

Resolution F: Publication of Data on Cost, Use, and Quality of UC-Licensed Electronic Journals

Resolved: *In order to inform faculty about the economics of scholarly publication and the impact of these economics on the University, and to increase understanding of emerging alternative methods of scholarly communication, the Committee recommends that the UC Office of Systemwide Library Planning compile, maintain, and make available via the World Wide Web information about scholarly communication and publishing issues, including data about electronic journal titles licensed for Universitywide access by the California Digital Library. This information might include cost, usage, journal citation frequency, copyright and licensing practices for contributing authors and institutional subscribers, and other data deemed to be of use to the UC community.*

Background:

In its March, 1998 Final Report,¹ the UC Library Planning and Action Initiative described a fundamental structural crisis in scholarly publishing and communication, and argued that in the long term, “to capture and distribute effectively the fruits of the knowledge developed by UC faculty requires new forms of scholarly and scientific communication.”

At their joint meeting on May 23, 2002, SLASIAC and the University’s Standing Committee on Copyright held extensive discussions exploring the economics of traditional scholarly publication and the importance to the University of promoting and supporting alternative and more sustainable forms of scholarly communication. The committees concluded that “it is important to take an initiative to educate the UC community” about these issues and the available alternatives.² Pursuant to those discussions, planning is underway in collaboration with the leadership of the Academic Council for a set of invitational regional forums to promote discussion among the UC faculty on these matters.

To supplement those efforts, the Committee believes that individual faculty choices about where to publish the results of their research may be beneficially influenced by information about the characteristics of leading journals and the effects of their decisions on the library budget.

An advantage of electronic journals, including the 8,000 titles currently available from the California Digital Library, is that, for the first time, detailed data on the use of individual journal titles can be captured and used for decision-making. It is now possible, for example, to acquire data for a digital journal title showing total use of its articles by the UC community over a defined period of time (measured by the number of articles viewed or downloaded), the approximate annual cost to license the title, and the average cost per use, and to juxtapose these measures with journal citation counts and other indicators of journal quality. While not all publishers currently make this information available on a routine basis, these data are available for the majority of journals licensed for the Shared Digital Collection.

¹< <http://www.lpai.ucop.edu/outcomes/finalrpt/>>

²<http://www.slp.ucop.edu/consultation/slasiac/notes_052302.html>

While the staff effort to compile, edit, normalize and present these data is not trivial, the Committee believes that the benefits of doing so are substantial, and encourages the Office of the President to allocate the resources needed to support on an ongoing basis the compilation and posting on a Web site of use and cost data about the University's shared digital journal collection, where it may be accessed and used by everyone in the University community. Recognizing that such data may be perceived as affecting the commercial interests of some publishers, we encourage consultation with the Office of General Counsel during the planning for this program.