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Biz of Acq — Opportunities for Librarians with Open Access Publishing

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Column Editor's Note: Librarians rather than IT people have often been leaders in promoting open access publishing and institutional archiving. This article makes the case, providing examples of library initiatives in these areas. — AF

Numerous forces are facilitating the growth of open access publishing or free unrestricted access to research material on the Internet. These forces include rising serial subscription costs, the expansion of the Internet, a change in communication patterns among scholars, and the exponential growth of scientific research. Recently the movement gained national attention with the National Institute of Health's (NIH) battle to require grantees of government funded research to provide their findings free to the public within 6 months of publication in a journal. The NIH campaign highlighted the people’s right to the free availability of publicly funded research. In addition, it also affected commercial publishers and non-profits’ attitude toward open access. Although commercial publishers once shunned open access, many have adopted a flexible publishing model in the last two years. The availability of alternative avenues for publishing scientific information creates new opportunities for librarians as well as changes their relationship with commercial publishers, nonprofits and researchers.

Advocates of open access differentiate between types of open access, including open access archives or institutional repositories and open access journals. Archives can contain a variety of materials including preprints, postprints, e-prints, course materials, data files, audio and video files, theses, dissertations, and any other digital file (Gibbons). According to the Scholarly Publishing and Academic Research Coalition (SPARC), material in an institutional repository must be created by the institution, contain scholarly content, be cumulative and perpetual, be interoperable, and have open access (Smith). Archives that comply with the open archives initiative protocol for metadata harvesting can be searched, but authors can also decide the degree of accessibility to their work (Gibbons; Branschlofský). Open access archives are typically characterized by low maintenance costs for institutions (Suber “Promoting Open Access in the Humanities”). Moreover, authors must consider copyright when depositing in an archive. Peter Suber notes that authors do not need permission for preprint archiving since they hold the copyright but permission to deposit post-prints may be needed from the publisher (“Open Access Overview”).

Although material in open access archives typically lacks peer review, institutions gain numerous advantages to hosting open access archives. In a recent workshop on institutional repositories at the ALA Mid-Winter Meeting in Boston in January 2005, workshop presenter Susan Gibbons described the advantages of the repositories to the institution including: stewardship of research output, efficiencies through centralization, showcasing institutional scholarship and a response to the scholarly communication crisis. She also noted individual advantages such as a wider distribution of the researcher’s work, showcasing, preserving, a consistent uniform resource locator (URL), and time savings.

Open access journals represent the second category of open access. Open access journals remain cheaper to produce since they do not have fees for printing, rights management, enforcement, licensing, or marketing (Goodman). In “A Primer on Open Access to Science and Scholarship” Suber maintains open access fees represent charges for dissemination, not access, which he equates to broadcast radio and television. Sally Morris in “Open Access: How are Publishers Reacting?” predicts that the costs associated with the journal access control system as well as subscription processing, license negotiation and sales fees will disappear in an open access model. Fees for open access journals are centered on peer review and dissemination, but as Suber notes, many of these tasks can be accomplished through software (“Promoting Open Access”).

Open access journals have numerous variations. In a panel discussion at the “Does Open Access Really Work?” seminar in Washington DC in 2004, Suber noted that some open access journals have enhancements that are not free (quoted by Hogan). According to Morris, open access journals are characterized by different “flavors” and some may include delayed open access, partial open access or full, immediate open access. Stevan Harnad defines the “gold road” open access as an open access journal, and the “green road” open access published in a non-open access journal but self archived in an open access archive. Harnad remains a strong advocate of self-archiving which he believes should be mandated by the researcher’s employer.

Despite the controversy surrounding open access journals, they are changing the landscape of acquisitions. Carol Tenopir, in “Open Access Alternatives,” maintains open access journals are having an impact. She notes that 191 were selected for inclusion in the Web of Science database. Tenopir also referred to an ISI study that revealed no difference in citation impact between traditional and open access journals.

According to Guterman in “The Promise and Peril of Open Access,” a 2001 study in Nature showed that in at least one set of disciplines, papers that appear free online are more likely to be cited by other researchers. Guterman describes a study in which a scientist at NEC Research Institute analyzed nearly 120,000 papers in computer science and related fields. Those that were freely available online had been cited more often in other papers than those not available online. The average number of citations of offline papers was 2.74, com-

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BORN & LIVED: I was born in Washington D.C. and lived in Maryland throughout my life.

FAMILY: My son will be a freshman at West Virginia University in Morgantown in August 2005. My daughter is a senior at Temple University in Philadelphia.

EDUCATION: I received my M.L.S. from the University of Maryland College of Information Studies in 1995 and am currently pursuing a M.A. in Communications with a focus on Digital Library at Johns Hopkins University.

FIRST JOB: My first job in the library world was an indexer for NOAA’s National Environmental Satellite, Data & Information Service.

PROFESSIONAL CAREER AND ACTIVITIES: I serve on the education committees of PalNet and the Library and Information Technology Association Division (LITA) of ALA. I am also on the Publications Committee for the Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL) of ALA.

IN MY SPARE TIME I LIKE TO: Read, hike, cook, and garden.

FAVORITE BOOKS: I truly enjoy reading books published by National Geographic on areas throughout North America.

GOAL I HOPE TO ACHIEVE FIVE YEARS FROM NOW: Complete a Ph.D. in Communications with a focus on Digital Library.

HOW/WHERE DO I SEE THE INDUSTRY IN FIVE YEARS: Digitalized.

Barbara A. Blummer
Resources budget and not the serials budget. The University of Calgary Library also promotes open access journals. According to Andrew Waller, Serials Librarian at the University, the DOAJ is a target in their Serials Solutions database and SFX server. The MARC records for these titles are in the catalog, and an A-Z list of e-journals exists. In addition, the library manages the institutional repository, which houses one of the open access journals published by the University of Calgary Press.

