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Jingfeng Xia

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This article briefly compares the history, current practices, and trends of library publishing and institutional repositories, but focuses on journal publishing by academic libraries. By introducing some foreign university publishing models, it recommends an institutional concentration, rather than a subject orientation, of library journals and suggests a diversification of the library publishing.

Keywords: open-access journals, digital, institutional repositories, peer review

Ever since the Internet became a predominant means of information dissemination in the mid-1990s, academic libraries have made various efforts to take advantage of this technology in order to better serve the scholarly community. Digital libraries are one such effort that has been successful with a wide range of practices, chiefly in the preservation and distribution of historical and cultural heritages. Another major effort initiated in the early 2000s is the institutional repository, which allows self-archiving of research outcomes by individual scholars to facilitate a rapid and free exchange of research ideas and results. Unlike digital libraries, institutional repositories have not yet reached the level of content volume expected by advocates and librarians,[1] despite the existence of several successful cases such as the repositories operated by the Universities of California, Michigan, and Southampton.[2] The most recent experience of developing a thriving repository has been to rely on the implementation of a mandate policy at various levels that requires scholars to make contributions.[3] It remains doubtful whether such a mandate policy can be implemented widely and whether many of the existing repositories are patient enough to wait for or push the implementation of such a policy without immediate input from faculty.

Recently, academic libraries have become enthusiastic about launching peer-reviewed journals as a promising alternative to support scholarly communication.[4] Although library publishing is not a new endeavour, the trend of library involvement in journal publishing began only in the past several years; since then, the idea has quickly been accepted by many university libraries. A recent survey of eighty research university libraries in the United States found that nearly 65 per cent of them either had already delivered publishing services or were planning to develop such services.[5] The true number is likely to be higher, taking smaller universities and colleges into consideration. This may well represent libraries' dissatisfaction with their inability to run a healthy repository after investments in digital systems and personnel.

While libraries are excited about this new model of scholarly communication and are optimistically envisioning its prosperous future,[6] it is not too early to analyse it and try to identify its appropriateness in the transformation of library services. Recall that when institutional repositories first caught the attention of libraries, their appearance and significance were widely praised.[7] Although the two models are different in terms of management, both require substantial investment and commitment on the part of libraries. In addition, both types of development require support and engagement from faculty, who are unfortunately busy or may be impatient with their libraries' experiments. This article discusses some issues in the current practice of library publishing and focuses on how to enhance such publishing services, particularly journal publishing, so that they can best suit faculty needs and be integrated into the infrastructure of the university enterprise. The article briefly introduces several modes of university publishing popular in East Asia in an effort to determine whether these practices can provide a useful reference point for the current passion for journal publishing on the part of libraries in the United States.

Library Publishing

In late 2007, the Association of Research Libraries (ARL) surveyed its member libraries on the topic of publishing services, and reported that of those that provided publishing services, 88 per cent

published peer-reviewed journals.[8] In addition to research libraries, smaller libraries at institutions not affiliated with ARL have also participated in publishing ventures.[9] Unlike many research libraries that use Open Journal System (OJS) as a tool to manage their publishing projects,[10] most small academic libraries have adopted the Berkeley Electronic Press (bepress) application Digital Commons.[11] According to bepress, there were seventy peer-reviewed journals hosted on Digital Commons repositories in 2008.[12] Although there are currently no figures on exactly how many academic libraries have been involved in this publishing business, it is safe to say that the number is by no means a small one.

Discussions of library publishing have concentrated on the applicability, sustainability, and scalability of providing such services by libraries. Advocates and librarians are confident about the applicability. Both previous experience in journal publishing and recent surveys of selected faculty indicate that scholars have a positive attitude toward cooperating with librarians and are willing to take the responsibility of organizing an editorial process for the quality control of publications.[13] Peer review is considered a necessary procedure for assessment of articles, as has traditionally been the case for scholarly journals. An easy and guaranteed way for any library to manage a journal seems to be to transfer an existing publication from a commercial publishing operation to joint faculty–librarian management. Such transfers have been undertaken in a federally funded project in Canada.[14] The library's responsibility is to provide hosting services; coordinate a supporting process; and provide additional services such as permanent URLs, workflow streamlining, mark-up, file generation, and print on demand.

