

# Why scholarship should never be a commodity!

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This is a presentation of a presentation. The original was presented on May 18, 2011, at the SFU School of Communication, as part of a grad panel on political economics, moderated by Rick Gruneau (my PhD supervisor). While this reflects my grad student work, many a liaison librarian today might be giving a similar presentation, and/or having informal conversations with faculty along similar lines.

## Communication journals?

This presentation reflects my work on scholarly communication in the area of communication. My first point is about the difficulty of identifying a really good list of journals in this area. Ulrich's list of communication journals is mainly focuses on engineering / telecommunications; I ended up using EBSCO's Communication and Mass Media Complete for analysis. I should mention that this presentation is not a linear one covering this particular research project, but rather draws from a number of different areas I have been working in, to address the topic of what communication scholars should know about scholarly communication in this area. The difficulty of finding a good list of journals reflects the variable boundaries of the discipline of communication.

## Scholarly societies & journals

- About 45% of journals are published by societies (Crow)
- Canadian Association of Learned Journals  
*Scholarly Journal Publishing in Canada Annual Report 2010-2011* (Provençal)

My key point here is that overall while there is substantial involvement of the commercial sector in scholarly publishing, there is still a strong presence of scholarly societies as well. Johanne Provençal (a graduate of the SFU Master of Publishing program) recently authored a study on behalf of CALJ, which found that most Canadian scholarly journals are faring well, e.g. success rates of obtaining subsidy funding were very high, however support for these journals seems to be eroding somewhat – a loss of teaching release time here, funding for an editor's salary there. I found it interesting that 65% of CALJ journals consider themselves to be open access to some extent (some fully open access, others providing free back issues).

## Volunteer work, anyone?

informa.plc (Taylor & Francis, Routledge)

- 2010 revenue: £1.2 billion (up .4% from 2009)
- 2010 adjusted operating profit: £313 million (up 1.4 – 1.8% from 2009)\*
- Informaworld name change to Taylor & Francis Online \*\*
- = profit margin of 25%
- Author's rights? Sherpa RoMEO Yellow (below average)

From: <http://www.informa.com/investor-relations/Results-Reporting/>

From: <http://www.library.yale.edu/~license/ListArchives/1104/msg00015.html>

This slow erosion of support for scholarly society publishers is in marked contrast with the high profit rates of some of the large commercial publishers, such as the 25% profit margin of informa.plc. The name “informa.plc” may not be well known to many scholars, but the “brands” of this multinational corporate body, such as Taylor and Francis and Routledge, are. When you think about the scholarly journal article as largely a gift economy, with the articles given away by their authors and peer reviewers giving their services for free, one way to characterize what is happening is that scholars are doing volunteer work to help out with a cause – achieving high profits for the stakeholders of companies like informa. Please note that revenue figures reflect informa as a whole – not just publishing, also the construction biz and the Yacht Shows and other areas – however the publishing portion is doing at least as well as the company overall.

- Wiley **“SCIENTIFIC, TECHNICAL, MEDICAL, AND SCHOLARLY (STMS)”**
- **Third quarter revenue + 8%**
- **Third quarter contribution to profit + 12%**
- **Revenue for 9 months up 1% to \$712 million**

**John Wiley and Sons Announces Third Quarter Fiscal Year 2011 Results <http://ca.wiley.com/WileyCDA/PressRelease/pressReleaseId-93037.html>**

These figures from Wiley – one of the largest journal publishers in communication since their 2008 buyout of Blackwell – are limited to scholarly publishing. Here we see that third quarter revenue is up 8%, and profit is up even higher, 12%. Interesting – what if the authors (suppliers) and readers (customers) of Wiley journals – for example, the department – had an increase in revenue like this? Would it make sense to give this to the journals, or would the department see better uses for this added revenue – like academic jobs?

