to working symbiotically with librarians that shaped the way this issue of *ATG* evolved. My first action was to list my angst on paper, and to share it with the extremely thoughtful members of our North American Library Advisory Board (thank you — you know who you are!), and then **Katina** and **Tom** kindly offered to extend this consultation to members of the Charleston Advisory Board for thoughts and additions. I am so glad of having done this, as these wise professionals surfaced two additional themes that were keeping *them* awake at night, and have come to keep me

awake now too. Problems shared are problems halved they say, and I certainly hope this proves to be true in time.

So what are some drivers of our shared angst:

1. Information authenticity in an age of both misinformation and overload
2. Metrics to demonstrate our impact
3. Making "open" a reality
4. Rights — by which I mean in this context copyright, copyright exceptions, and the rights of different scholarly communication stakeholders
5. Data access and preservation
6. Big data and privacy

So to each topic in turn...

Fake news and fake research are both eroding the trust that has traditionally been placed in published material. As is the case with news, fake research in its purest form is fabricated

*continued on page 8*

## If Rumors Were Horses

Hey everyone! It's summer in Charleston which means high 80s! Not sure how we would be able to survive without air conditioning!

I hope you read **Nancy Herther's** two part article about **Amazon** and **Jeff Bezos**. What a piece of great research and journalism. I am just sorry that I didn't buy **Amazon** stock when it was cheap. At last look it was nearly \$1000 for one share. Ouch! Anyway, more power to **Amazon** and **Jeff Bezos**.



**Mabel Porter Jacks**, the fifth grandchild of **Bruce** and **Katina Strauch**. She is adorable!

**SSP (Society for Scholarly Publishing)** is entering its fortieth year and is celebrating the occasion by launching a new logo. "As scholarly publishing has evolved over the years, we felt now was the right time to refresh our logo to better reflect who we are today and to symbolize the dynamic nature of our future. **SSP's** strength is within our membership and our new brand pays homage to our past while providing a new and exciting look for the Society going forwards," said the wonderful **Melanie Dolechek**, **SSP Executive Director**.

<https://www.sspnet.org/>

*continued on page 6*

### What To Look For In This Issue:

<i>Books About Books</i> .....	40
<i>Learning from Knowledge Unlatched 2016: Making OA Work</i> .....	46
<i>Remembering Eric Moon</i> .....	50
<i>How Not to Panic When the Key Employee Needs Extended Time Off</i> ...	62
<i>Making the Deal Happen</i> .....	64
<i>Living in the Past</i> .....	72
<i>News and Announcements for the 37th Charleston Library Conference</i> ...	74
<i>Interviews</i>	
<i>Kent Anderson</i> .....	30
<i>Profiles Encouraged</i>	
<i>New profiles for five people, two libraries and one company</i> .....	83
<i>Plus more</i> .....	See inside



