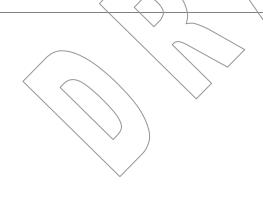# PUBLISHING NEEDS AND OPPORTUNITIES AT THE

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

A Report by

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REPORT OF THE SLASIAC TASK FORCE ON PUBLISHING NEEDS AND OPPORTUNITIES AT THE UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

CHARGE

The Task Force on University Publishing was established in May 2006 under the auspices of the Systemwide Library and Scholarly Information Advisory Committee (SLASIAC) to examine current publishing activities within the UC system and make recommendations for the future development of those activities (see appendix 1). In particular, the Task Force was charged to explore the following:

- Potential coordination among publishing programs as a means of disseminating scholarship more efficiently.
- Methods for publishing nontraditional forms of scholarship, such as those that interact with primary data within the publication, multimedia projects, and works incorporating ongoing review and revision.
- Research priorities likely to generate opportunities for new publishing programs.

This study grows out of SLASIAC's charge and more general concerns about the current state of scholarly publishing, which, is under pressure from a number of forces, including the escalating cost of scientific journals, cutbacks in monograph publication on the part of many publishers, and opportunities for new kinds of publishing created by digital technologies. These issues have been an important part of SLASIAC's agenda for some years, and continue to be the subject of much discussion throughout the University and the scholarly publishing industry.

The task force began its review of the UC scholarly publishing landscape with the following assumptions:

- The University faces continuing erosion of its ability to purchase the resources necessary to support its research and teaching enterprise and should take a direct approach to combating the problem.
- The University should play a greater role in publishing scholarly work, but it is not clear how it might most effectively do so.

INTRODUCTION

University of California faculty members seem to be, on the whole, pleased with their publishing options. They produce research articles in astonishing numbers, supplying an impressive percentage of published journal content globally; their longer works are published in equally impressive numbers, acquired readily by the most prestigious academic and commercial publishers. To hear them tell it, in the recently released Survey of UC Faculty Attitudes and Behaviors[1], scholarly publishing is a well-greased gear in the scholarly communication machine.

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[1] The Office of Scholarly Communication's report, *Faculty Attitudes and Behaviors Regarding Scholarly Communication,* is available at http://osc.universityofcalifornia.edu/responses/materials/OSC-survey-full-20070828.pdf

So why should we be worried?

And yet, we are hearing a quite different story on the campuses from Vice Chancellors for Research and Deans who are witnessing the gradual diminution of publishing options and opportunities for UC faculty, particularly within the Arts and Humanities. Junior faculty are beginning to struggle to get the book contracts they need for tenure and promotion; faculty working in innovative fields or on non-traditional projects are constrained by a publishing model that does not serve their needs; and campus resources are increasingly compromised by the commercial publishing culture, whose pricing necessitates increased restrictions on the very materials necessary to support research, teaching and the public dissemination of the university's work.[2]

The paradox, then, resides at the level of the individual faculty members who, in the face of these circumstances, are inclined to maintain a status quo that has not yet reached the level of personal crisis. Our institutional efforts to develop services that would respond to the publishing crisis have taught us an important lesson: attempts to improve scholarly communication by exciting individual faculty ire or inspiration have raised issues, stirred passions and illustrated boundless possibilities for the niche and informal communications that are the hallmark of 21st century scholarship - but they have not and likely will not fundamentally change the way scholarly publishing works. UC faculty would like to see the university play a more active role in blunting the effect of the commercialization of academic publishing, thus protecting the scholarly enterprise; many would further like to see UC fulfill its obligation to the people of California and the world by sharing intellectual output in an effective and sustainable manner; but they will not and cannot risk their own academic lives to make it happen. The university must step in.

What is to be done?

This is the setting for our report, which examines the university's predicament alongside the immediate and sometimes contradictory needs of the individual faculty member; the inexorably rising costs of traditional scholarly communication alongside the unavoidable costs of investment in new approaches; the needs of science faculty alongside those in arts, humanities, and social sciences; the restrictions associated with a well-established peer-review system alongside the creative drive to exploit all possible avenues of scholarly inquiry; the needs of academe alongside the needs of California.

