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Issue 121

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Welcome to the Autumn issue of *Research Information*. Just like the changing season, the magazine has undergone a changing of the guard. As the new editor of *Research Information*, I hope that I can serve you, the reader, and uphold the quality and voice of the magazine that is so highly regarded. The outgoing editor, Tim, has done a fantastic job and I hope to carry on the good work. His impact remains – I have commissioned him for a terrific piece in this edition.

In this issue, there is also a distinct focus on the new business models emerging into the scholarly research realm. First, there is a feature on the implications of the increasing use of video in research. Next, we look at how the ongoing move towards open science is changing business models in scholarly communications. There is also a related opinion piece that highlights some of the myths surrounding digital transformation and the regular round-up of the latest technologies and platforms offered to publishers. In addition, we hear all about what's new at this year's Charleston Conference.

Looking ahead, I have a date for your diary. *Research Information Live* will take place this year across 6, 7 and 8 December: we will be sharing further details of our speakers soon, but this is a unique, virtual opportunity to hear from those at the cutting-edge of scholarly communications and a lively debate can be promised about the challenges we are facing and some insightful perspective on the issues we all share. I very much hope you can join us then.

In the meantime, happy reading!



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Bringing a video dimension to scholarly communications

Siân Harris considers the use of video in scholarly communications today, and the challenges and opportunities for the future

No one involved in communicating research over recent years can have failed to notice that the COVID-19 pandemic has significantly impacted how academic conferences and seminars are delivered.

The pandemic, of course, meant that almost overnight the number of online conferences and webinars ballooned. It meant more researchers at different career stages and from more places could join events live. But it also meant there was an explosion in the quantity of video recordings of events. And these videos have the potential to add an important new dimension to scholarly communications.

This has been the topic of ongoing research at US research non-profit, Ithaka S+R, as Dylan Ruediger, senior analyst observes:

'Video can provide an opportunity to distribute presentations to more people, to people who aren't able to be in the room or even in the country where those presentations are being given,' says Ruediger. 'This greatly facilitates scholars' ability to keep up with their field.' However, he added that, despite interest in the space, the use of video in

research is not yet well established. This is where new video companies come in. One such company is Cadmore Media, which provides a video platform that can be integrated within publishing services platforms, or as a stand-alone service for publishers.

'We identified that most scholarly societies, associations and publishers do have the ability to invest in video infrastructure, and yet they can clearly benefit from making video part of their scholarly ecosystem,' explains Jessica Lawrence-Hurt, Chief Marketing Officer of Cadmore Media.

'We provide technology that allows scholarly associations to integrate video into whatever scholarly work they are doing. Our goal is to treat video and audio assets with the same kind of respect and scholarly apparatus and infrastructure that we do for books and journals.

'During 2020, we had some of our clients saying, "we have these scientific technical events that involve vast amounts of content; can you help us?"; she continued. 'When we were getting started, one of the big challenges was educating people on why they should do video. A lot of people are entrenched in their books and journals workflows. That changed dramatically in the past two years. I think, if the pandemic hadn't happened, we would still be doing a lot of that education.'

The use of video in research is not just about conferences and webinars. Some video journals have been around for some years, probably the most well known of these is JoVE, which launched in 2006 for visualising experiments. And some journals routinely publish video abstracts and lay summaries, as well as interviews

with authors to accompany journal articles and various press releases.

Demonstrating skills

We know some subject areas particularly lend themselves to video. Medicine and a range of related topics were early adopters because the benefit is being able to demonstrate techniques. Engineering content is similarly popular.

And there is enthusiasm from researchers about the potential of video in research too. As Uwalaka Onyekachi, an agricultural entomologist and principal research officer with the National Horticultural Research Institute of Nigeria, observed: 'It is high time this comes into effect. Apart from giving credibility to our research work, it would make adoptability and understanding of the details simpler.'

His point about improving understanding of details also highlights the role of using video not just for explaining research, but also the importance of video for education and professional development.

Jonathan Ferencz is responsible for one such endeavour. He is Assistant Editor of the *Journal of Prosthetic Dentistry* in the US. In recent years, this journal has observed the need for continuing professional development for recently qualified dentists in the field of prosthetic dentistry. He notes dentists can graduate with large amounts of debt and start their careers on quite modest salaries, leaving a challenge for the role of ongoing education. 'A dentist who graduates today knows he or she needs education but can't afford to attend a meeting, doesn't buy textbooks, doesn't belong to academies or subscribe to journals,' he says.

Ferencz also notes a disconnect between the academic researchers who



tend to read journals and the practising dentists and others who need to put the research into practice. As with medicine, dentistry lends itself well to video.

'The millennial dentist might have a patient Monday morning where they have to do a procedure they're not familiar with. They want to learn it from home after their kids have gone to sleep,' Ferencz says.

He likens it to going onto YouTube if your dishwasher is broken to see how to fix it. However, there is a difference: 'You have no idea whether the guy who's showing you how to fix your dishwasher is actually showing you techniques and procedures that are approved by the manufacturer.'

