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


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