

# **The scholarly communications conundrum – notes and queries from Libraryland**

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## What do we mean by scholarly communication?

- Current debate focuses on journal publishing
- Publications of research output in different formats
  - Journal articles
  - Scholarly monographs
  - Working papers
  - Theses
  - Letters and correspondence
  - Data sets, print, digital, other media

## **Journals: Key issues**

- Affordability
- Value for money
- Inflexibility
- Quality assurance
- Alternative models
- If so, how soon?

## **Affordability**

- Price increases are financially unsustainable for UK HE libraries
- Unacceptably high %age of QR funding (and growing)
- VAT on e-formats - an additional financial burden

## What it costs Imperial College

2009 – 2010

- £3.8m on journals (approximately 50% of total library budget)
- £2.7m of total spend (86%) with 3 publishers

In 2004-5

- £3m (43% of total budget)

## **Are we *really* getting value for money?**

- Usage statistics inform collection management strategy

but.....

## **Inflexibility**

### Big Deals

- Inhibit library's ability to develop collections to meet users' changing needs
- Multi-year contracts constrain unduly
- Core titles subsidise titles of low academic value

## **Quality assurance**

- Need to dispel myths about peer review

## **Alternative models**

- Open access publishing
  - Gold OA publishing
  - Subject repositories
  - Institutional repositories

## Something's got to give

### Options

- Negotiate better terms?
- Cancel big deals?
- Cut staff?
- Cut book budgets?

## What next?

- The end of the journal as we know it? (Anderson)
- The end of the journal article as we know it? (Prosser)
- The end of the library as we know it?
  - Libraries of the future initiative

## **We need**

- In the short term - an accommodation on price
- In the long term - a radical new way of handling scholarly communication

Not for its own sake ...

***... but because the effective dissemination of research should matter to us all***

PANITCH, J & MICHALAK, S. *The serials crisis: a white paper for the UNC-Chapel Hill Scholarly Communications*. Convocation January 2005

BUCKLEY-OWEN, Tim. Journal Pricing – don't waste a crisis, *Library and Information Gazette*, 11 December – 13 January 2010 pps 1&3

ANDERSON, Rick. 'Scholarly communications: the news from the library' in *Digital information: order or anarchy?* edited by Hazel Woodward and Lorraine Estelle. London: Facet, 2010

Libraries of the Future [www.futurelibraries.info/content/](http://www.futurelibraries.info/content/)

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