Bearing these factors in mind, the *Journal of Prosthetic Dentistry* began to create continuing dental education in the form of 30- to 60-minute videos. 'We use the 'over-the-shoulder' view; I'm treating the patient but you're looking over my shoulder,' he explains. 'Most people try to narrate the video as they actually do the procedure, but that doesn't work because you don't want to say things in front of the patient. We have the presenter create the

video with no narration, then the narration is done separately and a skilled technical person takes the image of the speaker and puts it on the screen in various places, so you really feel like he's talking to you.'

Finding what you need

There is plenty of excitement about the potential of video in research, education and professional development and the overlaps between them. However, there are also challenges. One of these is discoverability.

Part of this comes with indexing. Ferencz and colleagues aid this for videos by publishing a two-page abstract of each video in the print and online versions of the journal, which are then listed in PubMed.

Another aspect of discoverability is having digital object identifiers (DOIs). As Ruediger explains: 'With the various start-ups working in this space, one of the services they're offering is the capacity to create a permanent home for videos, assign them DOIs to enhance the metadata and make them more discoverable and more usable. There's potential here to →

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→ incorporate this kind of material as one of many outputs of scholarship in a more formalised way.'

Discoverability can be a particular challenge for the output of conferences. Often today, they can be spread across societies' websites and YouTube channels.

'Those things are very difficult to organise for discovery,' observes Ruediger. 'One approach is to build platforms where this material can be aggregated, so you have a Netflix-type platform for conference material from across a wide range of disciplines. That would provide some of that centralised discovery and a clear place for people to start searching for material.'

And discovery goes beyond the complete video, he continues: 'There are some questions about how people consume video. Often when I'm watching videos on YouTube I'm not watching from start to finish, but trying to figure out where the part I actually care about is. Maybe we need better discovery inside videos to help guide people to the pieces they want to.'

Having a transcript can help enormously with this discovery within a video, says Lawrence-Hurt: 'If the transcript goes along with the video, then any terms mentioned within the video can be part of the search. I think that this is the number-one thing to help really improve true discoverability, and it allows you to, kind of, read the video as if it were a journal article.'

Cadmore's platform integrates with a US-based transcription partner called 3 Play Media. 'People can just press a button and request a transcript and a person has actually reviewed it, so it's going to be quite good quality, and also if there's a particular vocabulary,' Lawrence-Hurt continues.

'Artificial intelligence (AI) solutions have also come a very long way, just in a few years, and they're only going to continue to

'There is much excitement about the potential of video in research, education and professional development and the overlaps between them'

get better, although they do need to have a person review them.'

Related to transcriptions is the potential to include text in other languages. 'Most places that do transcriptions also do translations,' she added. 'We have clients who offer the video content in a couple of different languages. I'm not seeing it as much yet, but it's only a matter of time.'

Ensuring quality of content and delivery
Beyond finding content, another challenge for video is quality and there seems to still be a mixed picture regarding peer review.

'The level of peer review on a lot of this content is certainly less rigorous than what would happen in a journal article,' commented Ruediger. 'Some scholars we've been talking to have voiced concerns that they use conferences as a way to workshop ideas and as part of the process of elaborating a hypothesis or articulating an idea. By locking them in place you might hamper people's ability to use them as part of an iterative process and discourage people from being creative or staking out innovative claims they might then need to hedge or refine to get them through peer review.'



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→ The systems for peer review are perhaps better established for video within more traditional journal set-ups. Ferencz explained that the videos on his journal are all peer reviewed by a working group made up of people across different aspects of his sector: 'If there are clinical procedures, you need these people involved to have a look and say "everything that's being described here is accurate, it's good quality education, it doesn't deviate from the standard-of-care and it conforms to the intended use by the manufacturer".'

Lawrence-Hurt has similar observations: 'For journals, it's much more part of the workflow. The video goes along with the paper. Often, a video would be part of the supplementary material that would all go through the review process. None of the organisations we work with want random stuff out there. If it's scholarly, it certainly needs to have gone through a review process in some capacity. The stakes are too high for it not to.'

Another aspect of quality is the video presentation and production – which can be a barrier to creating videos.

'There's still the perception that video is hard,' Lawrence-Hurt says. 'It simply doesn't have the history behind it and the ease with which people talk about the book and journal workflows. It's still new for a lot of people, although everyone is more comfortable doing it than they were two years ago. It doesn't have to be like ABC or NBC or Netflix. It can just be a fairly simple set-up. The goal is conveying the content.'

She had some advice for any researchers or organisations contemplating doing videos: 'Just dabble, try a few things, learn from each other, see what works.'

Tied up with confidence is motivation. She says: 'We haven't seen much potential yet in the humanities. A lot of this has to do with who is in the field, their desire to create video and whether there is the demand from their students.'

Considering bandwidth constraints

Video has potential to increase access, but it also raises some new challenges. As Ravi Murugesan, an associate for the NGO INASP, which provides training in research writing to early-career researchers in low- and middle-income countries through its AuthorAID project, observes: 'Videos

'Having a transcript can help enormously with this discovery within a video'



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and video-enabled communication are seemingly ubiquitous in online education. However, these are data intensive, for example, a one-hour Zoom meeting takes upwards of 500 MB to 1 GB of data. According to a study by VPN provider, Surfshark, many developing countries rank low in "digital quality of life", which includes aspects such as "internet affordability" and "internet quality".

