

Editorial



When we published our last Editorial back in July, we were delighted to see this tweet: 'This [#UKSGInsights](#) editorial is a really useful content summary, one might almost say *essential reading* for the scholarly comms community'. We certainly believe that some of our recently published articles are essential reading, particularly in these times when there is often a worrying disconnect between science and society. In this context it has been heartening to publish two articles about approaches which seek to engage the wider public. We were aware of projects where members of the public collaborate with scientists in making new discoveries, but we had not thought about the role that libraries can play until we heard Paul Ayris talk about it at the UKSG One-Day Conference in 2017. Having our eyes opened to the possibilities, we were pleased when Paul, together with Tiberius Ignat and other colleagues, submitted an article with the cheerful title of [Merry work: libraries and citizen science](#). The authors point out the future potential for universities to make themselves more open and relevant to society and they provide practical examples of projects being undertaken now by University College London, the University of Barcelona, the University of Southern Denmark and Qatar National Library.

Breaking down the divide between universities and the wider public is also the subject of Katherine Stephan's article, [Research cafés: how libraries can build communities through research and engagement](#). Katherine describes how the Research Support Team at Liverpool John Moores University run events which facilitate scholarship sharing and she explains why research and community engagement should be viewed as an integral part of a university library's agenda. Over the past three years the Research Support Team has held research café events in different locations, taking the Library out to a much wider audience both inside the University and outside in the city of Liverpool, bringing together a diverse audience of people and research.

The stated mission of *Insights* is to 'stimulate debate about topical issues and provide a forum for debate', but it sometimes feels that *Insights'* authors and readers are too reticent

2 and polite to dispute and deliberate. So, we were encouraged when **Rick Anderson** provided his critique of a recent *Insights* article by Gareth J Johnson about his research on academic resistance to open access. We greatly enjoyed their constructive and informative online exchange which took place both on the *Insights* platform and on Twitter. Gareth **@lordllama** and Rick **@Looptopper** certainly have the quirkiest Twitter handles of all our authors!

The cost and management of APCs and offsetting schemes are important issues of our time, and discussion about them occurs again and again, both in articles we publish in *Insights* and in the presentations at the UKSG Annual Conference. Many of these articles and presentations point out there is yet little standardization in reporting APC expenditure or systematic data collection. This contributes to a lack of transparency at odds with aspirations for open science and a more open society. Therefore, the dogged work of **Dirk Pieper and Christoph Broschinski** in creating data sets on the fees paid for open access journal articles by universities, funders and research institutions is outstanding. Their article describes their methodology, analysis and the results. Their objective is to contribute to a transparent and reproducible monitoring of fee-based open access publishing across institutions and nations.

We have published several articles that look towards transitioning monographs to an open access environment. In 2016 **Geoffrey Crossick** discussed the issues involved and last year **Martin Paul Eve** and colleagues provided cost estimates of a UK open access mandate for monographs. Building on this work, **Andrew Lockett** provides an in-depth look at 'decoupling' – a move to an open access environment for monographs that would not have negative impact on the economic and academic environment. Andrew points out that some publishers 'confess to being fatigued by a market rationale where the price of a monograph always gets higher, the print run ever lower', and argues that OA monographs provide the scope to shorten the supply chain, lower costs and engender greater academic freedom and diversity. In achieving this, Andrew says that libraries need to bring in more publishing expertise or acquire new skills. The university as publisher is also discussed by **Vivien Rolf and Beck Pitt** who look at the untapped opportunity of open textbooks. The UK Open Textbook project was a unique opportunity for UK universities to experiment with the cost benefits of creating their own textbooks. While the project, not surprisingly, found there are challenges in creating textbooks, the article cites examples of project outputs that are offering students access to good quality books, in flexible and accessible formats, which reduce the cost burden of buying proprietary textbooks.

In the world of scholarly communications, there is a wealth of bibliometric and altmetric tools and services, some long-established 'market leaders', but also some amazing start-up ventures, bringing innovation to old problems. **Elizabeth Gadd and Ian Rowlands** have taken a close look at these and surveyed practitioners asking them to suggest ways in which these services could be improved. Service providers will perhaps not be astonished to hear pleas for greater coverage and accuracy, but perhaps more surprised to hear calls for greater openness about the underlying data and for consumer labels which would indicate how 'sensible' it is to consume these metrics and at what risk. Almost one quarter of respondents to this survey declared themselves to be regular users of Dimensions, so we were pleased to publish an *Insights* 'Start-up Story' about this new bibliographic service. The idea of our Start-up Stories is not to publish original research, but to showcase new services and ask the providers to explain their rationale – the problem in scholarly communications that they are trying to solve. **Catherine Williams** explains that Dimensions seeks to shift the focus from publications alone to a more complete view across the research lifecycle. The aims of the Dimensions project are not just to deliver another research database, but to build something that aligns with the requirements of research organizations by drawing together funded grants, clinical trials, publication records, patents and policy.

Another recommended read, not just for librarians but for publishers too, is the article by **Magaly Bascones and Amy Staniforth**. Their selection of Aberystwyth University Library's practical metadata issues very visually highlights the problems caused by poor metadata. They demonstrate how wrong metadata is bad not just for libraries and their end-users, but for authors and publishers too. As they point out, 'end-users have nowhere to go if they are

3 confused by the content ... no editor to cite in their essay or article, no publisher, edition or place of publication so that others can look up the information they have referenced, thus reducing the potential for scholarly communication’.

Next year we are planning to bring you a specially curated collection which will pull together the perceptive and often far-sighted *Insights* articles written since the Finch Report was published in 2012. However, this is not a spoiler and we will leave our fantastic guest editors to paint the picture this fascinating collection of articles will provide.

Finally, we would encourage our *Insights* readers to become *Insights* authors; our [call for papers](#) provides the details. We are interested in your research, case studies and opinion pieces. We also encourage you to follow in the footsteps of [@llordllama](#) and [@Looptopper](#) by joining the debate. If you take issue with any of the opinions recently published in *Insights*, please submit your critique.

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