

# Mining for gold: identifying the librarians' toolkit for managing hybrid open access

*Based on a paper presented at the 36th UKSG Annual Conference, Bournemouth, April 2013*

In 2012, the author and colleagues surveyed eight publishers that had been involved with the Publishing and the Ecology of European Research (PEER) project to learn about the state of hybrid journal publishing. At the same time, one of the key questions asked to a panel of librarians at the International Association of Scientific, Technical & Medical Publishers May 2012 Meeting was what role librarians would play if scholarly publishing shortly went open access (OA) across the board? From the survey of the market, and the rapid OA developments in the UK and EU that include hybrid OA, a picture has begun to emerge of what roles librarians can play with regard to supporting hybrid OA publishing at their institutions. This article focuses on developing new partnerships within a given institution, looks at new budgetary models and the tracking of local scholarship creation. Current pertinent standards are highlighted.

## Background and zeitgeist

In June 1996, the author, as an early career professional librarian, attended the 11th annual NASIG Conference in New Mexico. At the closing plenary session of this conference were two speakers: Paul Ginsparg (Los Alamos National Laboratory) and Dr Stevan Harnad (then Professor of Psychology & Director, Cognitive Sciences Center at Southampton University). Paul Ginsparg spoke about the development of the physics preprint database and what would become ArXiv<sup>1</sup>. Stevan Harnad presented on the 'Faustian bargain' of scholarly research publication and the development of 'Scholarly Skywriting', a precedent to what eventually became open access (OA) publishing<sup>2</sup>. The question and answer session for this presentation ran over by an hour and a half as members of the scholarly publishing community juxtaposed a myriad of ideas, concerns and criticisms. It was one of the most amazing experiences of group brainstorming observed. You saw thoughts churning and the energy in that room was palpable.

What is meant by hybrid open access publishing? Some sources consider hybrid OA publishing to be 'gold' and others do not. SHERPA/RoMEO does not have gold listed as a color designation for open access publishing<sup>3</sup>. According to the definition for gold open access in Wikipedia<sup>4</sup>, the answer is that hybrid open access is not gold open access. In our information glut of the 21st century that Nicholas Carr has proposed<sup>5</sup>, where instead of looking for a needle in a haystack, we have a stack of needles to sort through, then what this paper addresses is random gold flakes sprinkled into this nest of needles.

At the 8th annual Electronic Resources & Libraries Conference (ER&L), the closing keynote speaker was Rachel Frick, Director of the Digital Library Federation from the Council on Library and Information Resources. One of the points she hit upon in her presentation, 'The Courage of Our Connections'<sup>6</sup>, was the mission of librarians as given



JILL EMERY  
Collection  
Development Librarian  
Portland State  
University

"... instead of looking for a needle in a haystack, we have a stack of needles to sort through ..."

116 by David Lankes in the Atlas of New Librarianship: 'The mission of librarians is to improve society through facilitating knowledge creation in their communities'<sup>7</sup>.

The take-away from Rachel's presentation is this: If this is not your personal mission statement as a librarian, then you've missed the transition of what it means to be a librarian in the 21st century. Rachel also referenced T Scott Plutchak's Janet Doe Lecture at the National Library of Medicine in 2011<sup>8</sup>. A highlight from this lecture is: 'Library advocacy for open access has, unfortunately, taken on the form of an adversarial advocacy that demonizes publishers, uses rhetorical shortcuts to gloss over structural complexities, and ignores the true complex of interests that need to be carefully balanced if we are to achieve a mature and robust digital scholarly communication enterprise.'<sup>9</sup>

Librarians need to overcome the anger and frustration with the current scholarly communication enterprise and the changing culture. Much of this anger is coming from what librarians cannot see and do not yet know. Librarians have to find ways to engage with the content creators and with the content distributors to develop a more equitable and reasonable model of supporting content creation.

"Librarians have to find ways to engage with the content creators and with the content distributors ..."