At the same time, there is much demand for video-based forms of education and communication. Further, the experiences of individuals within a country can obviously vary greatly, with some having excellent access to the internet and others facing cost or quality challenges. It is a difficult balancing act for education providers, and perhaps the best approach would be to provide both videos and video alternatives, such as transcripts and, of course, this is also the right thing to do from an accessibility perspective.'

Permissions and risks

Another potential issue to consider with video is around permissions and ownership. As Ruediger observes, 'societies hosting these things have a certain ownership over the content, but scholars may have intellectual ownership over their intellectual property; should they be compensated for if videos are sold to a commercial aggregator?'

'And, if they want to rescind permission for something to be streamed or be catalogued in a permanent way, how's that going to work?' He points to issues at a recent art conference where the inclusion of artwork in slides was covered by fair use, but sharing the videos more widely and potentially packaging them in a commercial product required a completely different level of scrutiny.

He adds that the transition to sharing conference and webinar videos in a more

permanent and accessible way also poses some challenges for the freedom of academic discussions. If discussions are taken out of the context of a discussion with peers in a room, then it can open up issues with culture wars or how sensitive information is used.

Developments over the past two years in particular have firmly established video as part of the scholarly communication puzzle, but that does not mean business models are resolved, according to Ruediger. 'The value isn't really well established because the market isn't very clear yet. Most of the start-ups building aggregated platforms are oriented towards the idea that libraries will be buying licences and they will facilitate scholars having access to that material. Our national survey on streaming doesn't really suggest that's a sure thing. We know libraries pretty overwhelmingly make decisions about streaming content based on their instructional value. They expect to spend more money on streaming, but it's not clear they're orienting that growth in their budgets towards research products; when we asked them about their interest in things such as recorded conference content, there remains a very modest amount of interest.'

However, Lawrence-Hurt is optimistic: 'I think there's a lot of opportunities for monetisation. The only line item in library budgets that is growing is in media. That's where you're seeing the opportunity for new media products. As today's students move into research; as early-career researchers become tenured professors; we're going to see it becoming much more part of the standard workflow for both education and research. We're going to look back at these conversations of 'should we do video? What is the value in video?' and laugh because it's going to be so taken for granted...' **Ri**



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The challenge of open-science business models



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Research Information spoke to four experts in the field about the ongoing move to open science, and the challenges that have emerged in an increasingly complex, open-science ecosystem

Open science is increasingly seen as a key part of ensuring innovation and knowledge discovery happens as fast as possible and with as few barriers as possible. It is the best way of tackling some of the big challenges facing the world, whether climate change, global poverty or the next pandemic. But while the advantages of open science are increasingly acknowledged, getting to open has proved tricky, as cultures and business models are slow to change.

Open science or open access?

The slow speed of change to open science is reflected in the fact that much of the open science discussion is still focused on the open access stage of the research process. As Richard Gallagher, President and Editor-in-chief at *Annual Reviews* explained, there are many opportunities beyond the traditional research paper: 'At *Annual Reviews* we see the publication

of the research paper as the start of what we want to do, rather than the end of it. We want to layer on top of it information that makes the content accessible and useful to other parts of society in addition to the research community. We want to make it useful to policymakers, educators and anyone who's got an interest in what current research thinking is on any particular subject. We want corporations to be able to act on information.

'Just making the research literature open is not quite enough, because not everybody can read and understand, or wants to engage with the very dry way that science is presented. The overarching opportunity is the opportunity to collaborate across different components of the scholarly publishing enterprise.'

A similar point was also made by Abhishek Goel, Chief Executive Officer and co-founder of CACTUS, a technology company accelerating



Richard Gallagher

scientific advancement: 'Most people aren't likely to read a research paper in their lifetime, but lay summaries, directed at the public, could have an enormous benefit in the public understanding of science. This is why open access is just a small part of open science (and more broadly, open academia), although the terms are often used interchangeably.'

The potential of open science was most clearly shown during the COVID-19 pandemic, as Curtis Brundy, Associate University Librarian at Iowa State University, explained: 'We saw what happens when we all move in the right direction during the pandemic – when the literature was opened up, the data was shared, the code was shared, the methods were shared – knowledge creation really did accelerate. That was a powerful lesson, and it was great reading about it in the new OSTP [Office of Science and Technology Policy] memo. They talked about the response during the COVID-19 pandemic multiple times as evidence for why we need to move towards making all of this publically accessible immediately.'

The rapid openness of the response to COVID-19 is noticeably different, however, from the complex open-science ecosystem that most researchers have to traverse, where the complexities of the open access system could risk slowing the advance of knowledge.

A diversity of approaches

As publishers have sought to fulfil the competing requirements of authors, funders and libraries, we have ended up with an increasingly diverse set of business models and an extensive bureaucracy to facilitate them. As Shelley Allen, Head of Open Research at Emerald, explained, there is no one-size-fits-all solution: 'Those who are interested in "open" don't necessarily want to get there in the same

way, and that's why Emerald have what we call "being open to all". We have a diversity of routes towards open – zero embargo, green, transformative deals with those who want them, platinum journals – and that's just on the business models, let alone on working practices.

