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# Rough Waters: Navigating Hard Times in the Scholarly Communication Marketplace

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**SPARC-ACRL Forum on Scholarly Communication at 2009 ALA Annual Conference**
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"Rough Waters: Navigating Hard Times in the Scholarly Communication Marketplace" was the topic of the SPARC-ACRL Forum that took place on July 11th at the 2009 ALA Annual Conference in Chicago. It was facilitated by Kimberly Douglas, University Librarian at California Institute of Technology.

The first presenter was Charles Lowry, Executive Director of the Association of Research Libraries. He reported the findings of an ARL survey (The Current Fiscal Landscape of Research Libraries). Of the 99 respondent libraries, 55% indicated that they had already experienced base budget reductions or take-backs in fiscal year 2008/09. Both the mean and the median of the reductions were 3%. Staffing was the hardest hit area in comparison to operations and acquisitions. That translated into measures such as hiring freeze, elimination of vacant positions, layoffs, early retirement incentives, etc. For fiscal year 2009/10, 69% of the libraries expected further reductions, 11% foresaw a flat budget, another 11% anticipated a budget increase, while 9% could not say for certain.

The second presenter, Ivy Anderson, was Director of Collection Development & Management at California Digital Library (CDL). As the coordinating body of electronic resources licensing for the 10 campuses of the University of California (UC) system, CDL had issued an open letter in May to inform licensed content providers of the need for collaboration in order to tackle the current economic crisis.[1] CDL was considering journal cancellations with a value-based pricing approach.[2] At the same time, CDL made effort to enhance access to journal content. For instance, it supported the CERN-based initiative SCOAP3 to help convert subscription-based core High Energy Physics journals to open access publications.[3] It also worked with journal publisher Springer to create a pilot project in which "all UC-authored articles are published with full and immediate open access via Springer's Open Choice program."[4] On the other hand, UC Berkeley implemented the Berkeley Research Impact Initiative to provide authors there with open access publication funds if they wish to publish articles in open access journals but do not have funding to cover the related publication fees.[5] Finally, Anderson discussed CDL's publishing services that are comprised of eScholarship's digital publishing and repository services,[6] as well as UCPubS (a combination of "open access digital publishing services provided by eScholarship with distribution, sales, and marketing services offered by UC Press").[7]

Emma Hill, Executive Editor of *The Journal of Cell Biology* at Rockefeller University Press (RUP), was the next presenter. She described how RUP had broken away from the traditional journal publishing model by introducing innovative policies with regard to accessibility, affordability, archiving, and article ownership. The reasons for adopting those policies were that online publishing had changed the landscape of scholarly

communication and that the new policies would be beneficial to the published contents. Hill pinpointed that commercial publishers' focus on profit-making was at odds with scholars' needs for information access. Quoting a study conducted at the Rockefeller University Library, she said that four "megapublishers consumed 69% of the total 2009 serials budget" there.[8] Hill asserted that librarians, authors, and readers should "make demands of the publishers" in order to initiate changes in the journal publishing system. She said squarely that "librarians and authors hold all the power, and they should not be afraid to wield it." Meanwhile, she advised that publishers be forward-thinking, listen to demands, and evolve.

The last presenter was Jim Neal, Vice President for Information Services and University Librarian at Columbia University Libraries. He argued that the future of scholarly publishing consists in having a competitive market, easy distribution and reuse of content, innovative applications of technology, quality assurance, and permanent archiving. He also discussed 12 scholarly communication issues as viewed from the stakeholders' perspectives. Some of them concerned new modes of communication, university's role in disseminating scholarship, monograph publishing, assessment and accountability of scholarly communication, and collaboration for quality, productivity, and innovation.

SPARC has made videos, podcasts, and slides of the presentations available online.[9]

**Endnotes**

[1] CDL's Open Letter to Licensed Content Providers: http://www.cdlib.org/news/pdf/UC_Libraries_Open_Letter_to_Vendors.pdf

[2] The Promise of Value-based Journal Prices and Negotiation: A UC Report and View Forward: http://libraries.universityofcalifornia.edu/cdc/valuebasedprices.pdf

[3] SCOAP3: http://scoap3.org

[4] Springer-UC Open Access Pilot Project: http://osc.universityofcalifornia.edu/alternatives/springer.html

[5] Berkeley Research Impact Initiative: http://www.lib.berkeley.edu/brii/

[6] eScholarship publishing program: http://www.cdlib.org/programs/escholarship.html

[7] UCPubS: http://www.ucpress.edu/pubservices/

[8] Rossner, M. (2009). A challenge to Goliath. *The Journal of Cell Biology*, 185(*4*), 571-572. Retrieved August 12, 2009, http://jcb.rupress.org/cgi/content/full/185/4/571

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[9] Videos, podcasts, and slides of this program are available at:
http://www.arl.org/sparc/meetings/ala09/