Against the Grain

Manuscript 8198

The Best of the Charleston Conference Blog

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The Best of the Charleston Conference Blog

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Opening Keynote: The Future of Research Information — Open, Connected, Seamless

The conference opened in the beautiful Gaillard Center with an opening keynote address by Annette Thomas, CEO of Clarivate Analytics Scientific and Academic Research, who discussed the future of information. She said that our most valuable asset is information, and we still have a lot to learn about how research works, which is important for the whole world.

Current problems in our industry

- Universities’ identity crisis. Universities have enjoyed unprecedented growth. Questions being asked are who are universities for, who should pay for universities, and what are they for?
- Researchers’ credibility crisis. How should research respond to political hostility and avoid becoming a victim of political infighting? Does it serve the economy or human culture? Why is so much research impossible to reproduce? How can we reward truly robust research?
- Publishers’ contribution crisis. Why should so much be published that is read by so few? Researchers have been hooked by the “publish or perish” model, and their main object has become to publish rather than to contribute to society. Why publish only “positive” results, which contributes to publication bias? How can we be part of the solution rather than part of the problem? The coming decades could be a golden age for research. Technology allows us to do anything, but we should not try to do everything.

Characteristics of the Web

- Connectedness: The web has transformed human society. It is the product of research, and the world of research has always been highly connected. We have unparalleled opportunities to construct huge maps of information. No research stands on its own. The genius of the web was to recognize that knowledge itself is a network. There is knowledge and understanding in connectedness. Citations and the Journal Impact Factor are still important assessments of journals. It is vital that research indicators are transparent and easy to understand.
- Openness: At its heart, the web is an open system—anyone can set up a web page. Research was also founded on the principle of openness, which is about transparency, sharing insights, and willingness to take blame as well as credit. Our work is something that we will all do together. Openness is also about being receptive to new users and new sources of data. For each human interface to our products, we should also have an API.
- Seamlessness: Jumping from one site to another is no different than jumping to another page. We do not have to think about where the sites reside. This is the future of knowledge and information. We need to achieve seamlessness between organizations. It also applies to libraries. We must support researchers as well as understanding organizations, governments, etc.

Where will research go next? No single organization or individual has all the answers. We must enable excellence in how research impacts society at large. The most significant trend in our community has been consolidation and opportunities of scale. What we need most of all is talent, diversity, and creative approaches. We need to be clear about what is a quality indicator and what is an impact indicator.

Are Economic Pressures on University Press Acquisitions Quietly Changing the Shape of the Scholarly Record?


She then discussed the reason for university presses. Their commitment to the integrity of knowledge creation and sharing has a renewed urgency and relevance. If they break even, that is a bonus. They now face problems from digital and related pressures (i.e., OA), diminishing library budgets, and decreasing sales per title. But publication costs remain high (one study reported between $15,000 and $130,000). The situation is not a crisis, but conditions are changing.

Acquisitions editors should be brought into the publication process because they exert editorial judgement in finding manuscripts that fit the press’s mission, which is closely tied to the reputation and character of the press.

Kizer Walker, Director of Collections, Cornell University, pointed to the need to understand possibilities between dynamics, suggesting an erosion of publishing channels. Many presses are forced to turn away manuscripts. The Association of University Presses (AUP) did a survey to determine how economic pressures on university presses are affecting monograph publication and whether guidelines, incentives, priorities, and workflows for Acquisitions Editors are changing in an era of declining sales. The study found the revenue tiers from at least 23 presses shown on the slide cited above. See the “Association of University Presses (AUP) revenue tiers:” slide on the blog at the URL noted above.

The slide which shows the subject areas acquired is also available on the blog at the URL noted above.

Sales have dropped sharply (35-60%) in the last few years. eBook sales are a small fraction of sales (most are less than 20%). About half of the 23 publishers said they are not acquiring OA monographs.

Mahinder Kingra, Editor in Chief, Cornell University Press, said that many Acquisitions Editors have been on the job for many years. Their performance assessment criteria have recently changed to include an increased focus on revenues and costs, more focus on acquiring trade and text books, introduction of quantitative measures, and expectations that the editors will handle more books.