'From an Emerald perspective, being an applied social science publisher, our key stakeholders were quite happy with our approach to open for quite a while. Most were happy with our zero-embargo green policy, some customers were interested with gold, but as most of the research is unfunded in our areas, there weren't too many "comers" for transformative agreements. That's definitely changed over the last few years. As a medium-sized social science publisher, it's really about having that diversity of approach, because we are very keen not to accidentally create

'Much of the open science discussion is still focused on the open access stage of the research process'

barriers to publication while we seek to remove the paywall.'

She added: 'It is really complex and very expensive to keep managing all these different ways. The biggest challenges are the workstreams you need in place to manage these complexities. Data is a massive challenge, identifying the eligibility of authors, ensuring you let authors know what they are mandated to do, what they are entitled to, and take that work out for them, and then just generally trying to



Abhishek Goel

shift the needle beyond open access to open research.'

With such a diversity of models and workflows creating an increasingly large administrative burden for publishers, research institutions and researchers, it is not surprising there has also been a push for simpler and cheaper solutions.

Removing barriers

The model Gallagher and Brundy are promoting, Subscribe to Open (S2O), may be seen as a more natural evolution from the original subscription model. S2O is a subscription model where, assuming subscribers participate, the publisher will make the year's content available as open access. As Gallagher explained: 'We want the people that are supporting the publishing enterprise – libraries, readers, reading institutions – to continue to be the ones that support the costs, whereas article processing charges (APCs) and



Shelley Allen

read-and-publish agreements move that obligation to the producers of the content. It doesn't cost us any more to not have the paywall than to have the paywall, and if we can continue to get subscription income, then we don't have to charge any more for it. It's much more equitable than the other ways to open access. There's been some studies and some complaints that open access is really playing in the hands of the wealthy. S2O works well on all areas of research – it's equally available to researchers from different institutions, different countries and different fields of research.'

Brundy is supportive of the model from the perspective of the library: 'Our library has implemented several different kinds of open access models, and S2O is really easy to do. There's no article-level workflows, it's really simple to go from one year paying for a traditional



‘Just making the research literature open is not quite enough, because not everybody can read and understand, or wants to engage with the very dry way that science is presented’

→ subscription, to the next year paying for something that’s delivering open access. Equity is the most powerful and important aspect of the model, especially as we learn how inadequate waiver programmes and discount programmes have been in trying to achieve equity with the APC-based models. There is not a publisher out there that hasn’t centred on diversity, equity, inclusion, and if you’re going to adopt a model that doesn’t have equity considered at the front end, you are very soon out of alignment with your own organisational values.

‘From a library perspective, we’ve been investing in a system of scholarly communication that slows down the advancement of science and introduces issues around reproducibility. A core value for libraries is information equity, so we have also been investing in a system that is out of alignment with a core value of our profession.’

In comparison to other open access models, S2O is new and experience is limited, with just 95 journals from 12 different publishers, and it will require far more experiment from a wider variety of publishers to satisfy some sceptics.



Curtis Brundy



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Alternative visions

While S2O is pushing the focus back on the readers of the content, it is not the only possible route out of today’s complex and expensive ecosystem. As Gallagher noted, the potential of overlay journals on preprints is still a big unknown: ‘They have the potential to really shake the current way scientific publishing is done – faster, much cheaper, but also somewhat less structured.’

This is the route that Goel sees as becoming increasingly important, with the creation of new markets for new services: ‘The obvious challenges of stagnating library budgets and increasingly large APCs are not sustainable for an industry. There will be an increase in the use and uptake of ‘free’ services, such as preprints, and a different approach to serving researcher needs via personalised service. These would encompass not just publishing, but everything on the continuum, from idea to impact.’

‘We believe the end user, who has been excluded from most business models in scholarly communications, represents an enormous opportunity to personalise services and offer support and content at an affordable price point. So, a B2C model, thus far largely absent from the market, could be the biggest change over the next few years.’

‘There is also a huge opportunity in the area of commercialisation of research. Traditionally, the bridge between academia and industry has not been very strong; a huge opportunity exists there, helping ease the financial burden for governments and institutes.’

Conclusions

It’s now more than 30 years since the arXiv preprint server was made available online, and for all the talk of the importance of

open science, we are still struggling to find an efficient solution to the problem of even open access. As Gallagher explained, ‘There’s a sort of valley of death between giving up your existing model and getting the new model to where it needs to be.’

Unsurprisingly, with the perceived progress of humanity at stake, tensions can run high and adversarial positions can be taken, but it’s always going to be a gradual change rather than a quick fix. As Allen explained: ‘It’s not just about policies and mandates and business models, it’s also about the culture, it’s also

‘The potential of open science was most clearly shown during the COVID-19 pandemic’

about incentives, and the support, the structural support to help change people’s behaviours in how they publish. That can only be achieved in a collaborative way across the ecosystem, and we do see that happening in pockets, but it would be good to see more trade bodies talking to other trade bodies. That is the only way to solve this, through collaboration, cooperation and conversation about the problems and what we can do. I don’t think it’s possible to change it overnight, and it certainly isn’t possible without that collaboration.’

