The Future of Scholarly Communication ed. by Deborah Shorley and Michael Jubb (review)

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Canadian Journal of Information and Library Science, Volume 37, Number 4, December/décembre 2013, pp. R1-R2 (Review)

Published by University of Toronto Press
DOI: *https://doi.org/10.1353/ils.2013.0026*

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Reviews
Comptes rendus

Deborah Shorley and Michael Jubb (eds.). *The Future of Scholarly Communication.* London: Facet, 2013. ISBN 978-1-85604-817-0. US$64.37.

There are some customary challenges with respect to reviewing edited volumes. It is common, for example, for a reviewer to state that the essays are "uneven" in quality. This difficulty does not apply here; the essays are uniformly informative, well written, and creative. The one caveat that has to be offered is that this volume is a UK collection, so examples do not, for the most part, come from North America. In fact, this is a quibble; the authors are tackling large and important issues, and it is a minor matter that particular samples are taken from UK experiences. Readers may well be edified by looking into what projects and initiatives are in operation overseas.

Michael Jubb, in the introduction to the book, makes the cogent point that the entire ecology of scholarly communication—the mechanisms of its production and the dynamics of its use—is undergoing a major shift at this time. Open Access has potential to upset the business model of publishing and render content more amenable to the needs of scholars and readers, for instance. The specific ecological elements are discussed in much more detail by the chapter authors, and the ecological theme is carried forward throughout the volume.

Henry Rzepa takes the particular example of the discipline of chemistry to illustrate some of the massive changes that have taken place. As he mentions, the migration from print to digital works is now mature, and researchers are able to take advantage of the technology in ways that were not possible only a couple of decades ago. Advanced imaging makes it possible for an author to include high-resolution and sophisticated images that can be integrated into a scholarly article. Moreover, the cost—in money and in time—of producing and transmitting such images is now so much lower in digital than in print conveyance that communication in entire disciplines, such as chemistry, can be quite radically transformed.

David Prosser, in his essay, provides a short history of the journal as a genre (which is a valuable contextual addition to the volume). In doing so he also states what the journal provides for research communities: registration, or the establishment of priority for a researcher or a research team; certification, which incorporates the peer review process; awareness, or communication to those who need to keep up in a field; and archiving, or retention for posterity. He also states outright what many individuals know but do not always acknowledge: More is published than a practitioner can hope to keep up with. To demonstrate the magnitude of the problem this reviewer searched the database Library, Information Science &

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Technology Abstracts® on June 18, 2013, for items on the subject "information retrieval." For just the period 2011–2013 there were 1,682 hits.

The huge amount of data that must be handled is also the topic of the essay by John Wood. As he points out, in many fields, such as biomedicine, there is enormous pressure to get research completed and to report the results so as to get products into the marketplace. Wood writes, "A study undertaken in the UK estimated that the value of existing data in the UK was £25.1 billion in 2011 and that it would rise to £216 billion during the following five years" (p. 78). He further observes that the actual value of data depends on its context; raw data are of far lesser value without the kind of organizational activities that institutions like libraries add to the morass of stuff.

The possibilities (present and future) of Open Access are discussed succinctly by Richard Bennett within the context of publishers' altering of their processes. As he says, requirements in many settings for authors to deposit materials in some sort of repository (many of which have been created, and are maintained, by libraries) expand access in ways that were unimaginable not long ago. One of his primary messages is that, by means of Open Access, the publisher, the library, and the user are now in a much more dynamic and interactive relationship than was the case under the print model. The interaction has the potential for content to reach interested parties more quickly and in more usable formats.

As Mark Brown observes, all of the foregoing developments have led to changes in the research library and its operations. More important, the libraries are now in a position, as Brown says, to act as "protagonists, advocates, and innovators" (p. 158). That said, however, libraries are still acquiring and organizing print materials for use even as they are managing digitally born communication objects. Brown concludes by saying that "much of the success of [libraries'] activities has been underpinned by a strengthening of the natural tendency of research libraries to form strong collaborative networks in order to pool resources, share knowledge, pursue joint initiatives and work in co-operation" (p. 166).

This is a valuable volume. Readers who are knowledgeable in some areas of scholarly communication will learn more because of the breadth of the collection. Those who are entering the field of scholarly communication—as researchers *or* as librarians—will be much better prepared for their work after they have read these essays. The book could even be a very solid textbook for the fields of scholarly communication and librarianship.

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Fidelia Ibekwe-Sanjuan. *La science de l'information : origines, théories et paradigmes.* Paris : Éditions Hermès-Lavoisier, 2012. 261 p. (Collection Traitement de l'information). ISBN 978-2-7462-3912-8.

Dans cet ouvrage de synthèse, Fidelia Ibekwe-Sanjuan, enseignante-chercheure à l'Université Jean Moulin de Lyon, cherche à répondre à trois principales