# 2017 Charleston Conference — 37th Annual Issues in Book and Serial Acquisition

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The Conference Directors for the **2017 Charleston Conference** include — **Beth Bernhardt**, **Principal Director** (UNC-Greensboro) <beth\_bernhardt@uncg.edu>, **Glenda Alvin** (Tennessee State University) <galvin@Tnstate.edu>, **Adam Chesler** (AIP) <adam.chesler@cox.net>, **Ed Coleran** (Triumvirate Content Consultants) <ecolleran@triumvirateconsultants.com>, **Cris Ferguson** (Murray State University) <cferguson13@murraystate.edu>, **Rachel Fleming** (University of Tennessee at Chattanooga) <rachel-fleming@utc.edu>, **Joyce Dixon-Fyle** (DePauw University Libraries) <joyfyle@depauw.edu>, **Erin Gallagher** (Reed College) <gallagher@reed.edu>, **Tom Gilson** (*Against the Grain*) <gilson@cofc.edu>, **Chuck Hamaker** (UNC-Charlotte) <cahamake@email.uncc.edu>, **Bobby Hollandsworth** (Clemson University) <hollan4@clemson.edu>, **Tony Horava** (University of Ottawa) <thorava@uottawa.ca>, **Albert Joy** (Retired) <albert.joy@uvm.edu>, **Ramune Kubilius** (Northwestern Health Sciences Library) <r-kubilius@northwestern.edu>, **Erin Luckett** (Readex) <eluckett@newsbank.com>, **Jack Montgomery** (Western Kentucky University) <jack.montgomery@wku.edu>, **David Myers** (DMedia Associates) <dave@dmediaassoc.com>, **Ann Okerson** (Center for Research Libraries) <aokerson@gmail.com>, **Audrey Powers** (UFS Tampa Library) <apowers@lib.usf.edu>, **Heather Staines** (Hypothes.is) <heather.staines@gmail.com>, **Anthony Watkinson** (Consultant) <anthony.watkinson@btinternet.com>, **Meg White** (Rittenhouse) <meg.white@rittenhouse.com>, **Katina Strauch** (College of Charleston) <kstrauch@comcast.net>, or [www.charlestonlibraryconference.com](http://www.charlestonlibraryconference.com).

**Send ideas by July 14, 2017** to any of the Conference Directors listed above. The Call for Papers form will open on April 18, 2017 at <http://www.charlestonlibraryconference.com/participate/call-for-papers/>.

**Or send ideas to: Katina Strauch**, P.O. Box 799, Sullivan’s Island, SC 29482 • 843-723-3536 (voice) • 843-509-2848 (cell) <kstrauch@comcast.net> • [www.charlestonlibraryconference.com](http://www.charlestonlibraryconference.com)



### Things That Keep Us Awake at Night from page 1

for the purposes of profit or propaganda, for example a whole range of predatory journals, including those recently exposed for accepting articles by “Dr. Fraud” (an entirely made up academic).

The public is waking up to the serious ramifications that fake news has for political processes, with the likes of Facebook and Google being asked to be part of the solution. The consequences of fake research are arguably just as dangerous and immediate for the millions of doctors, scientists, policymakers and more who rely on it to make do-or-die decisions every day. If a doctor makes a treatment plan based on fake research, it could risk the patient’s life.

I’m therefore delighted that in this issue of *ATG* we have two contributions on this important topic. The first is by **Donald Barclay** and the second by **Scott Plutchak**. I really encourage you to read both — they were developed independently but are highly complementary and reflect whether there are pragmatic things that can be done to tackle these issues, and/or whether an intellectual paradigm shift is required. I’m not convinced there is a single right answer, but

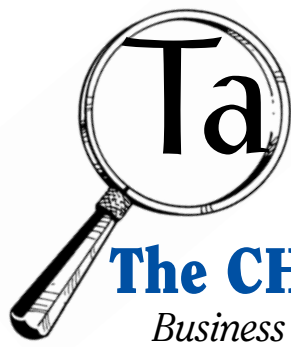
having read these pieces I’m newly convinced there are no quick and easy solutions. From where I am sitting, better peer review, research reproducibility, and analytics will be necessary ingredients.

Metrics have become surprisingly compelling to me, trained and firmly committed as a qualitative social scientist. But oh... the power of numbers is something I’ve come to really appreciate since joining **Elsevier**. Everything is measured here, occasionally in very painful detail. But there is something powerful in numbers and robust metrics for getting at reality and trends, and especially when these are counterintuitive or at odds with our own beliefs and perceptions. Other members of the research community clearly find metrics compelling too, given the range of articles in **Elsevier Connect** categorized under metrics and analytics and addressing topics from gender to research performance (<https://www.elsevier.com/connect/home?f.Tags|terms=metrics&f.Tags|terms=data%20%26%20analytics&f.Community|community=elsevier%20connect>). **Roger Schonfeld** and colleagues at **Ithaka** have got a great deal of experience in terrific longitudinal studies to gather metrics on the impact of libraries. Much of this work has focused on the contribution libraries make to teaching, and

it would be really compelling to have even more insight into the contribution that libraries make to improving research performance.