Business models for publishing are one of the main points currently under discussion. Despite the claim that the expenses involved in supporting periodical publishing can be reduced to a minimum after the library's initial investment in a journal,[15] many people are still concerned about the possibility of various hidden costs that might not be anticipated at start-up.[16] The completion of a publishing system's set-up is by no means the end of journal management; rather, it represents the beginning of the journal's ongoing expenses. On the basic principle of providing free public access to library-published journals, generating revenue to supplement journal publishing is not a feasible option. Although libraries

can conveniently use their existing infrastructure to accommodate journal publishing, there are currently no convincing business models to justify the ongoing costs, such as technology upgrades. The ongoing costs do not yet include the unavoidable task reassignment of library personnel in support of journal management, or at least coordinating faculty editors with the technical support of a university. According to the ARL survey, the major source of funding for individual journal titles was the library's own operational budget, which ran on so-called program-level funding; and, for the future, 'all of the libraries currently utilizing library budget funds anticipate continuing to rely on this funding.'[17] This consideration of the libraries' sustainability is inevitably associated with the discussion of their scalability: How long can library publishing last?

Regardless of this concern, libraries seem to have developed a good system that is able to satisfy all of their constituents by becoming actively involved in academic journal publishing. By comparison to institutional repositories, the idea of library publishing seems to have been more quickly accepted by some faculty members, particularly those who have served or are currently serving as editors for journals published by traditional presses.[18] From the faculty editors' point of view, the new model of scholarly communication is able to provide many more benefits than the traditional model of publishing: free access for readers (through libraries' Web sites), inexpensive hosting (even though libraries have to pay the hosting costs), and convenient management (through collaboration with libraries at the same institution). The ordinary scholar as reader is attracted to this model by its open-access component. It may also be that institutional administrators are pleased with library publishing because it increases the visibility of their institutions.

With no intent to disregard the value and potential of libraries' commitment to publishing, this article concentrates on some issues that have been neglected in previous discussions and draws the attention of librarians (rather than scholars) to some alternative ways of thinking about how to design better models of scholarly communication. Leaving aside the sustainability of library publishing, the article will briefly touch on the issues of applicability and scalability. Specifically, it will argue for journals to be designed to

serve individual academic disciplines, rather than all fields within an institution, and will discuss whether peer review should be the major, if not the only, form of quality control for publications. It is common sense that it is better to move slowly but steadily at the design stage than to make quick but rash decisions that may lead to mistakes. A comprehensive design benefits from fruitful discussions and thorough consideration. It will be beneficial for librarians to spend time learning about the positives and negatives of publishing practices by institutions of higher learning in other parts of the world and to learn from the experience of institutional repository management.

Disciplinary or Institutional?

Most, if not all, journals planned and implemented by libraries are based in one discipline or cover several closely related disciplines (i.e., they are 'interdisciplinary' publications). Examples of such journals are *Museum Anthropology Review*, published by the Indiana University Libraries,[19] and *Industrial & Labor Relations Review*, available through Cornell University's Digital Commons.[20] This makes perfect sense, since academic journals have traditionally supported research studies in their target field(s). It is believed that one of the reasons institutional repositories have attracted fewer faculty contributions than subject repositories is that scholars are more interested in research in their own fields than in unrelated research carried out at the same institution.[21]

When libraries entered the publishing business with the purpose of promoting free scholarly communication, the limitations of subject journal publishing began to be apparent. As noted above, how to sustain the unprofitable business of journal publishing has been a concern for every library. A library publishing program, through collaborations with faculty editors, requires a long-term commitment and considerable investment of the library's resources, which will inevitably divert its limited funds and personnel from other endeavours.[22] It is difficult, if not impossible, for any academic library – especially at a large institution with many academic disciplines – to support more than a handful of disciplines in journal publishing. Who, then, selects which disciplines should have journals? The

current practice of library publishing seems to favour those disciplines in which some faculty members have experience in journal editing, or better yet, are currently editing journals, which may create an unfair bias against other disciplines[23] and prevent the library from complying with its mission to serve the entire institution.

Publishing journals in individual disciplines will not achieve the goal of showcasing a library or an institution to increase its academic visibility, as some have expected.[24] Journals in specific subject areas usually have a very limited pool of readers. If a journal is not the core journal in its field, its readership is further restricted. It is expected that subject-based journals published by libraries will have 'low content flow and small audiences.'[25] Even within this small group of readers, many may have been directed to such journals on a library's Web site via Google or another search engine, without noticing or caring about the identity of the journal's physical host.[26] From this point of view, institutional repositories may do a better job of focusing attention on institutions rather than on individual disciplines.