It seems unlikely there will be a one-size-fits-all solution to open access or open science in the near future, but if such a solution is to be found, it will undoubtedly be found quicker together. **Ri**

Stop chasing your tail, choose AI summarisation

SciencePOD's new research amplification solutions, a boon for open science

Why are so many scientists still chasing their tail? They can never find enough time to read all the relevant past studies they need, let alone keep an eye on the latest research. On the upside, this tail-chasing dilemma creates an opportunity to introduce new business models for services that help scientists keep up-to-date and amplify the impact of their research. On the occasion of the 2022 Frankfurt Book Fair, SciencePOD is introducing ScioWire *beta*, a new artificial intelligence (AI) solution designed to empower every scientist – and their publishers – to increase the impact of their work. How? By creating summaries of individual published papers automatically and on a large scale. This double-edged solution provides both a newsfeed of the latest research and on-demand AI summarisation.

Beyond open-access publications

The ScioWire launch comes at the right time. It is taking place as open access (OA) is increasingly shaking up the old business models of scholarly publishers. Dwindling subscription revenues leave them with no other option but to explore new business models that better serve the scientific community. This approach makes scientist-centric solutions increasingly attractive. Specifically, new product opportunities are emerging for the post-publication stage – the stage associated with dissemination, discoverability and ultimately, research impact. For new solutions, we can thank advances in natural language processing applications in the field of automated summarisation.

This new context calls for new business models centred around the base-unit of scientific record – the research paper. Innovations associated with the nature of the scientific record and its wider availability cover micro-publications, open peer-review and preprints. Meanwhile, technology is also increasingly dictating the way scientific data is recorded,

in line with FAIR principles, to allow for machine readability and cross-analysis of the entire scientific output. Despite these innovations, wider scientific progress offering cross-fertilisation opportunities remains out of reach for most scientists, who remain siloed – often self-confined to their field of expertise due to the massive volume of information to digest.

New ways of consuming research

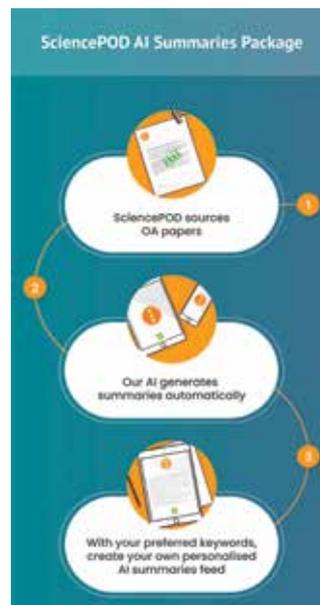
As AI technology matures, now is the time to re-think how scientists consume research. There is an opportunity to make hay of the benefits of natural language processing to increase the discoverability and dissemination of research studies and amplify their impact. AI summaries are quickly generated, easy to digest and share – they can act as a preview for individual research studies.

One way to productise AI summarisation is by designing a newsfeed to help scientists monitor latest advances in research. That's what SciencePOD has done with its new solution: ScioWire *beta* – delivering a keyword-customised newsfeed of the latest OA research. Each feed item is made up of automatically generated summaries of the latest OA papers, complete with context. ScioWire is an affordable productivity tool designed to help scientists select relevant studies more quickly.

Why summarise?

Before ScioWire, scientists interested in monitoring the latest advances had to rely on abstracts to separate the wheat from the chaff. The trouble is abstracts often give a subjective view of the study – more often than not, with the intention of supporting the authors' next funding application. By contrast, summaries reflect the key findings of each paper.

What is unique about SciencePOD's own AI summarisation tool, SUMMSci, is that it goes one step further by delivering contextualised



summaries. Through a partnership with Juan-Manuel Torres-Moreno, senior researcher from the Laboratoire d'Informatique d'Avignon at the eponymous French Université, SciencePOD's solution reflects the years of experience of this world expert in summarisation. The summaries of academic studies are generated automatically within seconds. And they come complete with context: keywords, acronyms elucidated and lay definitions of technical terms. In addition, they feature a second type of 'quick-to-consume' information – research highlights that answer key questions: Who did the work? Where and when did they publish? What did they find? How did they find these results? What are the future research steps?

Attention economy

Summaries represent the building blocks of research amplification strategies. They are proven to draw the attention of readers to the original research, yielding much higher impact than the full-size article on its own. However, AI summaries are by no means a substitute for the full text. Instead, they act as a 'teaser' to help readers decide whether or not to read the details of the full paper.

These snackable, digestible versions of scientific papers fit the evolving content consumption habits and preferences of scientists who, on average, only have 5- to 15-minute slots of time throughout the day to consume content.

The new solution can thus enhance researchers' productivity – when preparing a review paper or doing background bibliographical research, for example – which is critical to the success of their work. That's where ScioWire goes one step further in providing scientist-centric features, by offering AI summarisation on-demand and research monitoring functionality in the form of a customisable newsfeed.

Impact at scale

Research impact matters to scientists as well as scholarly publishers. In addition to relying on SciencePOD's global community of science and medical writers to create summarised research highlights 'by hand', publishers are exploring how AI summarisation technologies can help disseminate large volumes of article summaries linked to the original source research paper.

