

UC Libraries Scholarly Communication Program Priorities

-- DRAFT 2/05/2004 ---

The following recommended priorities are derived from the *UC Libraries Scholarly Communication Program Outline* (at http://www.slp.ucop.edu/uls/021004/Schol_Comm_Program_Outline040203.pdf), the direct product of discussions held in Fall 2003 among the University of California University Librarians and key stakeholders. The program outline includes a statement of the issues and challenges contributing to the economic unsustainability of current scholarly communication processes.

1. Expand and extend current infrastructure, encouraging innovation (eScholarship and partnership with UC Press).

- a. Encourage broader and deeper faculty adoption of the eScholarship repository.
- b. Develop a repository expressly for papers prepared for and presented to UC-based conferences and seminars (requires modest additional development of the eScholarship repository).
- c. Encourage faculty to retain copyright in their journal publications (at least a non-exclusive right to distribute their publications online, see 2.b. below) and provide a home for these "postprints" on a new postprint server (requires modest additional development of the current eScholarship repository).
- d. Develop and extend to other University presses the infrastructure that supports the production and distribution of online monographs and use the service capacity to explore different business models for monograph distribution.
- e. Mount one or more of these services with a selected group of R1 institutions (Cornell, Stanford, Research Triangle universities) that are able to make a level of institutional commitment similar to UC's.

Outcome scenarios

- i. Extending the infrastructure leverages eScholarship as a viable alternative for disseminating scholarship and a platform for communication.

The eScholarship repository is currently used by many authors to house papers that are being prepared for publication in peer-reviewed journals. As such, it provides an ideal platform from which to inform authors about the implications of the publishing decisions they are about to make for their work, and to recommend alternatives. By increasing faculty use of the repository, we enhance our ability to inform them about the crisis in scholarly publishing, and to encourage them to consider alternatives as we are able to develop and support them

In some disciplines (e.g. computer science) conference and seminar papers have equal or greater status than do journal publications. A repository for conference and seminar papers therefore provides an opportunity to support a

key form of scholarly communication, to accelerate that form as an alternative to commercial publishing, and to “connect” with faculty as they are preparing material for publication. Using this connection, we may be able to influence their behavior.

We are asked time and again by faculty for information about how they can retain their copyright. This information is now available from several sources (UC campus library websites, Create Change website, etc.). By providing faculty with a “postprint” repository, i.e. the means of “publishing” articles in which they retain a distribution right, we provide an additional incentive to their copyright retention. Additionally, by configuring a postprint server with reference linking capability, we may make inroads onto the use of commercially acquired journal content. Thus, a user who clicks on an article reference can be taken via UC eLinks to the publicly accessible version of the article where it exists in a postprint server. Although short term, the impact will be more symbolic than anything else, in time, we may actually reduce the use that is made of commercially published material. This is crucial since growth in use is the principal justification given by publishers for journal price inflation.

- ii. Building online monographic services supports change in those disciplines reliant on monographs; extends a dynamic and positively received partnership between university presses and libraries.

The scholarly communication crisis does not affect journal publications exclusively and programmatic library action must not be constructed as if it does. Capacity to produce and distribute monographs online and in a form conducive to short-run digital printing, has been cited time and again as a feasible and economical way to make inroads on the so-called first publication problem. If we can demonstrate to University presses that by using online publishing and short-run digital printing techniques they can reduce their economic exposure in monographs that are produced in modest (500-1000) print runs, we may help to encourage expansion of lists in areas that are still heavily dependent on monograph style communications (e.g. in so many humanities disciplines). A “Highwire for books” facility, even if only experimental for a few years, may extend University Press’s comfort with new forms of digitally based monograph publication

- iii. Inter-institutional service developments ensure the growth and aggregation of change sufficient to yield a difference.