### Three tenets of open access provision

OA provision does not mean that access is provided with absolutely no costs associated with it. There are business models in use with OA publishing and they are as varied as the business models of our for-fee based content. Even within our own community, there are multiple ways to produce OA content and each comes with a variable cost to the producer.

OA publishing whether done at your library or outside of it requires organization and management. The Education Advisory Board's report, *Redefining the Academic Library*<sup>10</sup>, was published two years ago. This report has done tremendous damage to academic librarians in the United States in part because it advocates that the ready availability of content, especially OA content and its growth, means that librarians do not have a management role in the content provision. Rachel Frick said it best in her closing keynote at ER&L: "This is the golden age of catalogers and unfortunately, this age has come at the tail-end of the great depletion of technical services"<sup>11</sup>.

OA provision at an institution of higher education is an enterprise-wide endeavor and this is especially true within the library. The creation of another silo of management, for example a digital scholarship program, or a scholarly communication division, only pushes the management role to the fringes of the organization.

### OA production and subscription model costs

According to an Outsell market report, 17% of all journal articles published in 2015 will be OA<sup>12</sup>. While not a large percentage, it is a significant number of articles. In addition, Outsell indicates that the average cost of each article is more along the lines of US\$660, whereas most publishers charge for hybrid publishing in the range of US\$1,200 to US\$5,000.

At Portland State University Library, our annual inflation costs hover at about US\$150,000 annually. As many librarians have pointed out, this is an unsustainable content provision model for academic institutions. We need to find a new way to support the research and content creation at our institutions. This is not the way forward.

### Market forces

Faculty research drives the scholarly publishing market with content creation and faculty want to continue to publish in for-fee journals. Their infrastructure systems of peer review and promotion and tenure have not changed. When there is this societal shift in academia away from the current metrics of what counts and what is recognized as quality, then,

117 librarians can promote what Stevan Harnad calls the Faustian bargain. These publications are where our content creators want to create their works. We need to work to influence this change in academia not just within the publishing community but within the academic community. Librarians have the connections already to the scholarly publishers and to scholarly societies. Librarians need to start having opinions on where to publish, promoting the publishers we respect to our faculty bodies.

We do fulfill the Education Advisory Board future vision of librarians by removing ourselves from the scholarly publishing ecosystem. Librarians have experience at article-level processing through inter-library lending and now demand-driven acquisition programs. We know how to manage scholarship at the discrete level. Librarians also have one of the best views of their institution. Librarians know what programs are offered, know when new programs are being developed and know how to budget fairly and pretty accurately across disciplines and subject areas.

“Librarians need to start having opinions on where to publish, promoting the publishers we respect to our faculty bodies.”

## Research project

In looking at how to fund for article processing charges (APCs) and better support open access publishing on a college campus, a research project was developed with the following participants: Sarah Beasley (Scholarly Communications Librarian at Portland State University), Robin Champieux (Scholarly Communications Librarian at the Oregon Health & Science University with whom Portland State share a partnership), Jill Emery (Collection Development Librarian at Portland State University) and Kasia Stasik (a Regional Sales Manager for Harrassowitz). The survey focused on eight publishers who had all been involved in the Publishing and the Ecology of European Research (PEER) research project<sup>13</sup>. The survey instrument asked a variety of questions regarding basic information on the publishers' hybrid journal programs, structure of their programs, and how they utilized discounts. The findings of this survey are very similar to the research conducted by Bo-Christer Bjork in the paper: 'The Hybrid Model for Open Access Publication of Scholarly Articles – A Failed Experiment?'<sup>14</sup>

The overview of OA hybrid programs shows that programs began around 2004 and have continued to grow since then. The average costs for APC fees range from US\$1,350-US\$5,000. Publishers argue that infrastructure costs coupled with impact ratings and the prestige of the journal add to the overall cost charged per article in hybrid publishing. The arguments that the amounts charged are the cost of selectivity, prestige and impact should be explored further between librarians and publishers. The survey team suspects that the publisher pricing focus has been more focused on competitors' scale than was disclosed via the survey instrument. Publishers are pushing the envelope on what the market will bear and this practice results in the cost-per-article figures disclosed by the survey. Librarians need to work closely with all stakeholders at their institution to determine how to redesign their budget models and develop funding for content creation as the core funding need. Re-evaluation of the research resource demand in relation to the core content funding will need to occur and a decision made on where article delivery can suffice in place of subscription costs.