The University of California has an enormous stake in ensuring the creation, dissemination, publication and preservation of the products of research and teaching, for its faculties, researchers and students, as well as for the readers and learners of California, and the legislators and policy makers who serve them. We believe it is possible and it is urgent that UC marshal its resources and services in a way that strengthens the university's research capacity and advances scholarship while addressing the overarching needs of all the communities it serves.

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[2] In 2005-06, The University of California spent a whopping $80 million on library materials and binding http://www.slp.ucop.edu/stats/05-06_rev.pdf, including $28 million per year on electronic resources alone, to support its research and teaching activities. With the continuing escalation in commercial journal output and prices, however, this buys only a shrinking percentage of those resources that should be available to support scholarly activities. Meanwhile, while UC author contributions to those same journals show no decline and, in fact, science faculty are winning out-sized grants to take up new research in critical fields, fields that will likely generate significant amounts of new journal content and further fuel the commercial engine.

METHOD

Our approach to examining these issues was strongly influenced by the principles articulated by the Long Range Guidance Team.[3] We were particularly interested the commitment to strengthening the communication of UC research in ways that will extend access to and improve the quality of education, better inform public policy and public opinion, and shape professional and industry practice. We were also fortunate in being able to draw upon the work of several other groups, including the Academic Senate's Special Committee on Scholarly Communication (SCSC), UC Berkeley's Center for Studies in Higher Education, and the IT Guidance Committee. The work of the Task force additionally coincided with a survey recently completed by the Office of Scholarly Publishing intended to gauge faculty publishing behavior and attitudes across the UC system.

In the course of this study, members of the task force visited all ten campuses and interviewed Vice Chancellors and Provosts, Vice Chancellors for Research, deans, librarians and faculty in an effort to survey existing UC publishing activities and to understand the current and emerging research priorities and associated needs for new publishing models and approaches throughout the UC system. In addition to these on-campus visits, we engaged in a significant amount of web-based research and correspondence with specific publishing programs across the system. We investigated over 300 UC organizations with publications programs, which we located chiefly by searching UCOP, campus, and library websites; investigating lists of MQUs and ORUs supplied by UCOP; and tracking back from publications in the eScholarship Repository.

A detailed discussion of our findings is attached as an appendix. [Not attached]

FINDINGS

1. The majority of faculty still follows traditional publication channels, i.e., books and journals. The commercial world still dominates this model of scholarly publishing, particularly in the sciences.

   - Results of the Office of Scholarly Communication's faculty attitudes and behavior survey indicate that most UC faculty are aware of the financial strains caused by the current publishing model. That awareness, however, does not translate into significant concern or specific action. In fact, many if not most UC faculty report being reasonably well satisfied with their existing publishing opportunities. They often view the publication and access problems associated with the crisis in scholarly communication as external to themselves, having little bearing on their immediate scholarly activities. [4]

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[3] The Long Range Guidance Team's report, *UC 2025: The Power and Promise of Ten,* is available at http://www.ucop.edu/acadaff/swap/lrgt_nov06_final.pdf.

[4] The Office of Scholarly Communication's report, *Faculty Attitudes and Behaviors Regarding Scholarly Communication,* is available at http://osc.universityofcalifornia.edu/responses/materials/OSC-survey-full-20070828.pdf

2. At a finer level of analysis, however, some faculty voice specific concerns about the effectiveness and long-term viability of the publishing methods used most frequently within their disciplines. The level of concern varies widely among disciplines:

    - Science faculty report, in the UC Faculty Attitudes survey and the Task Force's campus interviews, the highest level of satisfaction with current publishing opportunities – and, as a result of significant online services and more flexible policies regarding prior- and post-publication, are significantly involved in the digital publication of books and journals. At the same time, some scientists express concern about the high cost of many of the peer-reviewed journals that are the cornerstone of their publishing activity, arguing that UC should do more to establish alternative journals and/or wrest existing journals away from their commercial publishers

    - Not surprisingly, it is in the arts and humanities that we see the greatest gap between expressed need for publishing support and available services. The monograph remains the medium of choice for scholars in the humanities, with most fields requiring book publication for tenure and promotion. Opinion differs on whether opportunities for monograph publication are shrinking. Many faculty say they do not perceive any diminution of opportunity for UC faculty, although they recognize that there may be problems elsewhere. Some express grave concern about future opportunities, however, especially for junior colleagues.[5]

3. As new areas of research and new points of interdisciplinary convergence emerge, there will be new publishing opportunities, many of which will, again, follow traditional publishing models in lieu of other choices. Some of these new fields are in high-profile, socially-critical areas of research, such as biofuels and climate change. As the research funding in these areas grows there will be increasing needs and opportunities to publish – but the challenges to communicating findings within these emergent fields and outward to the larger public will also intensify.

