

Open Access Scholarly Publishing
and the Problem of Networks and
Intermediaries in the Academic
Commons

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The Academic Commons

- Share and share alike.
- Provides basis for progress of basic knowledge.
- Avoids tragedy of the commons – indirect remuneration.
- Similarity to Open Source Software movement.
 - Inspect modify, revise improve.

Journal Markets and Libraries

- Journal market served the academic commons.
- Research library as the market proxy for the academic commons.
 - Creates a public domain.
 - Scholars independent of the market.
 - Readers subsidized by sponsored collegial mandate.

Uniqueness of Journal Market

- Small readership for each title.
- Inelastic demand for each title.
- Volunteer labour from academic commons.
- Compare to mass media markets:
 - Strongly elastic demand.
 - No volunteer labour.
 - Need advertising and broad markets.
 - Readers treated like commodities.

Consequences in the Print Era

- Symbiotic relationship between market and commons.
- Research library as boundary manager (Lyman, 1999).
- Network integration between ‘visible’ and ‘invisible colleges’.
 - Similar to role of public, ‘block’ funding of universities.

Transformations

1. Internet

- Changes optimal network form of scholarship (e.g., independence of invisible college)

2. Economics

- Increase in journal titles, decline of public funding, more ‘strategic’ support for uni’s.
- The ‘Big Deal’. Bundling a bad deal.
- Decline of symbiotic relationship.

Transformations (cont'd)

3. Knowledge Society – new normative culture for research communication.
 - Post-modern science – porous boundaries between research communities and others.
 - Competition for publication credits (credentialism).
 - Changing concept of public interest – from autonomy to performance/access criteria.
 - Awareness of principal-agent conflicts (governance issues).

Evaluating Open Access Alternatives

- Distributed self-archiving ('green') and author pays journals ('gold').
- Dumping the proprietary model – changing 'One Bad Thing'? (Esposito, 2004)
 - Similar to Open Source software.
 - Substance of research – will it change in unintended ways?

Green Road

- Aims to maximize research productivity.
- Re-aligns society's interest and the system of access.
- Will it supplement or re(dis)place journals?
- Disaggregation of journal functions.
- Purifying peer networks. (Hall of mirrors).
- Network-bridging role of journals.
- Journals and teaching, public face of science, etc.

The Impact Game

- Institutional archives as competition for recognition. (is this productive?).
- More access = better scholarly exchange?
- Author-pays journals
 - Uneven playing field for poor disciplines.
 - Heightens tension between sponsored and unsponsored research.
- Research sponsors and ‘mandated’ open access.

Conclusions

- An Example: *International Journal of Social Economics*. (Emerald)
- OA doesn't make scholarship more open (only access more inclusive).
- Changes who has influence over science
 - Example: How to start a new journal in an OA world?