I first aspired to help create an open access world in 2001, and sometimes really cannot believe that in 2017 it still hasn’t come to pass. And why is this? It is certainly not because it is impossible. It is not because there are vested interests that throw up road blocks. It is not because of copyright. Or money. Or profits. Or indeed many of the other things I regularly hear cited as “the barrier.” I firmly believe it is because we are not pragmatic enough, and do not spend enough time together figuring out how to just make it work for all stakeholders. If we did, it would be. Instead we use “open” as if it were a battlefield or a grassy field on which all sorts of other games are played. Anyway, this keeps me awake at night. However, as it was my day job, and this exercise is in halving problems by sharing them, I asked my wonderful colleague **Gemma Hersh** for her perspective on making open a reality. She’s come up with a great piece that spans open access, open data, and open science and to my delight she also focuses on the importance of collaboration to make it all a reality. I hope you will enjoy reading what she has to say as much as I did.

*continued on page 10*



Take a closer look at....

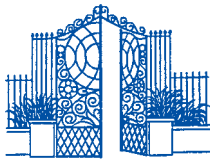
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### Things That Keep Us Awake at Night *from page 8*

Last week (i.e., the third week of April) the Open Scholarship Initiative convened its second annual meeting of key stakeholders, all committed to making open a reality. Under **Glen Hampson's** deft leadership, the consensus from those discussions has just been conveyed, and is summarized by him in this way:

1. **Open isn't free.** Several groups repeated this point that the focus of open cannot be about cost-savings. Open is going to cost money — the jury is still out on exactly how much. So, if we all agree that more open is important (and that's really why we're all here), it is this importance that needs to drive our efforts going forward, not the promise of less spending on scholcomm.
2. **Open isn't easy.** Aside from the cost involved, there is mixed messaging in this space (both in terms of what's being communicated at universities and from whom) and a lack of incentives for several key audiences (namely researchers). More trust and understanding is needed (see the trust section, below). More balance is also important, such as solutions that involve local input and incentives (local as in geographic, but also institution and discipline-specific), and approaches to open that are more inclusive (wherein we can all agree on the idea of open and then identify 100 paths to get there instead of just one).

3. **Publishing is critical.** Vint Cerf mentioned this in his brilliant opening address, and it was echoed by **Keith Yamamoto** in his equally brilliant closing. For **Vint**, increasing the reproducibility of published research was paramount, and this requires increasing access, and this in turn requires a much more serious focus on digital preservation — from hardware and operating systems to software and formats. Without preservation and access, there is no modern scientific record. For **Keith**, the focus was on the act of publishing. 'If you don't publish your experiment, it is *exactly* like not doing it.' But the current system of publishing is too expensive for universities (barring any major restructuring of how much money is allocated to libraries, or how much money comes directly from the government to support publishing), so our focus needs to be on what now — figuring out who pays, figuring out what we publish and where, understanding the global impact of our solutions, making sure we're resolving researcher concerns, and more. (Both speakers had much more involved messages than this; a summary will be provided soon.)
4. **OSI can help.** Several concrete ideas were proposed regarding where OSI can help push the ball forward on open. These included creating new resources for the open community (such as APC finders or open resources links), designing new open outreach materials tailored to specific audiences (instead of one-size-fits-all materials), funding studies to look at issues like how much libraries are spending on open,

developing a better understanding of researcher needs and incentives, convening conversations between funders, helping to identify best practices, promoting the DART framework for open (discovery, accessibility, reproducibility and transparency), and getting behind efforts like OA2020 and DORA (both of which can be read in a more balanced light).