4. At the same time, there is a trend toward non-traditional publication and informal communication – especially in the arts and humanities – and in both cases, there is a strong desire to formalize and validate these publications.

    - Although a majority of UC faculty is satisfied with publishing opportunities for their own work, a significant minority are engaged in experimental publishing models that are not well served by existing structures.   In the midst of this traditional disciplinary publishing, we have also found an increasing array of nontraditional modes of publication – both formal and informal – that necessitate the development of new publishing methods and models across the UC campuses. Most often, these new kinds of digital publishing projects are being developed within the humanities, arts, and social sciences. They range widely in format, from

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[5] This description of opinions is drawn from the *Faculty Attitudes and Behaviors Regarding Scholarly Communication* available at http://osc.universityofcalifornia.edu/responses/materials/OSC-survey-full-20070828.pdf and the campus interviews conducted for this report. See Appendix B.

documentary editions and reference works to datasets, course materials, and multimedia projects of varying degrees of complexity.

- At present, scholars publishing outside the traditional book and journal formats are, in effect, self publishing. Because their technical skills vary, as do the technical services available to them within their local departments and campuses, these projects differ significantly in the quality of their design, technical sophistication, and ease of use.[6] Few of these publications are marketed by anything other than informal means, and none are returning revenue to their authors or to the University.

5. Faculty are increasingly frustrated by a tenure and review system that fails to recognize these new publishing models and, hence, constrains experimentation both in the technologies of dissemination and in the audiences addressed. Unlike the University, which has clear mission, financial and policy concerns driving its desire to improve the publishing services available to faculty, the faculty themselves seem fundamentally motivated in their publishing choices and activities by the requirements established within their departments and campuses for tenure and promotion. In fact, the tenure and promotion process generally impedes those actions that might effectively address the scholarly communications crisis, such as publishing in open access journals, granting non-exclusive copyright to publishers, etc.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Strengthening traditional campus-based publishing programs

Campus-based journals are prime targets for commercial publishers because of the services these publishers can offer and the capital they are willing to invest in resource-poor publishing efforts. UC has the capacity to provide these value-added publishing services internally and, hence, prevent migration of local publications to the commercials. In order to provide comparable services, we need to develop the following:

- A tiered approach for journals to cost-efficiently address UC faculty needs and build on our existing eScholarship and UC Press journal services will have the following components:

  - Full service, which includes the UC Press imprint, will follow the current production workflow of UC Press; journals will receive the full platform services provided by the UC Press vendor, Atypon, and the associated marketing services of the Press.
  - UC sponsored journals, including those which have been launched, edited and produced by UC faculty and employ the platform, customer and technical services provided with the eScholarship Repository; these journals would be eligible for indexing and marketing assistance from the UC Press Journals Division.

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[6] One such example and a possible model for other campuses is the Center for Digital Humanities (CDH) at UCLA.

- UC-sponsored do-it-yourself journals that have been launched and managed directly by UC faculty and staff using the eScholarship Repository platform services. There is no fee for this service.[7]

- Better communications/higher visibility of UC publishing services within the UC community
  - To get the word out to journal editors that these services exist within the University
  - To educate/agitate about why these homegrown journals should publish with UC and not with the commercial publishers

Publishing digital projects effectively

Responding to the publishing needs of the UC scholarly community is not simply about rethinking journal and monographic publishing services. There are a good many UC scholars producing important work that does not fit neatly into traditional categories of publication. These non-traditional publications pose substantial and unique challenges to the current academic publishing model.

Standards/Methods

- There are no standard methods to guide us in publishing this kind of academic work. As a result, we must first define and codify processes for the evaluation, selection and peer-review of a broad range of non-traditional scholarly output.
- Concomitant with the development of standards for evaluating these projects, we also need to establish, from the production side, a typology of projects and documentation of best practices. Particularly in the setting of innovative projects, it is important to identify those nodes of intersection that help avoid the necessity of reinventing the wheel with each new project.
- Once we have established these standards and typologies, it is important to communicate them to the UC community, both to help inform practice and to encourage the validation of this kind of work by UC community entities like the University Committee on Academic Personnel.