An alternative solution may be a journal published by a library that is open to submissions from everyone at the sponsoring institution – in other words, not a journal for one or more subjects but one for all disciplines within a single institution. This has been a popular journal-publishing model for decades in China, where almost every higher educational institution publishes a 'university journal.'[27] Such journals accept manuscript submissions from any university-affiliated member, including faculty, staff, and students in every field, although most university journals favour research studies in the humanities and social sciences. An editorial team is organized to manage the publishing system and to coordinate a peer-review process undertaken by selected senior faculty, preferably scholars at the same institution. The journals are subsidized by their home institutions and are not usually expected to achieve profitability. While some of China's university journals have not been able to attract the attention of scholars outside their sponsoring institutions, the rest have been very successful in the wider scholarly community and are treated with the same respect as core journals in most disciplines nationwide. In fact, many scholars have found it more difficult to publish articles in their university's journal than to publish in a core disciplinary journal, because the

former is prevented by its overall capacity from accepting too many submissions in any single discipline. Therefore, it is clear that a journal's quality is not always determined by its publishing model.

The Chinese 'university journals' are characterized by (1) restriction of submissions to one institution, (2) sponsorship by the home institution, (3) accommodation of every academic field within the institution, and (4) quality control through a review process conducted by senior faculty at the institution. The success of a university journal depends mostly on the efforts of an editorial team, which works to increase the visibility and reputation of the institution's research. The university journal model has proved an effective way to facilitate scholarly communication while effectively maintaining the integrity of institutional research programs.

Although library publishing in the United States has adopted a variety of practices, none has taken up a business model similar to that of the 'university journal' in China. This model of journal publishing represents a reasonable revision of and an accepted compromise between current practices of library journal publishing and the tradition of the institutional repository. Upon taking up the responsibility, a library will find it inexpensive to set up the necessary infrastructure and to maintain a long-term operation while at the same time serving the entire university community by supporting its research, teaching, and learning. Such a publishing model will appeal to many faculty members in addition to those who serve as journal editors or have editorial experience. Nonetheless, it will in no way compromise the quality of the resulting publications, which can be rigorously controlled by selected faculty in every academic field of an institution.

Peer Review versus Non–Peer Review

Some seem to take it for granted that the peer-review process is the only way to guarantee the high quality of a publication.[28] Whenever library publishing is discussed, it seems to be standard to promise peer review to ensure the scholarly credibility of journal publications. This assumption may not always be valid, however. A Japanese model of university journal publishing may help illustrate how alternatives have worked competently and how a quasi-

peer-review process has been able to ensure high quality in scholarly publishing.

This Japanese publishing model, known as *kiyo*, is a unique variety of institutional or departmental journals.[29] It has mainly been adopted in the humanities and social sciences but has also been used in the sciences, technology, and medicine as a supplementary publication venue. In most of these fields, in a Japanese institution, the faculty structure is characterized by one or several senior scholars supervising several levels of graduate students and of faculty who are their former students. When *kiyo* is organized by an academic unit in a university, this senior faculty member is always the editor, who evaluates the importance and quality of all submissions from his or her students, while the academic unit provides the necessary support for the publishing of *kiyo* periodicals. The organization of *kiyo* content is flexible, covering a wide range of publication types, from research studies to laboratory records or field notes. Therefore, *kiyo* is designed exclusively to publicize research outcomes by the members of an academic unit, with the goal of exchanging research ideas and results and showcasing the productivity of a research institution. For this reason, *kiyo* publications are not offered for sale and usually circulate for free among peers.

Kiyo has a history nearly 100 years long and reached its peak after World War II. A *kiyo* publication may be a journal for a particular academic discipline or may allow an institution as a whole to cover multiple academic disciplines. Although some have criticized the possibly lower quality of *kiyo* articles in scientific contributions, its flexibility in organizing research materials has given it a reputation for formal-to-informal scholarly exchanges. It has provided an especially appropriate platform for young scholars to publicize their research.