While it may initially be a symbolic action, UC can provide leadership by helping to develop a small consortium of leading R1 universities that make institutional commitments to changing the economics of scholarly publications (as UC appears to be about to). Many peer institutions are making similar commitment to a number of small but nonetheless important practical steps (viz. establishing and encouraging faculty to use preprint and postprint servers, encouraging faculty to retain copyright in their publications, etc). However, an expanding inter-institutional cooperative effort could achieve a far larger impact on the scholarly publishing process than could be

achieved through any exclusively UC-based initiative. Preliminary contact has been made with Stanford and Cornell on this subject.

2. Expand communication efforts; seize attention and aggressively forward information about the costs, cost distribution, and economic and service interdependencies among the university libraries in their selection, acquisition, processing, management, and provision of access to the university's library collections.

- a. Survey the campuses to inventory, extend and, by sharing, save efforts on communication and outreach related to scholarly communication.
- b. Encourage faculty to retain copyright in their journal publications.
- c. Provide key data about the economics, UC usage, and potential alternative sources of quality scholarship (such as reasonably priced journals, post-print repositories or open-access journals) of materials from publishers with a history of unsustainable practices.
- d. Engage faculty in key strategic decision points and “poster children,” i.e. case studies of challenging UC library negotiations and other actions that directly address sustainability.

Outcome scenarios

- i. Building a knowledge base of communication activities allows comparison and alignment of shared and separate efforts.

Inventorying education, communication and outreach efforts sponsored by the libraries and others will enable consistency in messages, awareness of best practices, and economies of shared efforts. An analysis of communication gaps – in audiences or message components – will allow a more comprehensive communications program.

- ii. Faculty retention of copyright will remove a key factor – exclusivity of copyright - in the economic advantages of commercial publishers.

The libraries are well positioned, perhaps in partnership with UC’s Standing Committee on Copyright – to provide practical advice about faculty management of their copyrights. Faculty decisions to retain rights can provide freedom and flexibility for them and others to use their work for teaching, learning and research. It minimizes constraints on use of copyrighted material for alternative, and possibly parallel, forms of scholarly dissemination, such as eScholarship repositories or open access journals, and for access through and integration with library services.

- iii. Full awareness of the scholarly communication crisis and the factors in UC library decision processes will motivate faculty and other stakeholders to action.

As the fall 2003 Reed-Elsevier negotiations demonstrated, when well-informed the UC faculty are able to take individual and collective action. A communications campaign that fosters understanding among the stakeholders

in library decision processes will engage their support in those processes (e.g., journal cancellations). Providing that information consistently – perhaps by integrating it with end-user services such that users can see it at point of resource discovery and use - can be combined with highlights of key strategic decision points to deepen awareness.

The Reed-Elsevier experience also suggests that highlighting the challenges and perpetrators of unsustainable practices leads to direct faculty engagement. Analogous decision points in the near term might include those connected to society pricing (e.g. AAAS price hikes), publisher pricing (Blackwell, Springer-Kluwer upcoming renewals), and combative practices (e.g. AAP's suit against UCSD regarding e-reserves).

As with retaining copyright above, the libraries are well-positioned to describe and motivate stakeholders to specific actions, which might range from supporting library tactics in publisher negotiations to supporting journal cancellations, from asking questions about how their societies price their journals to refusing to edit or submit articles to, or review for, journals whose pricing is unreasonable. Under such circumstances faculty input to and support for library selection decisions could be based on economic sustainability in addition to the perceived value of selected materials. In addition to the Reed-Elsevier negotiations, the CDL's "Barriers to Licensing" and various campus library web sites and other efforts have already begun to attract faculty attention and engagement.

3. Establish selection principles that account for scholarly value and economic sustainability and operate according to them.

- a. Refresh principles for resource selection that explicitly account for and preference materials and vendors that encourage economic and service sustainability (e.g. persistent access, access integration, predictable business terms and models, co-branding, etc.).
- b. Investigate the potential for multi-variant and quantifiable measure(s) of resource value/relevance to UC, apply them to different resources, share/promote the results, and discuss the potential for acquiring resources accordingly.