Resource Allocation

- We must accurately evaluate each project to determine its need for technical infrastructure development and support. Given the non-traditional nature of this work, there are no established work-flows or resource allocation equations. The success of any such publishing program depends on the ability to evaluate and apportion resources in a sustainable and scalable manner.
- Similarly, evaluations of these projects must include sober analyses of the scope and integrity of data-rich publications.
Assuming CDL-UC Press collaboration often cannot directly provide technical support, a certification process must be developed for distributed, technical partners within UC.

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[7] There are three important issues to be resolved for this model to work: 1) the business model, which must blend the hybrid business models of the two programs, determine who pays for additional services to UC-sponsored journals, and defines the criteria for measuring success in the absence of a cost-recovery model; 2) the branding of journals in the program, especially the question of an overarching UC imprint; and 3) consolidation or integration of the two publishing platforms.

Interdisciplinarity/Emerging fields

Establishing new publishing programs in interdisciplinary fields and areas of high priority for UC research would, in addition to serving the needs of scholars in these emerging fields, accomplish several economic and policy objectives. On a practical level, creating and controlling publishing programs would allow the University to control costs, and determine the appropriate balance between open access and cost recovery models. Rather than being forced into a reactive relationship with commercial publishers, this in-house model would support a portfolio approach to publishing, where the level of financial commitment from the University toward discrete programs could be determined holistically, rather than on a case-by-case basis. On a philosophical level, the University's commitment to and development of these high priority research areas would be supported by internal publishing programs. Offering a range of publishing options from print to digital would help the University to make good on its commitment to communicating its priorities in a compelling and accessible way to audiences ranging from diverse disciplines within major research institutions to local communities and K-12 classrooms in California.

Based on our campus interviews, several fields in particular emerge as high priorities across the system, where faculty FTE and research budgets are growing. It is within these areas that we find the most promise for future publishing programs. We have concentrated on fields that have significant presence on multiple campuses. (The list, however, is far from exhaustive, given the limits of time in our campus visits.)

- Health and medicine, including global health, access to health care, women's health, and translating research findings to patient care (sometimes referred to as "bench to bed.")

- A cluster of fields in the biosciences, including stem cell research, genomics, and computational biology.

- A very broad cluster of topics in environmental sciences, including climate change, biofuels, water issues, food science, energy, and policy and sustainability issues.

- Nanotechnology

- Science and society

- Global studies, overlapping with the health and environmental fields noted above but also including global cultures and Pacific rim studies

- Linguistics and the study of language

- Digital arts and new media, including connections between art and science.

As the above list reveals, it is often at the point of convergence among multiple disciplines that the most promising work and opportunities for developing new publishing models seem to surface. We believe the University, as incubator of these new cross-disciplinary formulations and intellectual models, is best positioned to evaluate and fulfill the publishing needs of these fields as they emerge.

Peer Review

A good many of the projects we have encountered and are likely to publish do not conform to traditional structures of scholarly work, either in their organic form or their place of publication. How will these kinds of "texts" be regarded within the formal tenure and review processes across the campuses? We already know that many UC scholars feel constrained by the requirement to publish either a monograph or journal article; the structure of their work simply doesn't correspond to these arbitrary and, in some disciplines, outmoded textual forms. At the same time, we recognize the necessity of establishing means for authenticating and maintaining scholarly authority within a digital publishing environment – both for non-traditional publications and for those monographs and journals that are born digital. The problem is one of establishing expertise – and is certainly not unique to the digital publishing environment. What is unique within digital publishing is the vast quantity of digital information available and the necessity of calling out those publications that have been thoroughly vetted and should thus be regarded as authoritative scholarly work.

Our approach to a problem as complex as peer review and the conferral of legitimacy upon digital texts is, itself, necessarily complex. We currently have the infrastructure to support classic peer review in our born digital publications. Some of our journals and monographic series already produce peer reviewed publications within our digital publishing infrastructure. These journals treat the digital peer review process as an absolute replica of processes employed within traditional scholarly publishing environments. At the same time, we are increasingly called upon to support emerging models of social or use-based authentication which, native to the web, offer additional opportunities to signal expertise or relevance to the reader. Within these models, legitimacy is conferred by a community of known readers rather than a select few anonymous reviewers. Increasingly, scholars are inclined to accept this kind of legitimacy alongside the more formal and traditional conferral of authority.[8]

Traditional notions of peer review and scholarly authority are an often inadequate metric for evaluating the importance of scholarly work that resists traditional classification and exceeds current publishing modalities. The University community needs to develop standards for judging the validity and importance of these kinds of projects on their own terms, rather than implicitly pressuring faculty to curb the impulse toward innovation in the service of the known quantity.