In addition, SciencePOD will help with distribution by offering publication to its own ScioWire web magazine and make its content available through a personalised widget embedded in online portals hosting communities of researchers. Combining attention-grabbing AI summaries and distribution networks, SciencePOD's new solutions will empower publishers to offer greater value to authors and to draw wider audiences to the latest research studies they publish at an unprecedented scale. **Ri**

Sabine Louët, founder and CEO of science content creation company, SciencePOD

Find out more about ScioWire on the SciencePOD website:
www.sciencepod.net





Platforms to the future

As the move towards open science and FAIR data progresses, platform providers are facing new challenges. Five industry figures tell Tim Gillett what comes next

Please give us a short definition of a publishing platform...

Lyubomir Penev, Chief Executive Officer and founder, Pensoft: It's the backbone of a scholarly outlet – be it a scientific journal, preprints, conference materials, or academic monographs. It's everything the readers, the authors, the editors see when they visit the website or access their user interface, yet it's also what they do not – or rather should not – notice in terms of underlying processes and service delivery. It's what makes or breaks a smooth user experience.

Will Bailey, Head of Partnerships, 67 Bricks: At the moment, publishing platforms are the end of the research journey, a place to access content, often discovered via other search engines and websites, such as Google Scholar or Academia.edu. The paper or book chapter is downloaded by users before they leave the site, and that is the end of the interaction. But what a platform could be is a starting point – a place where publishers showcase themselves as innovative and boundary-pushing organisations, hosting experiments, testing new value propositions, integrating new products and continually focusing on user needs to provide added value to their research journey.

Mirjam Eckert, Chief Publishing Officer, Frontiers: A technological solution for the

evaluation and dissemination of research advances. Publishing platforms underpin the peer review and distribution services provided by journals and publishers, allowing stakeholders to manage the processes and interactions involved.

Kaveh Bazargan, River Valley Technologies (RVT): Traditionally, a publishing platform has referred to a publisher's hosting platform. While other aspects of publishing such as peer review are usually carried out on other disparate 'platforms', it is increasingly clear that an end-to-end solution would allow more efficient publishing. One could argue the 'publishing platform' of the future should encompass all these functions, not just the final hosting, thus avoiding the need for data transfer between disparate platforms.

Patrick Hargitt, Director of Product Management, Literatum: A publishing platform provides the venue and toolkit for publishers to create a global, discoverable, →

'Publishers need to understand their readers' usage patterns to help shape their future offering'



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→ accessible home and syndication source for their scholarly research content. It enables publishers to present, market and monetise a variety of content to answer questions, solve problems, further research and enable discovery.

What are some of the key features an academic publishing organisation should be looking for in a platform?

Penev, Pensoft: Seamless integration between the journal – as seen on the outside on its website – and everything that goes on beneath the surface. That is the submission portal, the editorial management environment, where the whole review is being executed, the mechanisms driving the publication, indexation, data export and dissemination, but also the communication with the authors, reviewers and editors necessary to support and eventually speed up the editorial process and the publication of the final output. We need to facilitate the record and sharing of scientific knowledge at each step, to make it indeed enjoyable for everyone involved.

Bailey, 67 Bricks: The biggest thing people should be looking for is flexibility – how quickly can you adapt to new requirements, experiment with new models, content types and products – and how easy is it for you to make great data-driven decisions about all of the above? If

‘This B2B to B2C movement is still nascent and requires a new mindset from both publishers and platforms’

your platform is locking you into a narrow way of working, that’s a potential future problem for any publisher who wants to stay relevant.

Eckert, Frontiers: Ease of use is key to ensuring adoption and user satisfaction. Other criteria depend on the strategy and goals of the publishing organisation, and include scalability, customisability and sophistication, particularly integration of AI. I believe an end-to-end solution is nowadays a must, providing a coherent user experience and, crucially, data visibility across the publishing process.

Publishing organisations may also want to consider the importance of cloud-based solutions, the roadmaps for feature improvement and pricing, of course. The provider’s vision and mission, track record and collaborative spirit may also be

important elements to look out for.

Bazargan, RVT: It might go without saying that user friendliness is essential, especially for users who might be using a hosting platform infrequently. It should be highly intuitive, and consistent with what users expect from any modern website. Publishers should be able to update and change content or commercial models within the system easily and at any time.

The interface, as well as all content on platforms, should be as accessible as possible, for example, for users with visual impairments, or readers with dyslexia. Good, structured XML is key to ensuring accessible content. Users expect to be able to access not only audio and video content, but also fully interactive content – for example, 3D images viewable with VR headsets. Hosting platforms should be able to handle all such content.

Users want to be able to access platforms any time and on any device. It is imperative that publishing platforms work on any device, allowing the user to purchase and read content on any platform they choose. This should apply to all platforms, such as peer review or reporting. Publishers need to understand their readers’ usage patterns to help shape their future offering. Convenient reporting and data analysis is paramount.

Hargitt, Literatum: A proficient

→



Product Spotlight



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→ platform should empower a publisher to disseminate information based on their specific goals, while also ensuring that authors, readers and other users experience as seamless a journey as possible. A successful publishing platform must also celebrate the breadth of online service and technology providers, and be prepared to integrate and collaborate with others. Key features to consider are: accessibility; flexibility; overall market integration; technical support; innovation; analytics; a consistent investment in R&D; ease of use; robust abuse protection; user identity management; intelligent content organisation; and the ability to support various publishing models (for example, subscription vs. open access).

