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Little Red Herrings-Can a Leopard Change its Spots?

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Liaisons were concerned that there had not been any publicity from the **LSU Libraries** to the campus community about the efforts to enhance collections, but in reality, the Dean of Libraries had continually promoted the project and emphasized the **LSU Libraries'** mission to those stakeholders with specific interests in maintaining a robust print collection.

Concluding Thoughts

The gap-analysis for the humanities was the first time **LSU Libraries** had allocated special funds for liaisons to focus on previously published materials. **LSU Libraries** was able to add 810 print monographs to the collection for fiscal year 2017, encumbering \$40,246 before spending halted. **LSU Libraries'** administration considers this an important on-going effort to build collection strength, and the dean wants to continue this process. Plans are underway to set aside more funding next fiscal year, and focus on other disciplines in the humanities that were not a focus in the first year, and include social sciences.

This project was a learning experience for everyone involved. A collection development librarian debriefed all the liaisons at the close of the project to gather input for future adaptations. As the process evolves, the timeline should shift so liaisons receive their allocations earlier in the fiscal year and the deadline for selections should move from March to January. The **Gobi** lists were helpful, but needed better parameters to refine the quality and quantity of titles. One suggestion was to limit titles to the **Gobi** profile indicators of "research essential" and "research recommended." Another suggestion was to provide title information only if five or more of the peer-institutions had purchased the title. To ease acquisitions, liaisons should be responsible for checking title records against the catalog or the project manager should consider having student workers manage this task.

In addition to adjusting some of the project processes, liaisons would like to see a greater emphasis from **LSU Libraries'** administration for campus-wide marketing, as well as guidance towards effective communication strategies for promoting the newly owned materials. The gap-analysis project offers opportunities to strengthen ongoing relationships between liaisons and faculty by highlighting the **LSU Libraries'** continued commitment to deliver quality resources.

The overall purpose of the project allowed liaisons to focus on remediating past omissions to balance the collection instead of focusing on collecting recently published materials. So far, the results of the humanities gap-analysis project reflect a strategic strengthening of the collection. The **LSU Libraries** hopes to develop future iterations of the project, incorporating suggested efficiencies, and progressing forward to continued success. 🌿

Little Red Herrings — Can a Leopard Change Its Spots?

by **Mark Y. Herring** (Dean of Library Services, Dacus Library, Winthrop University) <herringm@winthrop.edu>

At the time of this writing, the single biggest library-related news is **Elsevier's** acquisition of **bepress** [sic]. The move startled information pundits on several counts. First, none of us knew about the deal until it had been done. For whatever reason (a slip between the cup and the lip is certainly one possibility), **bepress** chose to let us let find out via social media. I saw it first on the *Scholarly Kitchen* website (<http://bit.ly/2uYXP4Z>), and then later on a slew of other social media. The other reason that everything went viral at once proved, of course, to be that **bepress**, a kind of mom and pop Jedi-shop, sold out to, in the eyes of many librarians, the Darth Vader of vendors, **Elsevier**.

For decades, **bepress** did yeoman's work in the world of open access, providing a first-rate software platform for many libraries that could not afford to create one themselves. The cost of said software, while not cheap, was much cheaper than hiring three or four coding librarians to create an open access portal for an institution's intellectual footprint. Those intellectual footprints, now institutional repositories, proved the perfect launching pad for open access content. Add to the first-rate software, first-rate customer service, and you have the formula for its success.

For most of those decades, vendors like **Elsevier** smiled bemusedly at libraries trying to gain an alternative foothold for expensive subscriptions. In many ways, the efforts of libraries were cute, and vendors like **Elsevier** patted us on the head and raised prices for key journals another few percentage points. Open access, it appeared, was going nowhere fast, and it did itself no favors with grand missteps like pay-for-play journals, too.

So how did two seemingly disparate companies get together?

In a word, need drove them together, but need of a different sort for both.