ECONOMIC ISSUES

The problems deriving from the commercialization of academic publishing are vexing. Over the past decade, the University of California has succeeded in blunting their effect through a set of carefully focused initiatives ranging from reducing expenditures for licensed resources to encouraging faculty management of intellectual property in a way more beneficial to the academic enterprise and the public good. But the commercial publishing world continues to control the vast majority of scholarly output while stimulating even greater production of it for their control.

The university faces its own economic pressures and seeks to minimize the effects of commercialization as a way to protect its core activities: research, teaching and learning. All of our efforts have this goal in common, and our current proposal is no different. But our approach to

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[8] See Michael Jensen on "The New Metrics of Scholarly Authority"
http://chronicle.com/weekly/v53/i41/41b00601.htm

securing the infrastructure for knowledge creation and distribution must be improved. Virtually every other sector of the scholarly publishing economy is enjoying the fruits of publishing made cheaper through digital technologies; somehow the academy is missing out on this dividend. UC cannot afford to miss this opportunity, and we cannot continue to pursue discrete projects that "assist" scholarly communication unless they truly improve its long-term sustainability

It is beyond the scope of this team and this report to take up the economic analysis necessary to elaborate a full economic strategy for university-based publishing. We suggest that a more detailed analysis be done. In the meantime we can begin to put university-based publishing efforts on firmer footing by combining the resources of our substantial in-house publishing operations, to illustrate our considerable capabilities and demonstrate a more effective way to utilize them. And to the degree that the university's publishing services align with the interests of the institution and the faculty, and thus offer a compelling alternative to the commercial publishers, we can begin to neutralize our own contribution to the dysfunctional scholarly publishing system.

Still, as with any sustained effort of this type, it will take an initial investment to ensure its effective launch. We think it is an unavoidable investment and preferable to the alternative: subversion of our mission. We have learned a great deal about the most critical of un-met faculty publishing needs, and we are confident that it is possible to begin to address those needs in a way that enhances our ability to fulfill our core academic mission, reinforces our capacity to contribute knowledge resources to the state of California, and enables us to put ourselves on course toward an economically sustainable scholarly publishing system.

RECOMMENDATIONS

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1. Establish a University publishing program. Such a program should build upon the existing activities of UC Press and eScholarship as well as campus-based programs. Its activities should include the following:

- Create a comprehensive UC journals program, incorporating UC Press and CDL journals; review other journals published in within UC to determine if they would benefit from being incorporated into a UC journals program.

- Evaluate current experiments in publishing monographs in digital/print on demand formats and expand this program if warranted.

- Identify campus-based monograph programs and determine which of them might benefit from centralized services.

- Create new publishing programs in high-priority research fields.

- Develop the capacity to work with faculty on digital course materials.

2. Create a system for publishing in alternative formats that would include the following

components:

- Criteria for identifying and selecting projects, including procedures for peer review and

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        technical assessment

- Editorial and technical development path

- Criteria for determining it the project will be sold or made available on an open access basis

- Marketing and sales strategies

- Maintenance and preservation

3. Work with campuses to establish local services to assist faculty with publishing options, especially technical advice on digital projects. All campuses have scholarly communications officers based in the libraries, whose primary role is providing information about copyright issues and alternatives to traditional publication. Outside the libraries, campuses also offer varying levels of technical service to faculty working on digital publication projects. Some campuses also have staff who advise on publication options in general, including advice on negotiating contracts and securing campus support services. UCLA's CDH is an example of this kind of one-stop shopping. Faculty on all campuses would benefit from these kinds of systematic and extensive services, especially technical services.

3. Begin the systemwide discussion of the criteria for evaluating work published in nontraditional formats for purposes of tenure and promotion. Identify the appropriate body or bodies to launch such a process.

4. Identify next steps in the analysis of economic issues associated with the university-as-publisher.