Ditte Tofteng and Mia Husted **Theatre and action research: How drama can empower action research processes in the field of unemployment** *Action Research* March 2011 9: 27-41, doi: 10.1177/1476750310396953

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## Pay per view

- Excess copyright  
<http://www.accesscopyright.ca/default.aspx?id=310>
- Discourages learning & reading (Morrison, 2005)
- Informational Feudalism (Drahos & Braithwaite)

The Sage model is pay per view – in my opinion, NOT a good model for dissemination of scholarship. Harmless in small doses, hugely problematic if it were to become the default. My dig at “Excess copyright” (Access Copyright) resonates with most faculty, for whom the latest tariff negotiations present huge issues with matters such as surveillance.

## Wiley: the Blackwell legacy

Journal of Communication

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Enough for the scary stuff! On the plus side, a nice bit about the Blackwell legacy; it was the practice of this company to leave the copyright in the hands of the scholarly societies whose journals they published. This means that some of the top-ranked journals in this field could walk away (perhaps to some of those library journal hosting services) and bring their journals – even all of their back issues – with them. (Note that even without the copyright, any editorial board is free to walk away from any journal at any time).



## Directory of Open Access Journals

<http://www.doaj.org>

- > 6,500 fully open access journals
- Media and Communication Studies: 95 titles
- <http://www.doaj.org/doaj?func=subject&cpid=130&uiLanguage=en>
- International Journal of Communication
- Global Media Studies
- Journal of Information Policy

The good news about open access journals is very familiar to us. Here, I am highlighted journals that are in our field of communication, and especially titles that people will know, because some of their colleagues are on the Board or recently sent out a call for papers.

## Library journal hosting services

Open Access Journal Supports in Canada  
(Morrison et al.)

<http://ir.lib.sfu.ca/handle/1892/10882>

For library students, it is important to know about library journal hosting services, as this could be part of our jobs someday. For academic, it is important to know about this, because for any academic journal nowadays, there is a high likelihood that among a journal's editorial board there will be several faculty members whose libraries provide such services. This means that scholarly journals that wish to walk away from the high-profit low-access commercial sector, pretty much can do so.

## stm revenue versus necessary OA costs

- \$8 billion USD annually (journals)
- 70% from academic library budgets ( ~ \$5.6 billion)
- Estimated cost to publish world's 1.5 million scholarly articles / year at average of about \$1,350 USD (PLoS ONE rates): \$2.5 billion
- = academic library budgets (globally) could fund fully open access journal publishing and save money
- Sources: Ware & Mabe (2009), Björk et al. (2008)

This is a bit of macro analysis that is a part of my own scholarly work. My point for the communication department is that a fully open access scholarly journal publishing system could be paid for with less than what academic libraries currently spend on scholarly journals. In my opinion, academics should encourage libraries to commit to making the transition to open access.

## Self-archiving

Heather's works

<http://ir.lib.sfu.ca/handle/1892/79/simple-search?query=Morrison%2C+Heather>

Here I talk a bit about the self-archiving option, illustrating with my own works in the SFU D-Space. Later, on request, I post a copy of this presentation there, too. I can do this because I'm with the library – the library has a community in the SFU D-Space, but not the communication department. So if people see my presentation and WANT to self-archive in the IR – they will be stymied. There is a good reason for this – SFU is in the process of moving the IR to Drupal, and planning a major public launch and marketing campaign, so development in the current installation has been stalled.

## MIT Faculty Open Access Policy

<http://info-libraries.mit.edu/scholarly/mit-open-access/open-access-at-mit/mit-open-access-policy/>

“Each **Faculty member grants** to the Massachusetts Institute of Technology nonexclusive permission to make available his or her scholarly articles and to exercise the copyright in those articles **for the purpose of open dissemination**...The Provost ... will **waive** application of the policy for a particular article upon written notification by the author, who informs MIT of the reason”.

Here I talk a little bit about open access policy. My perspective is that it is in the best interests of faculty to proactively get involved in OA policy and help shape policies that are in their best interests, as well as the interests of the university and of open access. I talk about the MIT policy because, in my opinion, it is the best!

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