The work of an Acquisitions Editor is that of a gate keeper to evaluate book proposals. Reasons for rejection include the quality and scope of the proposal and the sales potential of the book. Every acceptance is a commitment of $20,000. Subsidies are a key part of acceptances (31% of books come with some subsidies, usually from the author’s institution).

A graph which shows some reasons editors use in deciding to enter new fields can be viewed on the blog at the same URL noted above. The cost of entering is not usually considered. Factors considered in launching a new series include increased funding, more proposals, a sales proposal or a suggestion from authors, and an emerging new field. Poor sales is by far the leading reason to close a series or exit a field.

See the “Why close a series or exit a field?” slide on the blog at the URL noted above.

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Nicole Kendzejeksi, Associate Director, Project MUSE, described how she does correlation analyses to determine if there is a relationship between revenue and the numbers of new titles acquired in that subject in the same year. She found that there is, but each subject area looks different from others. Ultimately there is a positive correlation between acquisitions and sales for several subjects. Here are her lessons learned:

• Accurate, consistent, comparable data is hard to get across multiple publishers,
• Count of titles by acquisition date must be collected (contract-to-publish times differ across subjects),
• Select subjects carefully: be consistent with the granularity across subjects, and
• Monograph-specific data is not easy to collect.

Preliminary findings are:

• Cooperation and collaboration are key to sustainability,
• There are mixed messages about the importance of revenue to acquisitions, and
• The mission still wins. Editors will find a way to “support the continuation of important scholarly research.”

To answer the question asked in this session, Acquisitions Editors are still shepherding scholarly monographs through to publication regardless of sales potential, but sustainability under current models is doubtful, and new production and distribution methods seem underutilized. New economic models are emerging but have yet to take hold. The overall picture is still a little unclear.

Where the Stress Falls: Exploring Challenges in the University Library-University Press Relationship

(L-R) Lisa Quinn, Carolyn Walters, Elizabeth Scarpelli, Jeffrey Robert Little

The Thursday Keynote: Navigating Access to Information and Libraries in the Digital Age — Copyright, Fake News, and AI

Ruth Okediji, Professor of Law at the Harvard Law School, presented a stimulating keynote address on the role of libraries in the digital age. She began by emphasizing that the work that librarians and archivists do is indispensable, but we might need to re-conceptualize their role in an environment where platforms govern. In Okediji’s growing up years in New York City, she found some of her best friends at the New York Public Library and discovered a world of learning.

The original design for libraries was to deposit multiple copies of works in diverse libraries. Libraries are not a version of the World Wide Web, and we now have a generation that does not know what a library is. But 53% of Millennials visited a library in the past year, 74% of Americans say that local libraries help them decide what information they can trust, and two-thirds of them say that if their local public library closed, it would have a major impact on their communities. 64% of library users in 2016 wanted to borrow printed books. Knowledge cannot be free if the price of it is that we lose our libraries.

With free access to information, libraries provide a critical social function, such as a safe and quiet place for study. Librarians guide users to information and help them navigate seemingly endless online resources. Libraries host cultural community events, provide free and safe public meeting spaces, and facilitate content searches without selling users’ personal information to commercial entities. They teach information literacy and help users deal with information overload. We talk about information overload, but the reality is that there has always been a lot of information and much of it confirms our biases. It is important that libraries raise awareness and raise levels of critical thinking.

Avid news readers gain information literacy which is something you cannot learn on the Internet.

Libraries are fake news warriors, teaching users how to identify biased sources and how to do fact checking. Now more than ever, they can raise awareness of the need for critical thinking. We have not done a good job of defining what is fake news; libraries play a role in this. They are the great levelers of social opportunity and provide opportunities to enhance lives and receive exposure to political and cultural information. Fake news is a sad testimony that we have not been successful in facilitating access to multiple sources of information. Uneducated people do not have the capacity to discern between what is true and what is not.


There is still a move to create an international treaty where libraries can have more freedom in selection and creation of new materials. The way to meet this challenge is to think of how libraries can be viewed not as just another stakeholder; they are the anchor in the system. From its continued on page 16
beginning in 1790, the fundamental design of copyright law has been about learning. The law was envisaged for perpetual access; it begins “Provided always.” Librarians were embedded into the law and were not passive recipients of books; they are the institutional home for education of the public.

