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MAKING A DIFFERENCE IN THE EVOLVING ELECTRONIC SCHOLARLY PUBLISHING ECONOMY

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No library or information service can stand aloof from the current developments (legal, technological, and organizational) in scholarly publishing. I will be describing my personal actions to influence beneficial change, as well as those of the various groups I am involved with. This may be useful to chapter members and, I hope, stimulate more ideas for effecting changes in the electronic publishing environment before it, too, is usurped by for-profit publishers.

NOTE: This article is organized to give an overview in print for the *Bulletin*, as well as an electronic version which include hot links to examples of the actual documents and e-mail messages used to educate and involve researchers and decision makers.

Group Initiatives:

Since 1996, the Centennial Science and Engineering Library (CSEL) has made educating the faculty about the crisis in scholarly publishing a major goal. The reasoning behind this is that they are both at the front and back ends of the process as producers and users respectively. Thus they have the most leverage for change, as well as having the most to win or lose. We also expect faculty to share in the difficult collections decisions we need to make annually.

A Science and Engineering Library Liaison Committee was establish with representation from each of the 10 sci/eng departments. The liaisons were targeted for intensive "education". A group e-mail provided information industry updates, links to succinct articles on scholarly publishing issues, legislative updates regarding the digital environment, and the like. At our quarterly meetings I used the same three overheads to ensure recognition and involvement in critical decisions. The three to pics were:

- Access and Ownership options and the respective pros and cons
- Cancellation criteria (Faculty help decide the top three criteria to be used in a particular year.)
- Collection and cancellation extrapolations, budgets, industry trends and statistics.

The e-mail list was also used to encourage specific faculty groups to write to encourage or protest actions by publishers, especially where their societies were involved. For example, I provided an e-mail template for a letter that the Electrical and Computer Engineering Faculty could send to IEEE to protest the restrictive and expensive electronic offerings of their publications (Example # 1). An almost natural result of all this education was the creation of a Sub-committee by the liaisons to look for ways to fund

electronic products and experimentation. A proposal was developed to apply for one percent of the Indirect Overhead Cost of the grants received by UNM. This was eventually written into a petition which was signed by a large percentage of the faculty, representing, what Rick Luce from Los Alamos calls, a high "Loyalty Factor". See Example # 2 for the cover letter to the Provost and the petition. The petition failed but created enormous opportunities for educating the university decision-makers more about this below.

Influencing organizational leaders:

The next step was to identify leaders in the organization that could exert an influence on future information infrastructure and resources decisions. I started meeting with Deans and Department Chairpersons individually and as a group. The latter meeting resulted in a letter of support for an UNM legislative initiative to enhance the library's ability to move more rapidly into providing electronic products and services. Individual meetings focused on how each of them could help to create understanding of scholarly publishing issues on campus and how they could influence their associations, societies, and other external contacts. Something that struck me during these meetings was the feeling of helplessness that these influential persons felt in the face of such a massive industry-wide change. It is important to provide a list of actions that will change perceptions and attitudes but which do not necessarily cost money. This is clearly a problem that cannot be solved by only throwing money at it. It needs concerted long term legislative and industry changes. See Example # 3 for such a list, sent to the Dean of Arts & Sciences.

Most recently, I met (not without difficulty) with the Vice-Provosts at UNM to include them in the process and, quite frankly, to force some answers as to the importance of these issues to the effectiveness of their constituents, the students and faculty. This resulted in a university-wide Scholarly Publishing Committee created under the auspices of the Vice-Provost for Research. Although the committee's mandate has yet to be formalized, it's initial charge is to disseminate information, build consensus, look for funding, and stimulate new paradigm library services.

Influencing external decision makers:

It is critical that we work together as consortia or other types of library associations to influence favorable legislation in the digital arena and to create economies of scale when purchasing electronic information. The N.M. Library Services Alliance and the group purchase of OCLC's FirstSearch for college and university libraries, are good examples of this. The current joint efforts of the four year colleges, the State Library, the Alliance, and NMCAL to field legislative proposals that will provide electronic databases statewide, is another.

I was fortunate to get on the agenda of the N.M. Joint Legislative Committee on Education in July, to make a presentation (Example # 4) in support of these efforts. How did this happen? Faculty from the UNM Biology department who were presenting realized that this was a good opportunity to raise their concerns about the future

availability of scholarly information in the state and manipulated a spot on the agenda for me to speak. A good indication that our education efforts are beginning to bear fruit.

Facts and data counts.

It is important to have facts and data about one's library operations, current and historical journal pricing information, and library impact data on hand when speaking to the above groups. As special librarians, I suspect you are more familiar than most with the need to have performance and value-for-money data always at hand!