“Publishers are pushing the envelope on what the market will bear ...”

How publishers share information on what discounts are applied from hybrid publishing showed that discounts have not been consistent from one publisher to the next. Nature Publishing Group (NPG) and Oxford University Press (OUP) are the most transparent in their disclosure of cost breaks provided. OUP goes as far as printing the discounts within the yearly price chart given each year. NPG and OUP both give global discounts whereas Springer tends to give discounts on the institutional level or uniquely to each consortium partner. Librarians who pay subscription costs but have started to support hybrid publishing models feel that charges are being incurred on two fronts and this practice is referred to as double-dipping<sup>15</sup>. This is the point where librarians have the greatest ability to negotiate on pricing and develop a sustainable model that works for all of us.

## Strategies for librarians

At any given institution, librarians should be driving the conversation about all aspects of OA publishing including hybrid OA and bringing as many people to the discussion table as possible. The identification of who the key players are among the librarians/library employees should occur. Some roles may be overlooked due to their 'traditional' job function. Identify who the main stakeholders are at your institution. Is it the research/grants office, is it other faculty groups? Bring them together and start talking and build new essential partnerships at your institutions. Do not wait for the conversation to come to you or for your invitation to join discussions already taking place. Ask for the invitation to be there.

“Do not wait for the conversation to come to you ...”

Tracking of hybrid OA is a big problem for publishers and librarians alike. Librarians have descriptive catalogs in libraries that provide descriptions on the journal level; publishers have payment systems or fulfillment systems, and these are two very different data structures. Many publishers are not tracking authors or articles at all but rather on the overall uptake of the journal of hybrid OA articles as a way to arrive at the discounts provided. It makes sense that, for the publisher, the tracking is first and foremost predicated on financial management given the data structure they are working within. FundRef from CrossRef will have an impact on the better tracking of APC funding but still will not help publishers or libraries fully discover where faculty are publishing<sup>16</sup>. Even when faculty have registered and starting using ORCID identifiers, publishers and librarians are not tracking these identifiers within their systems<sup>17</sup>. Librarians should not expect the standards to be used by any given publisher and should ask for them to be included. In the case of hybrid OA this means asking that FundRef, ORCID, as well as Counter 4 statistics, be employed by all significant publishers<sup>18</sup>. All in all, how the tracking of hybrid OA publishing is done leads to a difficulty in librarians obtaining lists of articles from publishers of the journals where their respective faculty have published. Citation tools only give you what they index and not everything is indexed. It may be necessary to go through department web pages to find what is being published and where. Conversations with the stakeholders at your institution may reveal institutional mechanisms for tracking content creation on your campus. National Information Standards Organization (USA) (NISO) is also working on indicators, so watch them for what will come out of their working group<sup>19</sup>.

Librarian management of hybrid OA publishing gives us the opportunity to promote other options and to hold more meaningful conversations on scholarly publishing. Librarians should provide a framework for making choices on where to publish and help early career faculty in particular make the right choices with publishing content. Provide spaces where content creation can happen in the library through the use of advanced technology and with the expertise of staff and librarians.

Management of OA publishing is an investment that we are making not just in our future as librarians but in the future of the scholarly publishing ecosystem. Our strengths lie in our ability to organize and manage resources well and we should invest heavily in our strengths. Supporting open access publishing whether it is hybrid, green or gold is an enterprise endeavor and we need to engage everyone in this effort. Librarians have been handed a golden opportunity. Together, let's make this investment worthwhile and successful and let's not squander it.