We must dread the day when librarians become like pharmaceutical sales reps. We need best practices guides in selection of materials. Distinguishing what is newsworthy and what is not is affecting how libraries function. They must not become middlemen between purveyors of information and its users. Search engines have replicated many of the functions of librarians, and the digitization of collections can expand the capacity of artificial intelligence (AI) to support these roles. Whether AI-generated works will attract copyright protection will become an issue for libraries seeking to add such works to their collections.

Okekeji concluded with some reflections:

• Information is not news, and news is not knowledge.
• Librarians are critical to the architecture of civic education.
• They perform specialized and non-replicable tasks that include development of intuition, training in judgement, empowering independence of thought and skill, selection and preservation of materials, and fostering social and intellectual community.
• Libraries and librarians are foundational to a trusted system of knowledge development and sharing.
• The current ecosystem of copyright positions libraries as stakeholders in competition with other users. This view distorts the role of both libraries and librarians.

One of the most vital things is to give users training in judgement and intuition and have capacity to navigate the labyrinth of information. Libraries and librarians are foundations of a trusted system; we must maintain the principle that libraries must consider what they do with private customer information.

Sustainable Open Access Approaches: Benefits for Researchers, Librarians, and Publishers

Diane Fulkerson, Director of Library Services, University of South Florida, began with the history of OA initiatives and their common goals. OA began with the Budapest OA initiative in 2002, and there were two other initiatives that followed in 2003. Goals of OA include removing price and copyright barriers and limiting the requirements only to attribution. We now have five types of OA, article publication charges (APCs), and predatory publishers using OA. Next steps should be support for faculty to encourage them to publish in OA journals and identifying those journals with high impact. About 14.3% of OA articles are published as gold OA; they are freely available after publication; APCs can be up to $5,000. Authors’ institutions do not typically fund those charges. The major downside to OA publishing is that predatory publishers are using it.

Julia Gelfand, Applied Sciences and Engineering Librarian, University of California-Irvine, said that today about 30% of published articles are OA. View some of its advantages and how OA will influence libraries in two slides titled “The Real Advantages of Open Access” and “How will OA Influence Libraries?” available on the blog at https://www.against-the-grain.com/2018/11/sustainable-open-access-approaches-benefits-for-researchers-librarians-and-publishers/.

Increasing efforts are being made to share in discovery systems. Institutional repositories (IRs) will continue to be important. Libraries are providing management and software to enable building IRs and are defining themselves as publishers. The role of funders is important. Kevin Sayer, Advisor, ProQuest, noted that books are in the early stages of OA, but there are many shifts in OA costs. Publications and brands play a significant role in OA, and a robust workflow has been established. More prestigious journals have more rigorous standards. Author recognition, financial security, and rewards are at stake. OA has impacted publications and brands, but not the goals of scholarly communication. Savings in publication are offset by editorial costs so APC charges were instituted. Authors seem willing to pay the fees, and libraries are starting to adjust their cost factors and services. View these three slides on the blog at the same URL previously provided.

Mehdi Pour, President and CEO, IGI Global, said that for example, one university has spent $13,884 on APCs and publisher charges for OA books. 53% of their total spending went to three publishers and resulted in 965 articles published. OA is therefore an expensive process. IGI has created a possible solution to high OA prices by establishing deposit accounts for their subscriptions to their journals which allows librarians to reinvest their journal costs in the OA movement to benefit them, their users, and their institution as well as the publishers. This model creates an additional source of APC funding and preserves them from using predatory systems like Sci-Hub. Quality content means it must be validated which incurs costs. The details of the model and how it works are available in three slides on the blog at the same URL previously provided. There has been a large positive response to IGI’s program.

Peer Review: Increasing Transparency in Standards and Practices

This was a highly informative and useful session on the current state of peer review and ways to improve it.