Julie M Hurd, Science Librarian Head & Coordinator of Digital Library Planning at the University of Illinois, notes that her institution lists open access titles in their journal finder database. According to Ms. Hurd, these titles are offered through the DOAJ and Highwire Press Open Access Titles, and are also integrated into the University's catalog with full MARC records. Library staff believe it is especially important to make these journals easy to access. This attitude is shared by Ms. Callan at the QUT where open access journals are incorporated into collection development processes. The QUT library staff catalog relevant open access journal titles and include them in subject guides. Moreover, the DOAJ is listed with the library's subscription-based databases.

Other writers encourage librarians to foster the publishing of open access journals. In “Does Open Access Really Work,” Donald Hawkins urges librarians to ask publishers for open access since he believes it requires partnership with all in the publishing chain. He encourages librarians to use existing funding to provide open access. David Goodman in “The Criteria for Open Access” envisions libraries as publishers, maintaining article databases through funds previously earmarked for publishers. Gayde believes open access offers new roles for librarians through participation in open access institutional membership schemes, negotiating discounted open access publication charges, and ensuring maximum availability of quality research material, well presented and secured for the future. In “A Primer on Open Access,” Suber suggests opportunities for libraries to publish open access journals in less heavily funded fields like the Humanities. He describes Philosophers Imprint as a peer-reviewed open access journal published by the University of Michigan Libraries. At the University of Rochester, it is hoped that the libraries will publish online journals for small scholarly societies (Gibbons). Librarians have assumed a major role in promoting open access in their institutions.
The American Society for Information Science & Technology is sponsoring “DASER: Digital Archives for Science & Engineering Resources” in December 2005. This conference will discuss institutional repositories projects in academic and non-profit organizations, as well as in the commercial and government arenas throughout the world. Recently the Association of Research Libraries published Open Access Bibliography: Liberating Scholarly Literature with E-Prints and Open Access Journals. This is a compilation of more than 1,300 entries of books, conference papers, journal articles and technical reports in a variety of formats. The bibliography traces the development of the open access movement between 1999 and August 2004.

Contributors to library listservs are also active in promoting open access. Listservs post notices of new conferences on the topic and several, such as the STS-L listerv, monitor the release of new open access journal titles and include information on coverage and links to sites.

While open access cannot eliminate all of the problems with the current model of scientific scholarship, nor solve the serials funding crisis in libraries, it offers some hope of improved access to research. Suber maintains open access will solve the permission crisis that creates legal and technological barriers through law and licensing (“Creating”). Most importantly, open access provides librarians with alternative solutions to the problems of scientific publishing and empowers them to oppose publisher price increases. In “Closing in on Open Access,” Lee Van Or dell and Kathleen Born note that librarians refused to accept big deals at Cornell, Harvard, Research Triangle institutions in North Carolina and MIT. Instead, they decided to select subscriptions title by title and year by year, based on value of the content and not size of the package. In addition, Regazzi urges librarians to mediate journal costs through a partnership with publishers. This advice is echoed by Ewing, who urges librarians and scholars to stop dealing with high priced journals and encourage non-profits to publish more papers.

The number of open access journals and institutional and governmental repositories continues to increase, illustrating the support for open access publishing in academic and public sectors. This support is the result of rising journal costs, the increasing availability of information in digital format, the growth of the Internet, improvements in search engines, and the formation of groups demanding free access to government-sponsored research. The open access movement changes the means of access and delivery of scientific information. It fosters opportunities for librarians in promoting the use and development of open access journals and institutional repositories, and in the publishing of serials. In addition, open access has bolstered the librarian’s power in negotiations with commercial publishers for the purchase of toll access journals.

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And They Were There

Reports of Meetings — Special Library Association 2005 Annual Conference and 14th Annual North Carolina Serials Conference

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The annual SLA Conference, held June 5-8, 2005 in Toronto, Canada, drew 5273 attendees. There were 2,245 SLA members, 1584 industry partner representatives, 440 booths in the Info-Expo (exhibit hall), and more than 600 first-time attendees. The 2005 conference theme was “Putting Knowledge to Work,” which meant that most session topics “fit the bill.” During the conference, with great fanfare, SLA introduced “Click University,” its members-only online learning community for continuing professional education, (http://slahublogger.typepad.com/sla_conference_blog/www.clickuniversity.com). The SLA 2005 Conference Blog included photos, notes and comments about the conference, exhibits, and travels around the environs of the popular conference destination. Readers could see reports of receptions or open houses to which they didn’t go...Toronto’s newspaper, Globe and Mail, on June 9th covered the conference with the headline: “Librarians as tech-savvy sleuths.”

It’s been a few years since I last attended a SLA Conference, and I was pleasantly surprised to meet a number of pro-active library school students who attended anything and everything, and networked well, too. A number of attendees and exhibitors commented on the light-filled second floor Toronto Metro Convention Center exhibit hall in which they spent their conference days, although a few bloggers complained about the heat. (Toronto was experiencing a heat wave.) Many attendees took advantage of CE courses on Saturday or Sunday morning, but the conference officially began Sunday afternoon with the opening of the Info-Expo hall. A number of bloggers commented on the exhibit hall opening performance by the Finnish choir, named “Huutajat Rajaton” (Shouting Men) and its renditions of “The Star-Spangled Banner” and “O, Canada.” (The choir was in town for the Northern Voices Festival). The exhibit hall featured many of the same vendors seen at other library conferences, but the size of the booths seemed to indicate how much the exhibitors thought SLA attendees were their

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