It is noticeable that some library publishing in the United States has improved students' chances of publishing their research. Libraries at small universities seem focus more on students than on the faculty scholars who are the primary beneficiaries of research libraries' publishing outlets. For example, the Illinois Wesleyan University Library has created several student journals (*Res Publica – Journal of Undergraduate Research, Undergraduate Economic Review*, and *Undergraduate Review*) on its Digital Commons platform

as part of its publishing efforts.[30] It is the author's hope that more academic libraries join this venture and create more flexible plans to diversify their publishing practices but, at the same time, pay attention to the quality of journal publications. Senior faculty members can play a central role in quality control and in safeguarding research activity within their institutions. The *kiyo* model provides a good example for librarians to make library journal publishing more dynamic.

Journal Publishing and Institutional Repositories

As mentioned above, only a few institutional repositories have developed into sizeable scholarly databases sufficient to demonstrate to their administrators the rewards of institutional investment. After a period of unproductive experiments, the majority of librarians have not yet made a convincing argument that an institutional repository can be an effective and efficient way to advance scholarly communication. Mandatory self-archiving policies have recently surfaced as an apparently good solution, but wide implementation appears to be a challenge. Some have also criticized this idea, stating that such a policy puts an extra burden on scholars.[31] Others continue to hope that the open-access movement will be supported by the new US federal administration, so that mandatory policies can be regulated at the national level.[32] The desire for federal intervention indicates how difficult it currently is for institutions to implement mandatory self-archiving policies. Meanwhile, many libraries have decided to move on and look for alternatives.

Advances in information technology provide new opportunities for libraries and make it possible for librarians to re-evaluate some of their existing operations. Library publishing seems to be one of the major possibilities, thanks in part to the maturation of publishing management systems such as OJS and Digital Commons. Many libraries implementing a journal publishing system tend to maintain multiple services simultaneously; these may include, among others, digital libraries and institutional repositories.[33] However, there is no clear evidence that libraries have built a logical connection between the operations of library publishing and those of institutional repositories.

At first glance, the two operations are dissimilar in many respects, including data acquisition and information processing,

although both services share the same goal of supporting free information sharing through the Web. To the end user, however, the output is similar: research outcomes. This similarity may enable both services to learn from each other's characteristics. On the one hand, for example, library journal publishing may attract a small but dedicated pool of scholars who foresee benefits for their own career advancement from participating in the publishing service; at the same time, libraries are instantly rewarded for their endeavours by receiving strong support from certain faculty groups.[34] Managers of institutional repositories may want to learn from this aspect of library publishing and work out their own ways of motivating faculty members.

On the other hand, institutional repositories have functioned unambiguously to broadcast the research results of their institutions' own staff. When a repository has successfully accumulated a critical mass of material, it will effectively showcase the intellectual profile of an institution at a broader range than that of merely publishing journal articles in selected disciplines, most of whose authors are not affiliated with the institution. According to some repository advocates, for example, Southampton University in England has benefited from its Soton eprint repository in advancing its reputation in an international university ranking system that measures the number of links to Southampton's Web site and ranks Southampton, a second-tier research university, twenty-fifth in the world.[35] Although library journal publishing can cross institutional boundaries and assume a disciplinary orientation across institutions, it is the task of any academic library to serve its home institution first and foremost, even though a global view of scholarly communication is the essential inspiration. Therefore, library publishers may want to rethink their publishing operations by learning from the successful stories of their colleagues who manage institutional repositories and considering a pan-institutional journal for the publication of members of an institution across disciplines, as discussed above.

Conclusion

This article reviews current practices in library publishing, with a comparison to the practices of institutional repositories. It also

briefly introduces some foreign publishing models as a way to inspire reform in some fundamental aspects of library journals. The article has argued that library-published journals may need to build an institutional concentration rather than a disciplinary focus, and, further, that these journals may need to diversify their operations and to examine what forms a peer-review process can take and how the dissimilar constituencies of an academic library can best be served. Finally, it is recommended that both library journal publishers and institutional repository managers learn from each other's successes and opportunities in design, implementation, and maintenance.

Library journal publishing is not a simple undertaking. Many more institutional services outside libraries will have to be, or have been, involved in appropriate digital projects in order to develop feasible publishing models. The relationships of library journal publishing to university presses, computing support centres, research offices, individual schools or departments, and other members of the campus community need to be explored in more detail.[36] In particular, support from institutional administrators is key to the eventual success of a library's publishing endeavours. These are all interesting topics that have been discussed in the literature in the past and will still need to be discussed in the future.

JINGFENG XIA is Assistant Professor in the School of Library and Information Science at Indiana University – Indianapolis. His research interests are in digital scholarly communication and geographic information systems for library management. He can be reached at xiaji@iupui.edu.

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