Mark Edington, Director, Amherst College Press, started a consortium of 53 colleges (Lever Press), focusing on humanities and humanist social sciences (HSS). He started from the premise that OA has a reputation problem because many people think it means not peer reviewed. When he published a blog post about this on the Scholarly Kitchen, he received many incendiary comments. The best fix to asserting the problem of peer review is to assure transparency. See https://www.arl.org/news/arl-news/1200-principles-for-emerging-systems-of-scholarly-publishing#.uW-YXIFKgYw for the article on principles for emerging system of scholarly publishing which asserts:

“The system of scholarly publishing must continue to include processes for evaluating the quality of scholarly work and every publication should provide the reader with information about evaluation the work has undergone.”

We have figured out how to do this in rights. Creative Commons has created three “layers” of licenses. How can we do the same thing in peer review? Peer review is an act of the Scholarly Commons. Nature has a perfect form for signaling a collaborative work: the hexagon. The hexagon photos of possible signals of peer review and the peer review symbols are available on the blog at https://www.against-the-grain.com/2018/11/peer-review-increasing-transparency-in-standards-and-practices/.

Using symbols like this would be modular, extensible, and scalable. Some important issues are not being addressed:

• Crediting the labor of peer review,
• Diversifying the pool of reviewers,
• Institutional acknowledgement of peer review,
• Shifting to open peer review as a norm, and
• “I am angry about peer review.”

The next step is to hand these issues over to others in the field.

Charles Watkinson, Associate University Librarian, University of Michigan and Director, University of Michigan Press, said that operationalizing peer review signaling is particularly relevant to OA publishers. The University of Michigan Press publishes Lever Press books on the Fulcrum platform. Lever is an experimental press; Fulcrum presents components as well as the work so it is appropriate for multimedia, extra images, 3D models etc. Authors therefore do not have to strip away their research to get beyond the print facsimile eBook. Each component has its own identifier and metadata. Not all assets will necessarily go through the same process.

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The Winds of Change: A New Model for Specialized LIS Education

Carol Tenopir, Chancellor’s Professor, University of Tennessee School of Information Sciences, and her students and colleagues reported on a three-year user experience (UX-A) project at the University of Tennessee. The goal of the project was to create specialized educational assessment experiences; its unique feature is building the collaboration. Students come out of their education with an MLS degree and take courses on assessment, which are combined with workplace mentoring, training, and collaborative experiences. They partner with experts from information-intensive environments to share ideas. There is a growing need for assessment librarians but they do not learn it in their MLS programs. This project was funded by IMLS and the Laura Bush 21st Century Fund. Further proposals for collaboration are solicited; the deadline is mid-September 2019.

A graph showing the timeline for the implementation of UX-A is available on the blog at https://www.against-the-grain.com/2018/11/the-winds-of-change-a-new-model-for-specialized-lis-education/.

Twelve students were needed for the program. In the first year, they took the required SIS MSIS curriculum plus additional courses on human-computer interaction, research methods, academic libraries operation, special libraries, and statistics. In the second year they will take a new course on planning and assessment plus some subject-area courses. Online courses from lynda.com were used where appropriate. Weekly meetings with the students were held and were favorably received by the students.

Students are required to participate in a practicum and were paired with a mentor from a partnering organization who can guide them after they finish the program. Practica were scheduled for 2 semesters and received good feedback from students and mentors. Longer terms gave better context for students and engage in peer to peer learning. Research projects were rated the most insightful by the students.

Two students described their expectations and experiences. They were pleased that they received real world experience. Mentors trusted students and made them feel valued because they were treated as colleagues and were able to transition successfully from students in a practitioner to professionals. They gave presentations at professional conferences and published papers. The experiment was a success; students went to work for many different organizations.

Major lessons learned were that the relationship between LIS education and practice is important. Students received a significant benefit from hearing from practitioners. Distance education was considered but was not implemented; students were required to be on campus so they could use campus facilities such as libraries and closely interact with mentors from the local area.

The Friday Keynote: The Long Arm of the Law

This was the 9th running of The Long Arm of the Law session that was moderated by Ann Okerson, Senior Advisor, Center for Research Libraries. Participants were Bill Hannay, Partner, Schiff Hardin, and Kenneth Crews, Partner, Gipson Hoffman & Panceone. (The title of the session is based on a song entitled The Long Arm of the Law which can be viewed at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ffhyh5xZ0jE.)