5. **We're on the right track.** OSI isn't going to be able to tackle this issue by itself — we all acknowledge that this effort's current lack of staff (i.e., funding) makes it a somewhat unlikely candidate to manage a global revolution in scholarly communications, but most delegates thought OSI serves an important and useful purpose nonetheless — that what has been spinning out of OSI is having an impact, and that the approach we're taking is exactly on the right track. Whether by being a neutral forum for broad discussion, a proponent of inclusive ideas, a convener of parties, or even a developer or funder of new products and projects, the big tent approach is better understood this year than last (although as a group we're still not settled yet on exactly how this group should be managed, if at all). **Keith Yamamoto** noted one specific way in which OSI might be on target: Helping identify a set of common principles that define what we want at the endpoint. If we can identify these principles as a group, we can then make a broad model that can be adapted or adopted.
6. **We're more alike than unlike.** Several stakeholder groups (in their reports) pushed back against the idea of having distinct groups. We have differences of opinion in this community, but there is often as much diversity of opinion within a single stakeholder group as there is between groups. Everyone agreed that we need more involvement from the global community, and also from researchers themselves.
7. **Convergent needs are everywhere.** The HSS & Scientists workgroup in particular identified a raft of areas where these often disparate communities can find common ground — e.g., on the need for visibility, public engagement, preservation, and interdisciplinarity. Convening action on this common ground is the next step. Some stakeholder groups (namely scholarly societies) felt they were already cohesive enough and well-positioned enough that they could advance agendas and promote culture change — that these convergent needs were (or could become) clear and as actionable. Similarly, the scholarly infrastructure groups like ORCID and DOAJ are ready to work together and with OSI to help promote and secure open.
8. **Accountability and recognition.** We need to get institutions invested in this effort (not necessarily financially). We all have a stake in the outcome. What this means in practice is to be determined. As far as recognition is concerned, several groups expressed an interest in developing a way to recognize good work in open — a type of Nobel Prize for open.

*continued on page 12*

# Bet You Missed It

Press Clippings — In the News — Carefully Selected by Your Crack Staff of News Sleuths

Column Editor: **Bruce Strauch** (Retired, The Citadel)

**Editor's Note:** Hey, are y'all reading this? If you know of an article that should be called to *Against the Grain's* attention ... send an email to <kstrauch@comcast.net>. We're listening! — **KS**

## AVAST, ME HEARTIES

by **Bruce Strauch** (Retired, The Citadel)

Pirate libraries hold millions of scholarly journal articles in violation of copyright. And they hand it out for free.

They began in Russia with the samizdat culture where scholars passed lit and scientific info underground to evade communist censorship.

Then they shifted to English-language works. And grew to be ginormous. A neuroscientist from Kazakhstan created **Sci-Hub** that jumped the fence of journal paywalls via donated passwords.

**Elsevier** began litigation against **Sci-Hub** and **Library Genesis** in 2015 claiming a loss of millions of dollars in profits. The pirates argue that their users could never afford the price of buying the articles so **Elsevier** really lost nothing.

See — **Sarah Laskow**, “The Rise of Pirate Libraries,” *Atlas Obscura*, April 21, 2016.

## NEVER A BAD TIME FOR A NEGRONI

by **Bruce Strauch** (Retired, The Citadel)

The **Strauch** daughter — **Ileana Jacks** — returned from Venice a Negroni enthusiast. And starting June 1 is Negroni week. The classic has equal parts sweet vermouth, Campari and gin. Rocks. Garnish with orange twist.

Or for a mod taste, smashed cucumber, Bonal vermouth, gin and beer. Cucumber ribbon wound through inside of glass. Salted rim.

See — **Jim Kearns**, *Wall Street Journal Podcast*, 4-24-17.



## AND LET'S READ ABOUT BASEBALL

by **Bruce Strauch** (Retired, The Citadel)

**Jim Boulton**, *Ball Four* (First exposé book on infidelity, drinking and drug use by ball pros.) (1970); (2) **Robert Peterson**, *On the Ball Was White* (First book about the Negro Leagues. Inspired special Hall of Fame entries at Cooperstown.) (1970); (3) **Bill Veeck**, *Veeck as in Wreck* (3-foot-seven pinch hitter gets walked because he has no strike zone.) (1962); (4) **Ted Williams**, *The Science of Hitting* (Ted's legacy still in print.) (1970); (5) **Michael Lewis**, *Moneyball* (Mgr. uses stats to find undervalued talent.) (2003).