At CSEL we have clear selection criteria available for CSEL departments as well as credible journal use studies. We are fortunate that Bruce Neville, the science and engineering collections coordinator, has created an impressive database of use data which can be correlated with factors such as annual price increases, publisher data, availability at partner libraries, and so forth.

What can I do?

You may be wondering what this means for the individual librarian. Is their any effective actions that an individual can take to further the cause of freely available and cost-effective scholarly information? Yes, below I describe some actions I have taken. These often involve risk taking and the possibility of seeming naive, yet they should be done by as many of us as possible as it is often the many small things that bring about significant long term changes.

Personal initiatives can include the following:

- Letters to publishers to speak against over-pricing, inflexible licensing agreements, mergers, et cetera. (Example # 5)

- Bring local or national speakers on the issue to your organization or association.

- Participation in panels and conferences, such as the Charleston Conference and the Faxon Colloquium. (For a comment on the latter, see van Reenen, 1998, 1998 "Library consumerism in the digital age." *Journal of Electronic Publishing*, March, 1998 Volume 3, Issue 3. http://www.press.umich.edu/jep/03-03/vanreenen.html

- Provide the best articles on the issue to leaders in your organization.

- Encourage editors and authors in your organization to publish and edit in low profit or not-for-profit journals, preferably in electronic format.

- Create an information package about publishing an electronic journal. This can be given to editors who are considering publishing their print journal electronically or to encourage new and cheaper competitor electronic journals (Example # 6).

Hint: An important communications hint for all of the above initiatives are to keep communication, especially written pieces, short. One or two pages are all that busy executives are prepared to read these days. I hope the linked examples illustrate this principle. In any case, if one cannot say it briefly, one has generally not grasped the problem and possible solutions clearly oneself!

Conclusion:

We do not need to feel helpless in the face of continued price increases and journal cancellations. There are long term solutions. These will come into play sooner if all librarians take action and encourage their patrons to take action on one or more of the levels discussed above.

EXAMPLE # 1: Letter template for members to send to their association.

To EECE Faculty, Below is an outline for a letter to IEEE as discussed at today's meeting; Mr. Gutfeld's email = k.gutfeld@ieee.org. The letter(s) should be copied to iel@ieee.org.

To: Klaus Gutfeld, Director of Electronic Products, IEEE.

Dear Mr. Gutfeld,

I (we) are writing you to express concerns about the present configuration of your electronic publishing products. The IEL product does not meet the needs of our academic library and therefore does not serve the engineering faculty's expectations of a new era in scholarly publishing.

The product should be offered as a packaged subscription (not a lease) and be Web-based (not only for Intranets). We expect the price for Electronic ONLY versions of all your publications, or groupings thereof,

to be the same or less than the print price. This is based on the assumption that you will not have paper, print, and mailing costs. This would not only apply to library subscriptions, but also to savings in providing numerous duplicate sets to members, with exceptions of one or two special interest journals that may still be required in print by individual members.

Should some of your decisions be based in the fear of losing memberships or conference income, please let me (us) assure you that my (our) membership and attendance at

conferences is not based on the publications that accrue from these but the contacts we make and the other member services you provide.

My (our) greatest concern is for the widest possible distribution of engineering information to strengthen our profession, to ensure innovation at our universities and research institutions, and keep American

engineering research competitive. As a member(s) of your organization, I (we) expect strong support of these aims from you.

Thank you for your consideration,

[Your or your group's name]

EXAMPLE # 2

PETITION TO ALLOCATE FUNDING FOR SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY INFORMATION

Dear Provost.

We are forwarding to you signed petitions in support of funding science and engineering (s/e) information initiatives that will keep UNM in the forefront of research universities, as well as encourage its libraries to experiment with alternatives to traditional scholarly publishing. The petition is one of the outcomes from about two years' work with s/e faculty to create awareness of the crisis in scholarly publishing and possible alternatives. Meetings of the Centennial Science & Engineering Library (CSEL) Liaison Committee, presentations at s/e department meetings, and meetings with selected s/e faculty were utilized in this process.

At its meeting of 24 February 1997, the CSEL Liaison Committee struck a sub-committee to prepare a proposal to elicit funding for emerging electronic information access options. This proposal was prepared and approved by the Liaison Committee and presented to Associate Provost for Research on 10 June 1997. The sub-committee reported back to the Liaison meeting where the proposal was approved as a petition to ascertain grassroots support for the ideas expressed there in. Proof of this support is attached. Additionally, we would like to provide examples of the types of initiatives such funding would support:

- Purchasing electronic packages from forward looking publishers. Especially society, not-for-profit publishers, such as the excellent and affordable electronic journals from the Association of Computing Machinery.