Kenneth Crews discussed International Agreements, U.S. Statutes, and Copyright Office Regulations. He noted that when we work with the law, sometimes we win, and sometimes the law wins. And the law has many long arms, not just one.

International agreements:

- The Marrakesh Treaty, adopted in 2013, provides copyright exceptions to facilitate the creation of accessible versions of books and other copyright works for visually impaired persons. It has been ratified by member states of the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO, an agency of the UN based in Geneva, which now has 191 member countries — almost all countries in the world). Cross-border provisions have been established by 60 countries and implemented by 40, so an author can supply a work to an authorized entity in another country that has agreed to the cross-border provisions. WIPO is therefore going into the exceptions business.

- Exceptions for libraries and archives are not as well developed as the broader terms of the Marrakesh Treaty. They may cover preservation and copies for research and other reasons not yet determined. Whether a contract can override licenses is not known yet.

U.S. Statutes:

- The U.S. has ratified the Marrakesh Treaty and has created some exceptions (Sections 121 and 121A) to adopt Marrakesh provisions applying to preservation, research and study, contracts and licenses, and digital technologies for published literary and musical works, formats for persons with disabilities, and domestic and cross-border uses.

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• The Music Modernization Act gives copyright protection to pre-1972 sound recordings. Section 1401 that creates a new chapter in the Copyright Act and establishes quasi-copyright protection for about 95 years, preserves Fair Use (Sections 107 and 108), and exceptions for non-commercial use. There was no copyright protection for pre-1972 recordings until this new section was enacted. Libraries might be able to take advantage of the new non-commercial uses exception.

Copyright Office regulations:
• The Digital Millennium Copyright Act (DMCA) was enacted in 1998. A new Section 1201 establishes a procedure in which the Copyright Office will issue regulatory exceptions for streamlined renewals and uses of audiovisual works that must be renewed every three years. The present cycle began in October 2018. Copyright law comes at us from many different sources: courts, Congress, regulatory agencies, and international negotiations.

Bill Hannay titled his speech “The Long Arm of the Law As My Whimsy Takes Me” and presented updates on four topics:

1. Right to be Forgotten: The European Court of Justice (ECJ) heard oral arguments in which Google argued that expanding this right globally would impinge on “freedom of speech.” A ruling expected some time in 2019. Meanwhile, Google is struggling to respond to 2.7 million requests to take down information. They granted the requests 44% of the time. When it denies a request, Google frequently faces further litigation.

2. Pornography is not education v. EBSCO: A group of parents in Colorado claimed that EBSCO’s databases and the Colorado Library Consortium contain many explicit and obscene materials and asked for an injunction to prevent EBSCO from providing these databases to underage children. As a result, 130 school districts have terminated their relationships with EBSCO. An ALA spokesman said “EBSCO’s databases are mainly a curated collection of mainstream journals, newspaper articles, and magazines. There is no evidence that students are using it in the manner claimed by the parents. Furthermore, students looking for sex on the Internet do not start with library databases.”

3. ACS and Elsevier vs. ResearchGate: The American Chemical Society (ACS) sued ResearchGate in a Maryland federal court for “massive infringement of peer reviewed published journal articles.” (This follows a similar suit by Elsevier against ResearchGate in Germany last year as well as one against Sci-Hub.) ResearchGate responded that publishers must submit takedown notices on an article-by-article basis, which the publishers deemed to be impractical. This lawsuit will have a profound influence on academia. It challenges the whole OA movement.

4. Georgia State Re-redux: This is a long-running case, and this is the third time it has been reversed. In 2016, the court rebalanced the four fair use factors which favored Georgia State. The publishers appealed. This is an important case. Fair use is a hard concept to master.

As he customarily does, Bill concluded his presentation with a musical tribute. The lyrics are located on the blog at https://www.against-the-grain.com/2018/11/the-friday-keynote-the-long-arm-of-the-law.

Closing Session and Poll-A-Palooza

For the closing session, Erin Gallagher, Director of Collection Services, Reed College Library, returned to conduct the 5th “Poll-a-Palooza.” (According to the Urban Dictionary, a Palooza is “an all-out continued on page 20
crazy party, partying at one place with a ton of people like there’s no tomorrow."

