



Evidence Summary

Several Factors of Library Publishing Services Facilitate Scholarly Communication Functions

A Review of:

Park, J.-H., & Shim, J. (2011). Exploring how library publishing services facilitate scholarly communication. *Journal of Scholarly Publishing*, 43(1), 76-89. doi: 10.1353/scp.2011.0038

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Abstract

Objective – To identify and examine the factors of library publishing services that facilitate scholarly communication.

Design – Analysis of library publishing service programs.

Setting – North American research libraries.

Subjects – Eight research libraries selected from the signatories for the Compact for Open-Access Publishing Equity (COPE) Cornell University Library's Center for Innovative Publishing; Dartmouth College Library's Digital Publishing Program and Scholars Portal Project; MIT Libraries' Office of Scholarly Publishing and Licensing; Columbia

University Libraries' Center for Digital Research and Scholarship; University of Michigan Library's Scholarly Publishing Office; Duke University Library's Office of Scholarly Communications; University of Calgary Libraries and Cultural Resources' Centre for Scholarly Communication; and Simon Fraser University Library's Scholarly Publishing.

Methods – The authors used Roosendaal and Geurt's (1997) four functions of scholarly communication to analyze and categorize library publishing services provided by libraries included in the study. The four functions of scholarly communication include registration, certification, awareness, and archiving.

Main Results – Analysis of the registration functions provided by library publishing services in this study revealed three types of facilitating factors: intellectual property, licensing, and publishing. These include services such as repositories for digital scholarly work and research, ISBN/ISSN registration, and digital publishing. Analysis of archiving functions demonstrated that most programs in the study focus on repository-related services in support of digital content preservation of papers, datasets, technical reports, etc. Analysis of certification functions provided by these services exposed a focus on expert review and research support. These include services like professional assessment of information sources, consultation on appropriate literature and information-seeking tools, and writing or copyright advisory services. Analysis of awareness function showed search aids and knowledge-sharing platforms to be the main facilitating factors. These include services like metadata application, schema, and standards or scholarly portals enabling knowledge-sharing among scholars.

Conclusion – This study identified several services offered by these library publishing programs which can be categorized as facilitators under Roosendaal and Geurt's (1997) four functions of scholarly communication. The majority of the libraries in the study treated library publishing services as part of broader scholarly communication units or initiatives. Digital publishing (registration function) was offered by all programs analyzed in the study, while traditional peer-review services (certification function) were not. Widely adopted among programs in the study were the use of social networking tools (awareness function) and self-publishing (archiving function). The authors recommend developing services that facilitate peer review and assert the need to provide a knowledge-sharing mechanism within the academic community that facilitates the scholarly communication process.

Commentary

This study contributes to a growing body of literature exploring library publishing services in the broader context of scholarly communication. It uniquely and explicitly ties these services to specific functions across the scholarly communication process while other studies focus on service or business models for these programs. It is also interesting to consider this study in light of the recent findings of Mullins et al. (2012) in their library publishing services report released by the Scholarly Publishing and Academic Resources Coalition (SPARC), which found approximately half (55%) of survey respondents have or want to develop such services, and that those with existing programs anticipate increasing their capacity within the next year (p. 6).

This study fills a gap in the literature but comes with some limitations. Its primary weakness is the lack of in-depth analysis of the findings and their applicability, and the absence of suggestions for further research. Further discussion on this could enhance understanding of the role of academic libraries in scholarly communication and help readers consider the application of this work to their library's practice and context. The sample size is small and includes mostly Association of Research Libraries members, many of which have been at the forefront of establishing library publishing services. Lastly, some methodological details are absent, such as how information was obtained about the programs and the process of mapping services to the chosen theoretical construct.

Roosendaal and Geurt's (1997) framework outlining the four key functions of scholarly communication is effective and appropriate for this analysis, and is a structure libraries could utilize for program evaluation and planning. The Mullins et al. (2012) SPARC report recommends "treating academic publishing support as a holistic endeavor and assuming responsibility for acquiring a comprehensive understanding of editor and author needs" (p. 2). This framework could be used to identify areas where services need to be expanded or added, and could be helpful for libraries planning to offer publishing services. It can

also help managers of library publishing services understand scholarly communication functions in both conceptual and specific terms in order to better address the needs of their scholarly community or to strategically develop and leverage collaborative partnerships across campus to ensure fulfillment of all scholarly communication functions.

The Mullins et al. (2012) SPARC report also notes that further articulation of the important role library publishing services play in scholarly communication is needed (p. 3). This study contributes to that goal, and can be enhanced by replicating the study with a larger and more diverse sample size, examining which library publishing service or business models best facilitate the four functions of scholarly communication, and investigating the feasibility of Roosendaal and Geurt's (1997) framework as a program development and assessment tool.

References

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