Although I have no inside information, for **bepress**, it must have been the need for cash to develop its big plans. It must have been frustrating for **bepress** to be successful yet remain a small company making a great product. There was so much more it could do, but a fair price for a great product just made the going so slow it must have seemed to slog at times. Ambition to make **bepress** better at everything it did, especially analytics, must have also seemed too appealing to wait. In order to get to that point, **bepress** would have had to raise prices so high so fast it might well have lost too many customers. The choice was to plod along or look for a Sugar Daddy.

Enter sweet **Elsevier** with deep pockets. Again, although I have no inside information, **Elsevier** did not get to be one of the largest vendors by ignoring the market. Sure, for about a decade and a half, open access and institutional repositories seemed like two ugly stepchildren with no fairy godmother, destined to live forever in the cinders and ashes. Then suddenly, libraries everywhere of every size began creating IRs with some success. While the content may never rival **Elsevier's** these idiot stepchildren were making this first-rate content freely available to anyone. Frankly, it was a brilliant move on the part of **Elsevier**, at least from their perspective. Open access may still fail completely, but for now, a good portion of it is in the hands (some might want to say stranglehold) of a company not really known for its frugality to customers.

Once everything about the **bepress** acquisition went viral, its spokespersons came out with several statements. First, to apologize for not letting its customers know about the acquisition before it announced to everywhere else. Managing director **Jean-Gabriel Bankier** rightly apologized for not letting customers know first and committed to communicating better. Probably an apology for not communicating at all would have been better. Frankly, it felt a little like getting to the altar and the spouse-to-be saying, "By the way, I'm already married." Could it have been that **bepress** knew this was a hornet's nest best not to be kicked by it, but to throw that nest onto the social media highway and deal with the buzz later? Hard to say.

After the sort of *esprit d'escalier* apology, assurances were made that nothing would change and content would remain our own; **bepress** would remain as committed as ever to keeping everything functioning normally, customer service would remain first class, and the pricing structure would remain the same. Furthermore, our content will remain as portable as ever. The key takeaway here is that all of this is true *now*.

What we do not know is whether **Elsevier** will begin charging for various portions of the service, such as the dashboard or for reports to users about the use of their content. Will there be a charge after a certain number of submissions, and how quickly, if at all, will prices begin to rise? How soon, if at all, will **Elsevier** begin replacing **bepress** employees with their own? In the eyes of many colleagues, keeping things functioning normally after what appears to be a dinner with the devil will take a spoon so long it has not yet been made.

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My only experience with **Elsevier** is having to pass on many products because it takes so much of our scant resources. The content is fine, of course; it is just the king's ransom we must pay to make **Elsevier** materials accessible requires us to say no, more often than not.

And that brings us, finally, to the leopard and its spots. Can he change them?

I suppose the best answer for now is that there is a first time for everything. Even for **Elsevier**. 🐆

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the future of how research information gets published, shared and accessed. There's also the steering committee for **Metadata 2020**, a group effort to advocate for richer shared metadata. **Scott** says he will keep pushing for open data and a more open, affordable and transparent scholarly communication ecosystem. He's not going to go looking for consulting gigs, but if some interesting projects came up, who knows? **Scott** plans to do some professional and personal writing, he is doing a lot of exercising and even cooking

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Optimizing Library Services — Tracking E-journal Perpetual Rights: A Discussion Among Publishers, Vendors, and Librarians

by **Carol Seiler** (Account Services Manager, EBSCO Information Services)
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A recap of the 2017 Electronic Resources and Librarian (ER&L) session "Tracking E-journal Perpetual Rights: A Discussion Among Publishers, Vendors, and Librarians." Presented by Teri Oparanozie, Sam Houston State University; Jackie Ricords, IGI Global; and Carol Seiler, EBSCO Information Services.

Tracking perpetual access rights is an essential part of the electronic library system. But who is responsible for tracking this information? What information needs to be tracked? This session provided a forum for discussing how librarians, publishers, and vendors can collaborate to make tracking

e-journal perpetual access and entitlement easier and more efficient.

The well-attended session, led by the session moderator, **Teri Oparanozie**, started with a detailed look at what issues and questions exist with perpetual access.

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