See — **Paul Dickson**, “Five Best,” *The Wall Street Journal*, April 22-23, 2017, p.C10.

## GROUNDBREAKING BIOGRAPHIES

by **Bruce Strauch** (Retired, The Citadel)

**William Godwin**, *Memoirs of the Author of 'A Vindication of the Rights of Woman'* (Husband writes of **Mary Wollstonecraft**, feminist, travel writer, children's author.) (1798); (2) **Elizabeth Gaskell**, *The Life of Charlotte Brontë* (**Liz** actually interviewed Charlotte.) (1857); (3) **Michael Holroyd**, *Lytton Strachey* (1967-68); (4) **Robert Caro**, *The Years of Lyndon Johnson* (Four volumes of a study of power.) (1982-2012); (5) **Stacy Schiff**, *Véra* (The Nabokov marriage.) (1999).

See — **Richard Holmes**, “Five Best,” *The Wall Street Journal*, April 1-2, 2017, p.C10. (Holmes is the author of *The Long Pursuit: Reflections of a Romantic Biographer*.)

## Things That Keep Us Awake at Night from page 10

9. **Trust**. This conversation needs trust to move forward. There is a lot of mistrust in the system — not in OSI, which is widely seen as something of a unique refuge and a unique and valuable opportunity to speak across the aisle — but in the larger scholcomm system which has been so polarized for so long. Still, even within OSI, we still haven't cracked through to where we're having frank and open exchanges yet (at least in the annual meetings) about fundamental disagreements — issues like APCs, for example. How and where to have these conversations is to be determined — maybe not in full-group meetings in front of live audiences, but we can certainly continue to make progress in this regard. **Scott Plutchak** noted that we can't get to this level of trust (and engagement) by meeting only once a year for a few days — more meetings and more engagement will be needed.”

All restful music to my ears. Rock on, OSI!

The next three topics proved particularly frustrating as I was unable to find anyone willing to

write about them. Now, I am sure you are out there, and I simply failed to look in the right places or ran out of time before I did so. But, please, identify yourselves loudly and proudly and come out of the wordwork. For example, consider submitting a proposal to speak at the **Charleston Conference**: <http://www.against-the-grain.com/2017/04/2017-charleston-conference-call-for-papers-now-open/>.

What especially gave me sleepless nights were the reasons provided by some real experts in these areas about *why* they were unwilling to write on the key stressful topics identified. Now, of course they are all busy people being experts, so perhaps these are polite cover stories, but what do you think of some of these responses:

- **Rights** — there's nothing new to report or discuss, nothing much has changed in the last 5-7 years. This left me depressed, and if things are so entrenched surely this must be a sign of problems in itself.
- **Data and preservation** — this is new and hard and so understandably difficult to write about, but what depressed me was the huge willingness to write about the preservation of publications. The preservation of publications is *not* something keeping me awake at night when we have wonderful services like CLOCKSS and

Portico and national libraries with legal deposit collections. Let's please not waste our energy on duplicating effort, and instead really embrace and overcome the new challenges facing us all on data.

- **Big data and privacy** — there is clearly lots of shared angst that needs to be surfaced, and pragmatic steps for resolving this need to be found. Again, the **Charleston Conference** is a good place for this to happen. For example, **Elsevier's** privacy policy was published partly in response to an excellent session **Ann Okerson** organized there on this topic two years ago. Thank you, **Ann**. So... a little more conversation and then some action, please (to mangle **Elvis Presley's** tune just ever so slightly).

And then finally a hopeful and thoroughly pragmatic and positive note to end on, by the wonderful **Maggie Farrell**. She reflects, from her position as a Dean of Libraries, on the importance of establishing a strategic vision and for all the necessary things to drive change through to a successful conclusion. If there is one certainty we all share, it is that change is all around us and more is coming. Inspirational, successful leadership is essential for us all. 🐼