- Funding of potential solutions to the continuing journal cancellations, such as rapid, electronic, self-service document delivery at no cost to faculty and grad students.

- Funding a planning group to get involved in national initiatives of the AAU, ARL, and others to find long term solutions to the crisis.

- Funding an electronic current awareness service for researchers to ensure competitiveness.

- Funding to sponsor or join networked consortial initiatives with other libraries.

- Support for librarians and local faculty who edit scientific journals to explore non-commercial ways of publishing, e.g. through Stanford's HighWire Press.

These are just some of the initiatives that will further our goal of increasing access to s/e information at UNM without increasing costs - currently rising between 10-12 percent per annum.

Attached are the signed petitions and a copy of the background information that was attached to these. Please call Johann van Reenen (7-8310) for more information or to arrange a meeting with the signatories. Written responses can be addressed to Johann at Centennial Library, UNM.

Thank you for your consideration of this grassroots proposal,

Yours sincerely,

IDC Sub-Committee Members

Attached: ***PROPOSAL: FUNDING FOR ESSENTIAL ADVANCED RESEARCH INFORMATION RESOURCES IN SCIENCE AND ENGINEERING***

1. PROBLEM:

a. Scientific and technical journal subscription prices are increasing at a rate that is beyond libraries' ability to pay thus requiring cancellations at UNM that are getting harder to accomplish without damaging our research effort.

b. The cost of retooling library services to provide electronic access, consortial licensing and Web-based products is high and currently must be funded from reallocations of existing budgets.

2. PROPOSAL:

We propose that one percent of the IDC budget be set aside annually* to support currently unfunded, essential information resources for advanced research in Science and Engineering. These funds will be administered by a committee comprised of four Science and Engineering faculty and the director of the Centennial Science & Engineering Library (CSEL). Sci/Eng faculty members will be selected annually from the membership of the CSEL Liaison Committee; two to represent science departments in the College of Arts & Sciences and two to represent the School of Engineering.

By funding advanced research information resources not affordable by the CSEL, the Office of Research Services can ensure that successful research and grant writing continues to flourish at UNM. The alternative is a reduction of the CSEL journal collection by about 60% over the next 5 years with a resultant decrease in information support for grant writing and a negative impact on research income and research activity.

3. DISCUSSION

The cost of scientific and technological information, especially journal subscriptions, has outstripped Academic Libraries' ability to purchase sufficient information access and ownership to support advanced research (See attached: "Reaching a Critical State: Journal prices and continuing cancellations").

UNM is no exception; the cancellation projects in 1996/7 ($185,000) and 1997/8 (about $120,000 planned), alone, will diminish the CSEL holdings by about one third.

The Library is exploring many options to help it to continue to underwrite the growth of grant-funded advanced research in sci/tech. Some of these are:

- staff reductions (2.75 FTE eliminated out of 14.5 FTE in CSEL during 1996).

- prioritization of services (discontinuing some).

- just-in-time direct ordering by users of articles from journals we do not own.

- consortial initiatives with other N.M. sci/tech libraries to purchase electronic services we cannot afford by our self.

- re-engineering "behind-the-scenes" library processes to be cheaper and faster.

- capitalizing on the Internet to distribute information and services widely; any time, any place.

- involving Faculty Liaisons in journal cancellations and planning.

- providing, for a fee, electronic copies of articles from the CSEL collection to non-UNM customers, e.g. Sandia Laboratory.

Yet, all of these efforts cannot ensure that our level of sci/tech information infrastructure will remain sufficient to support current levels of research at UNM. We need additional funding, separate from the library budget, to explore new ways of purchasing sci/tech information and to keep the journal collection viable.

* This is already done for 8 other initiatives in the Overhead (IDC) Operating budget.

EXAMPLE # 3

LETTER REGARDING actions in support of a new scholarly publishing economy that do not necessarily require more funding for the library.

To: Dean of Arts and Sciences.

Dear Dr. … , Here are some actions that faculty leaders can take that involves effort but not necessarily more money:

1. Avail themselves of education opportunities provided by the library regarding the crisis in scholarly publication, e.g. the symposium organized by the library in March this year.

2. Help us create a dynamic inventory of UNM faculty who are editors, sit on editorial boards, or are reviewers. These individuals should be provided with regularly updated information regarding fair use legislation, electronic publishing opportunities, alternatives to their current publications, etc.

3. Promotion and tenure guidelines should be amended to favor those who publish in society/not-for-profit publications and who publish in electronic ONLY journals.

4. All graduate students should be required to attend a course along the lines of "Your options and rights as a future scholarly publications producer".