Outcome scenarios

- i. Library selection principles and goals that include economically sustainable development and maintenance of high-quality research collections provide a foundation for supportable actions.

Ideally selection decisions lead to collections that support the academic enterprise and that can be sustainably grown and maintained. Current collection principles and policies – including those of the shared digital collections – are explicit with regard to academic value and mission alignment, somewhat less explicit with regard to service sustainability, and are at best indirect with regard to economic sustainability. Because sustainability

is a key value and an operational necessity for the libraries, the elements of sustainability need to be added to collection principles and articulated clearly, transparently, consistently, and accountably. Clear principles combine powerfully with the other priorities in the library scholarly communications program to allow stakeholders to anticipate, engage in, and support library actions.

- ii. When combined with principles of sustainability, measures of scholarly value and relevance will yield supportable selection and de-selection decisions.

Current judgments by librarians of the scholarly value of resources rely on deep and critical specialist expertise. They also are heavily influenced by faculty opinion and demand (which is only beginning to be informed by the issues of sustainability, see priority 2 above) and by actual use or requests for access. In an era of rapidly expanding volume of scholarly material, of wildly differing costs and cost per page or per use, and of limited library collections budgets, the process of evaluation needs to be and could be greatly assisted by decision-support mechanisms that accounted for economic sustainability, and that provided data and measures to profile the local and systemwide value and relevance of the material.

By investigating and, if feasible, implementing multi-variant measures of sustainability, value and relevance¹ the UC libraries could create greater confidence and efficiency for local and shared collection decisions. Such action also would contribute substantial leadership to the library community as it grapples with the dilemmas of sustainable scholarly communications.

4. Build expertise within and across the university libraries; create a network of highly engaged and informed library staff to shape and support systemwide as well as campus-based efforts.

- a. Survey UC libraries to create deep and comprehensive knowledge of the expertise that is available, and of the individuals deeply engaged and active (or with such potential).
- b. Create a known community that coordinates common and shared efforts.

Outcome scenarios

- i. Surveying for expertise and engagement minimizes redundant investment.

Evidence that ranges from selector group listservs to LAUC-sponsored forums to UC faculty economic analyses makes it clear that there is significant expertise and deep awareness of scholarly communication issues to be tapped at UC. Indeed the question may be as much one of surveying and coordinating better flow of information and expertise as of building it anew. Many of the arguments that justify sharing collections and sharing services may be applied

¹ One can imagine, for example, a metric that is some combinatorial product of cost per page, cost per citation, cost per use, impact factor, manuscript rejection rate, ILL requests, and size of directly related UC community. Admittedly, validation of the metric and application (to titles, publishers, title bundles?) is more difficult to imagine.

to sharing expertise to increase understanding and effect change in scholarly communication. Among them are the lowered costs and efforts of distributed rather than redundant expertise, and the coordination of core expertise that can be locally adapted and applied for greatest effect.

ii. Collaborative management of some common and shared efforts minimizes redundant investment.

While a survey will establish where and how plentiful relevant expertise is, other methods can be used to help distribute and apply it, with the result being larger and more predictable local and collective effect of the library scholarly communication program. The following functions to service the program could be collaboratively managed and distributed:

1. liaisons for using, servicing, and promoting the library-based infrastructure;
2. advocacy/outreach to faculty, societies, and other key stakeholders;
3. identification, analysis and escalation of issues;
4. information exchange on local activities; information exchange about activities common to or within a discipline.

An organizational option to establish and coordinate these shared functions would be to create a working group comprising senior-level library staff who would represent and advise on these roles in a single body and coordinate associated activity at their campuses. Supporting collaborative mechanisms (fora, best practice workshops, listservs, etc.) could be supplied relatively painlessly by emulating analogous methods in other activity domains.