How have platforms developed in recent years to take account of the move towards open access and open science?

Penev, Pensoft: It must be a difficult exercise for publishing platforms and their developers to switch from technologies initially designed for subscription journals. Luckily for us at ARPHA, we don't have to face this challenge, as it has been designed as a fully open access platform from the very start. Instead, we are simply continuing our work towards the much anticipated evolution from open access to open science.

One way for platforms to embrace open science – apart from prompting free and easy access to research publications from day one – is opening up 'non-conventional' research work, including early research and small, yet integral bits and pieces that comprise scientific breakthroughs. Favourite examples are grant proposals, datasets, data management plans, workshop reports, software descriptions, conference abstracts and posters.

Bailey, 67 Bricks: We've seen some recognition of the fact that publishers' primary customers are shifting, from libraries, consortia and institutions to researchers, thanks to the open access movement. Publishers whose customer data is in great shape and can therefore respond quickly to changing needs and trends will be at an advantage in this new market, since customers at an individual level are much less likely to suffer from inertia than B2B subscription contracts. This B2B to B2C movement is still nascent and requires a new mindset from both publishers and platforms. I think there's a lot of opportunity still left in this space.

In terms of the platforms themselves, open and digital-first platforms like F1000 and PLOS have taken steps – such as facilitating preprint deposits, promoting open peer review and requiring open



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data – all of which challenge some of the traditional publishing processes and take advantage of the technology available.

Eckert, Frontiers: I believe platforms, which were developed with the sole aim to enable open access, provide the most powerful solutions for our move towards open science, as they do not suffer from compromises in workflows, or being adopted as an afterthought in the publishing process. Open science platforms, like we built at Frontiers, benefit from fully leveraging the widespread dissemination of research advances without barriers to access, and therefore

'The expectations of users are high in terms of ease of use of any technological interface today'

drive visibility and impact for scientists. The myth that open science is of lower quality has also set the standards high for open science platforms to perform better than legacy solutions in quality control, assurance and efficiency, while allowing for an expansion of innovation and promoting collaboration.

Bazargan, RVT: Open access has simplified and streamlined the requirements of publishing platforms, in that no subscription or authentication of the reader is needed. On the other hand, the submission systems have more work to

do, mainly to work out APCs using complex formulae. In addition, the submissions system (directly or indirectly), needs to collect the funds from the author. The proliferation of Plan S transition models have added further complications to APC calculation and management.

The move to open science has meant data relating to publications need to be openly available, and in as widely readable formats as possible. This requires publishing platforms to partner with third parties that specialise in hosting different types of data. Ideally, the data should be viewable directly via the platforms, and they should be linked closely with the relevant section of the publication.

Hargitt, Literatum: Open access has opened the industry's eyes to new business models that rely on enriched content offerings. Publishers are considering branching into new content types so they can better identify, develop and monetise their audiences and high-value content spaces. Open science has also sparked a conversation about embracing technologies that enable publishers to help their researchers take new strides. Research that incorporates media and data assets requires new services to be integrated, or natively supported on platforms, requiring an overall modernisation of supporting content management systems.

What should platform providers be working towards next?

Penev, Pensoft: More and more automation. Even if we have managed to develop an →

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→ all-rounded, end-to-end platform, new tools and platforms designed to cater for the specific needs of different communities are emerging all the time. The solution is to be ready to continuously incorporate those within our platforms' own workflows, guidelines and practices. Again, our mission in academia is to take the burden of technicalities away from the researcher by providing the technology, accompanied with a very personal approach and understanding, so they are able to focus on the science.

Bailey, 67 Bricks: Again, the key here is offering flexibility for publishers to take ownership of their products and data, so they can reimagine their offering to customers and stay current. I don't think we're going to be seeing the end of books and journals, but there's a clear need for publishers to see these outputs as just one product of the data they have as researchers' needs evolve. As long as platforms confine publishers to these traditional formats, how can they engage with their users, experiment with their data, innovate and create new and more valuable insights for their customers?

Eckert, Frontiers: The expectations of users are high in terms of ease of use of any technological interface today, and platform providers will do well in improving their interactive design, as well as evolving AI-enabled tools to serve the scientific community in their publishing endeavours. Quality assurance remains crucial and continuing the work on effective research integrity checks integrated into the publishing workflow will be key to safeguard the scientific literature.

Bazargan, RVT: Platforms should try to be more interoperable, so data can be moved from one platform to another conveniently. Currently, moving from one platform – say a hosting platform – to another is a major headache for a publisher, as there are no standardised methods or formats used by each platform. An initiative that goes part of the way to doing this for submission and peer review systems is the NISO MECA standard. But even in this case, the main idea is to transfer one submission from one platform to another. Moving completely from one platform to another still entails major work for the publisher and/or the incoming platform provider.

Hargitt, Literatum: Platform providers should be actively supporting upcoming developments in online technology in the areas of accessibility, security and privacy. They also need to leverage AI to automatically enhance content discovery, comprehension and connections. It is a case of knowing where the industry, the internet and society at large are heading,



'It is less about new developments and more about understanding audiences and new directions'

and offering publishers reliable and timely solutions to weather the changes to come. Ultimately, publishing platforms need to stay one step ahead of the game to stand a chance of catching up to the present.

