

Report
Joint CDC/SCO Task Force on
Criteria to Determine UC's Support for Transformative
Scholarly Publishing Models

April 15, 2008

Background:

In 2005, the Scholarly Communications Officers Group drafted the *UC Library Investments in Transformative Scholarly Communications Models* in response to the UC University Librarians' request for criteria to use when investing in transformative efforts. This document served as a discussion piece for a UC library-wide summit on scholarly communications. Subsequently, the UC libraries began funding various transformative efforts (see Appendix C for examples). Due to the highly dynamic landscape for transformative scholarly publishing models, the funding for these transformative efforts has increased. In addition, different expectations in return for funding are now emerging.

Because of these changes, the Collection Development Committee/Scholarly Communications Officers Group Task Force (UC CDC/SCO TF) was charged with determining the criteria to assess "return on investment" (ROI) that UC Libraries should expect for contributing funds to organizations which offer transformative scholarly publishing models (see Appendix A for charge document).

The Task Force reviewed the five transformative scholarly communications efforts that UC currently invests in against the 2005 criteria, and developed a strategy for assessing expectations that are keyed to the stage of development of a particular transformative effort. Evaluations of the five current investments are included in Appendix C. Recommendations for future assessments are included in recommendations below.

Task Force Recommendations:

- 1) The UC Libraries as a consortium invest in transformative models that meet the criteria outlined in Appendix B. It is not necessary for libraries to fund each transformative publishing model. Models such as Wikipedia (<http://www.wikipedia.org/>) and Encyclopedia of Life (<http://www.eol.org/home.html>) may not require library funding, but can benefit from librarians' contributing their expertise and support.
- 2) There should be two categories of expectations and slightly different criteria for assessing transformative efforts and ROI depending on their stage of development:
 - a. UC Libraries should invest in new transformative efforts based on initial expectations of potential impact delineated in the criteria found in the *UC Library Investments in Transformative Scholarly Communications Models, 2005*.
 - b. UC Libraries should continue to invest in transformative scholarly publishing models when they meet the Impact Assessment criteria found in Appendix B. UC Libraries can expect an ROI from a transformative scholarly publishing model that minimally meets the Impact Assessment criteria. 'Returns' may be in the form of a tangible benefit to UC and/or demonstrated effectiveness in shifting the scholarly communication model.

3) For both new and ongoing transformative efforts, it is important that UC Libraries consider the symbolic effect of not investing or of discontinuing funding in a transformative scholarly publishing endeavor.

- How will traditional publishers, such as the commercial, for-profit sector view the UC decision?

- What is the value that UC Libraries bring to a transformative effort through endorsement and/or funding?

- Does a financial commitment bolster the UC impact rather than only a statement of endorsement?

4) The existing CDC/SCO review process for determining whether to invest in a new transformative scholarly communication effort should be extended to include an Impact Assessment for each transformative resource. The Impact Assessment will be conducted at timely intervals; at least every three years for each transformative resource, or whenever the resource's business model changes.

Appendix A
Joint CDC/SCO Task Force
Criteria to Determine UC's Support for Transformative
Scholarly Publishing Models
September, 2007

According to [*UC Library Investments in Transformative Scholarly Communications Models, 2005*](#), "a publishing or distribution effort can be considered transformative when it is developed principally to a) remove or reduce impediments to the flow and availability of knowledge, especially of quality-filtered...materials; or b) create a more sustainable set of economic transactions among stakeholders..." This same document lays out eight criteria which, in addition to those contained in [*Principles for Acquiring and Licensing Information in Digital Formats*](#), should be used to assess a potential investment in a transformative scholarly communication resource:

- Potential for transformative influence
- Operational sustainability
- Disclosure/transparency (economic model, analysis of economic vitality, etc.)
- Uniqueness
- Scholar-led
- Protection from financial risk
- Non-profit status

The document also describes potential indicators for each dimension that can be used to judge a particular resource.

Recently CDC and SCO have been asked by several transformative publishers for additional funds to support their efforts. In discussing these requests, it has become clear that the criteria contained in the 2005 document need to be further delineated to help us make these decisions. The Task Force is charged to:

- a. Review the criteria in [*UC Library Investments*](#) and determine if there are additional criteria that are needed. In particular, should the presence of a program that advocates transforming scholarly communication be one of the criteria used to determine support of a "transformative" effort? Are there tools or services that transformative efforts should include to warrant UC support? Are there particular benefits that UC should expect to derive from support of a transformative publishing venture? Do the criteria vary according to the type of model or approach taken?
- b. Review the categories and/or types (e.g. membership fees) of support currently offered by transformative publishing ventures and suggest which are most likely to warrant investment at this time.
- c. Recommend mechanisms and schedules for reviewing the level of support UC is providing to transformative publishers.

Task Force Members:

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Proposed Timeline:

Progress report = Sept, 2007
Final report = Nov 1, 2007

Appendix B
Impact Assessment:
Criteria for Determining
Transformative Scholarly Publishing Model Success

Initial Potential Impact Criteria:

-use definitions found in UC Library Investments in Transformative Scholarly Communications Models, 2005:

- potential for transformative influence
- operational sustainability
- disclosure/transparency (economic model, analysis of economic vitality, etc.)
- uniqueness
- scholar-led
- protection from financial risk
- non-profit status

Ongoing Impact Criteria:

-continued evidence of meeting the initial potential impact criteria mentioned in above

-“impactful” success indicators: (these are illustrative examples and are not meant to be a definitive list)

-number of articles and/or journal/book titles compared with traditional publishing methods

-compare startup vs. 1 – 3 years later

-number of authors using the transformative effort, especially UC authors

-compare startup vs. 1 – 3 years later

-ISI impact factor

-compare startup vs. 1 – 3 years later

-Eigen Factor

-copycat phenomenon: how many new startups or existing traditional publishers have adopted a similar transformative model?

-sustainability for UC: cost of investment is less than or does not exceed the cost of a traditional profit-driven or toll-access approach

Tangible ROI indicators:

a) author discounts for publishing fees

b) alternative methods for sharing research results (e.g. social networking tools that enhance commentaries and show research value of a work)

c) strategies for librarians to influence scholarly publishing ventures (e.g. sponsored forums between researchers, librarians, publishers to discuss new ways of disseminating research results seamlessly)

The current CDC/SCO review process for evaluating a transformative scholarly publishing effort will be used to conduct the UC Impact Assessment.

Every three years or whenever a transformative scholarly publishing resource changes its business model an Impact Assessment will be conducted by the UC SCO Group upon notification by the UC CDC.