Here is the list of the questions asked at the 2018 Poll-A-Palooza:

- Where is everyone from?
- Are you a first-time attendee of the Charleston Conference?
- What is your favorite sessions format?
- What is the hottest buzzword of Charleston 2018?
- All scholarship must be made freely available for reading and reuse. (multiple choice)
- What’s the best book you’ve read this year?
- What excites you about the future of libraries?
- Is your library using virtual reality?
- If you could implement virtual reality services in your library or organization, how would you use it?
- What is the best thing you ate in Charleston this week?
- Will you be implementing any programs or adjusting existing programs at your library/organization based on what you learned here? (multiple choice)
- What do you think will be significant forces that will change our profession in the next year?
- What do you think will be the hottest topic of Charleston 2019?
- If you could change one thing about the Charleston Conference next year, what would it be?
- Any ideas for the theme for the Charleston Conference 2019?

(Audiences responses are available at: https://www.against-the-grain.com/2018/11/closing-sessions-and-poll-a-palooza/)

Following the Poll-a-Palooza, Stephen Rhind-Tutt, CEO, Alexander Street Press, presented an excellent information packed summary of the conference. Here are the numbers:

- 1,600+ attendees
- 146 exhibitors
- 23 hotels
- 100 hours
- 200+ individual events
- 350+ speakers
- 200+ hours of presentation
- Lunches, dinners, breakfasts, chats …

These are some of the major trends at the conference, primarily drawn from the Trend Spotting workshop held on the first day following the preconferences.

- Analytics & Algorithms
- Trust
- AI & Machine-aided Indexing (MAI)
- Content — Abundance, Formats, Data, Code, Fragmentation
- Climate Change & Environmental Impact
- Cybersecurity & Threats to IP
- Defunding & Erosion of support for public goods
- Personalization & Customization of Information Environment
- Research controlled Information Environment (Workflow, Tools)

Rhind-Tutt identified some trends and gave a special mention of Joris van Rossum’s presentation on blockchain, saying that it was one of the best he had heard and made the concept very clear and understandable. View the slide available on the blog at https://www.against-the-grain.com/2018/11/closing-sessions-and-poll-a-palooza/.

Rhind-Tutt also identified the rise of open and OA as one of the most pervasive trends of the conference, with many presentations, some of which are shown in additional slides available on the blog at the same URL as noted above. Another slide notes that the concept of open also comes into education and training with open educational resources (OER).

Rhind-Tutt quoted Dr. Garry Henley, Director of MERLOT, who said in 2016, “Materials students might need are available in the library; those they definitely need must be purchased from the bookstore. Openness enables us to build on other people’s work, materials, and expertise with appropriate attribution.” And finally he mentioned the issue of affordable textbooks and libraries’ opportunities, with savings to students served by the OHIOLink system estimated to be as much as $50 million/year.

In summary, Rhind-Tutt mentioned the following takeaways:

- Rise of open. Its tone is becoming more strident, and no part of the ecosystem is unaffected.
- Importance of learning; for example, SUNY’s journey to OER.
- An inclusive model for textbooks, which constitute the core of all course-material adoptions. Open textbooks are massively important.
- The ever increasing importance of analytics.
- Expanding the role of libraries. Core roles include standards, metadata, social functions, supporting academic research
- Print vs. electronic resources.

He urged us to get involved before outsiders make decisions for us that we don’t like.

Following Rhind-Tutt, Barbara Myers Ford, President of Myer Consulting Service described “A Journal Carol in 3 Parts,” which is coming in November 2019. Three journal editors-in-chief will look at the journal across three time periods:

- Past: 1665-1965, print exclusively, only internal improvements, no technology improvements, first peer review in 1733.
- Present: 1966-2019, application of computers to the publishing process producing print + online. Journals read in print and on screen. Challenge of degree of online availability. The sciences took to online, other disciplines not so much.
- Future: 2020-2025, connectivity and everything accessible around the world. The biggest challenge is not technical but economics.

Auditions for editor-in-chief of the project will begin in early 2019.

For more information on Charleston, visit the Charleston Library Conference blog at https://www.against-the-grain.com/2018/11/closing-sessions-and-poll-a-palooza/.