5. Faculty who involve themselves with finding solutions or doing research in the opportunities the internet offers to re-invent the scholarly publishing process, should be encouraged and rewarded. Even those who just sit on library committees. I have the impression that currently these positions are the least valued.

6. Grant writing in the areas of informatics and electronic publishing should be stimulated, especially in Computer sciences and the publishing course in the English department.

7. Support the recently formed Electronic Publishing Committee of the Senate Library committee (even elevating it to a 'council' or whatever it will take to give it credibility).

8. Encourage all faculty to speak to these issues at their associations' national and regional meetings. These societies should take back publishing from for-profit publishers.

9. Actively involve faculty leaders in supporting journal cancellations targeting specific for-profit publishers, even if it may cost us more in the short term in just-in-time article orders. I and others spend hundreds of hours "selling" cancellations to sci/eng faculty - yet, invariably the library ends up being the bad guy/gal.

10. Help make journal funding (esp. in science, engineering, & business) a statewide priority, especially electronic resources that can benefit all citizens, not just university constituents.

11. Help lobby state government for the above.

I hope this is useful. More money could solve the immediate problem, but it would be irresponsible to make that our only aim.

Johann van Reenen

EXAMPLE # 4

N.M. Legislative Committee on Education, July 14, 1998

NOTES ON THE CRISIS IN SCHOLARLY PUBLISHING

AIM: To develop a strong science and technology information infrastructure for New Mexico that will ensure continued growth of science and engineering research, innovation, and job creation for the state. At the root of this are successful grant applications and the resulting publications and discoveries.

CONSEQUENCES OF FAILURE:

Fewer science and technology knowledge workers will remain in the state and fewer will be attracted to our Universities and Laboratories. Fewer discoveries will be made in and credited to NM.

THE EVOLVING CRISIS:

UNM's science and engineering library collections, and those of NMT and NMSU, are facing a critical threshold this year: we will begin to cut subscriptions that will ultimately be cheaper to own than to order article by article as researchers need them. Already, two of the Lab libraries are at this point and rely on UNM's scitech collections for affordable article delivery. This crisis was brought on by high inflation in the scholarly publication economy. Between 1990 and 1994 the median price of North American journals increased 54.6%, and that of European journals by 63.6%. With these increase, and static or decreasing acquisitions budgets, the purchasing power of Libraries has reached a critical state.

WHAT HAVE WE DONE AT UNM?

- We instituted subsidized rapid electronic document delivery for articles from cancelled subscriptions.
- We are building awareness of this international problem among faculty, the administration, and funding bodies.
- We are supporting the efforts of the Association of Research Libraries (ARL) and the American Association of Universities (AAU).
- We are fundraising and investing in new paradigm products with our partners in the Library Services Alliance of NM (the "Alliance").
- We are joining consortia to lower the prices we pay for information.
- We have asked the university to form a high level committee to study this problem and possible solutions.
- The Associate Dean of the Library worked with NM library groups and organizations during the last legislative session to get state funding for general electronic information resources. This passed all the legislative hoops but was lost as a line item veto.

POTENTIAL SOLUTIONS

- Continue educating stakeholders.
- Continue reallocating resources within the library to afford investments in electronic resources.
- Continue working with the Alliance in joint purchases that will benefit all science and technology libraries.
- Join national initiatives to change the economics of scholarly publishing.
- Raise state funds for a state initiative to underwrite a set of basic science and technology electronic resources as has been done by most other states.

EXAMPLE # 5: A letter I took the liberty of sending to the CEO of Engineering Village who sold out to Elsevier.

Dear Mr. Regazzi,

I am writing you from three perspectives: As chairman of the Library Services Alliance of New Mexico (which signed a consortial license for *EiVillage*® for our members); as chair of the SciTech

Library Liaison Committee at UNM (representing 10 sci/eng departments); and as a director of a library in an area where technology is the livelihood of many in the local economy who look to us to provide services

that will make and keep them competitive.

I, and most members of the above groups, were deeply disturbed by your sudden announcement of being purchased by Elsevier. The latter represents in our minds the worst case of benefiting from free information created at America's universities and laboratories, and then selling it back to our libraries at inflated prices. We know prices are inflated because Elsevier posted record profits last year.

We realize that you cannot change this situation, but may have some control over future subscription price increases for *EiVillage*. We encourage you in such efforts. Simultaneously, we hope to find a cheaper alternative to your products before our multi-year contract with *EiVillage* expires, particularly, if such could be encouraged in the not-for-profit/academic sector.

We find your products useful and hope to continue them, but as conscientious consumers, accountable to our primary customers, we have to be vigilant in pursuing the most cost-effective options.

I hope this is helpful in planning for the future,

Johann van Reenen.