“Supporting OA publishing ... is an enterprise endeavor and we need to engage everyone in this effort. Librarians have been handed a golden opportunity.”

## References

1. Ginsparg, P, Winners and Losers in the Global Research Village, *The Serials Librarian*, 1997, 30(3-4), 83-95, doi: 10.1300/J123v30n03\_13.
2. Harnad, S, How to Fast-Forward Learned Serials to the Inevitable and the Optimal for Scholars and Scientists, *The Serials Librarian*, 1997, 30(3-4), 73-81, doi: 10.1300/J123v30n03\_12.
3. Jisc, SHERPA/RoMEO:  
<http://www.sherpa.ac.uk/romeo/faq.php?la=en&fldnum=|&mode=simple> (accessed 30 April 2013).
4. Wikipedia, Open Access:  
[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Open\\_access](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Open_access) (accessed 30 April 2013).
5. Carr, N, 7 March 2011, Situational overload and ambient overload, Rough Type:  
<http://www.roughstye.com/?p=1464> (accessed 30 April 2013).
6. Frick, R, The Courage of Our Connections: Thoughts on Professional Identities, Organizational Affiliations and Common Communities, Electronic Resources & Libraries Annual Conference 20 March 2013:  
<http://www.electroniclibrarian.com/conference-info/2013-keynote-speakers> (accessed 30 April 2013).
7. Lankes, R D, Welcome, *The Atlas of New Librarianship*:  
<http://www.newlibrarianship.org/wordpress/> (accessed 30 April 2013).
8. Plutchak, T S, Breaking the barriers of time and space: the dawning of the great age of librarians, *Journal of the Medical Library Association*, 2012, 100(1) 10-19, doi: 10.3163/1536-5050.100.1.004.
9. Plutchak, T S, ref. 8.
10. Education Advisory Board, University Leadership Council, Redefining the Academic Library: Managing the Migration to Digital Information Services, Research & Insights Academic Affairs Forum 2011:  
<http://www.eab.com/Research-and-Insights/Academic-Affairs-Forum/Studies/2011/Redefining-the-Academic-Library> (accessed 30 April 2013).
11. Frick, R, ref. 6.
12. Outsell, Inc, *Market Report: Open Access: Market Size, Share, Forecast, and Trends*, 31 January 2013.
13. PEER: Publishing and the Ecology of European Research, 31 May 2012:  
<http://www.peerproject.eu/home/> (accessed 30 April 2013).
14. Bjork, B-C, The Hybrid Model for Open Access Publication of Scholarly Articles: A Failed Experiment?, *Journal of the American Society for Information Science and Technology*, 2012, 63(8), 1496-1504, doi: 10.1002/asi.22709.
15. SPARC Europe, Hybrid Journals:  
<http://sparceurope.org/hybrid-journals/> (accessed 30 April 2013).
16. CrossRef, FundRef:  
<http://www.crossref.org/fundref/index.html> (accessed 30 April 2013).
17. ORCID:  
<http://orcid.org/> (accessed 30 April 2013).
18. COUNTER:  
<http://www.projectcounter.org/>, (accessed 30 April 2013).
19. NISO:  
[http://www.niso.org/news/pr/view?item\\_key=d2e5f409bc6af6b7f504a10edf0329203ffec6f9](http://www.niso.org/news/pr/view?item_key=d2e5f409bc6af6b7f504a10edf0329203ffec6f9), (accessed 30 April 2013).

**Article © Jill Emery**

Jill Emery

Collection Development Librarian

Portland State University, 220H LIBW, P O Box 1151, Portland, OR 97207, USA

Tel: 503-725-4506 | E-mail: jemery@pdx.edu

## To cite this article:

Emery, J, Mining for gold: identifying the librarians' toolkit for managing hybrid open access, *Insights*, 2013, 27(2), 115-119, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1629/2048-7754.65>