Can we expect any groundbreaking developments in the near future?

Penev, Pensoft: Now that we have already made some big steps on the path from open access to open science, I'd say the next groundbreaking development would be the transition from open data to FAIR linked data in research and academic publishing, and building up of knowledge management systems. At Pensoft we have already started working on several projects with this mission, the EU-funded project BiCikL, for example, or the OpenBiodiv knowledge management system. We should be building up the infrastructure that allows researchers to link back and forth the data underlying their research. This is how you make research truly transparent, reproducible and responsible.

Bailey, 67 Bricks: It's hard to predict where the truly groundbreaking changes will happen. That's what keeps working in this industry fresh and exciting! The new syndication agreements we're seeing between publishers and companies like ResearchGate to get open access content in front of as many people as possible are smart, and I think we'll see more work to make the distribution of content really slick. The disruption here will occur if usage on these third-party providers

eclipses publishers' native usage, leading to hard questions on exactly what platform development publishers should be focusing on.

Publishers operating at high volume should become less curators of static content and more miners of the insights their data holds, to add real value and create new revenue streams. Leveraging powerful tools, such as AI and machine learning, to support researchers, funders and institutions to tease out useful information from the firehose of data available to them will open up new opportunities for product development. But for many publishers and platforms there's an awful lot of architectural groundwork to be done before they can embark into such innovative lands.

Eckert, Frontiers: From my point of view, we would enable groundbreaking developments if we reach the tipping point for open science as quickly as possible, with data being made accessible in a machine-readable, structured format. This would allow for the development of more sophisticated AI models to support researchers, for example, in summarising advances, exploring correlations across a large body of literature, and in making knowledge understandable for the public to counteract misinformation and spur innovation.

Bazargan, RVT: We will see more flexible business models, where a user might want to buy a selection of chapters and create their own personalised book. Or a publisher may decide to regroup chapters from multiple books and conferences to create a new product for sale – these should be possible with simple reordering of content within the system.

It is our view that the ideal publishing platform should not simply be a 'hosting' system, but should be able to take care of all the activities in publishing, from online authoring and peer review, to production and hosting. This is already attainable and makes the publishing process far more efficient, allowing immediate dissemination of research within a fully transparent framework.

Hargitt, Literatum: The future will be more focused on supporting the groundbreaking shift to a publishing landscape dominated by open access and open science. It is less about new developments and more about understanding audiences and new directions, as platforms branch out to facilitate new business models and a broader exchange of ideas across borders. All the while, platform providers will need to ensure they maintain the same levels of excellence in supporting an ever-evolving publishing market. **Ri**

The critical range of publishing platforms

Publishing platforms are digital solutions that are principally designed to help publishers and authors to evaluate and disseminate content.

In its simplest form, a platform is an accessible location to host content and make it discoverable. Publishing platforms allow authors to share their insights on a digital platform, and promote the sharing of information with their intended audiences.

A publishing platform needs to give publishers control of all the key functions that they require to run their publication and drive growth, as well as how their content is hosted, presented, marketed, and shared. It needs to support all of a publishers' content, products and websites, and be easy to customise, extend and link to third-party systems. An effective publishing platform increases the value of a publisher's content and the impact of their digital brand with websites that adapt the features we are familiar with in many successful consumer websites specifically for research content.

Key players

Publishing platform providers include **67 Bricks**, a trusted partner to many publishers. The company has created

flagship information products, platforms, AI-powered workflow tools and supercharged digital user experiences.

Adam Matthew Digital is a specialist publisher of primary-source collections. The company developed the Quartex digital collections platform, a fully hosted solution with functionality that requires no technical expertise, and which allows customers the flexibility to establish customised workflows based on their unique needs and collections.

Atypon is the creator of the Literatum online publishing and website development platform. The platform was engineered with a modular structure, so that it can easily be adapted to each publisher's business objectives.

CAB Direct is an online platform that was built specifically to help users get the most out of CABI's world-class bibliographic databases, CAB Abstracts and Global Health, and more than 30 online database subsets.

F1000Research is an open-research platform, offering rapid publication of research articles and other research outputs. Articles can be published in as few as 14 days, and, post-publication, invited peer review creates an open

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The **'STEM information professionals: bridging the gap with R&D departments'** White Paper brings together findings from interviews, addressing some of the key challenges faced by information professionals when working with R&D groups, and highlighting how advanced technology projects bring a unique opportunity for them to demonstrate their impact to colleagues across their organisations.

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dialogue between authors and their research community.

Frontiers' open-science publishing platform is at the heart of its publishing operations for researchers to benefit from the latest technology to validate and disseminate their findings. The firm leverages software tools for a rigorous, fast and efficient service.

Pensoft is the creator of the ARPHA open-access publishing platform. Offered as software-as-a-service (SaaS), ARPHA allows users to build their own publishing solution, and to manage and host journals, books, conference abstracts, proceedings and institutional documents.

River Valley Technologies (RVT) built an XML-based publishing solution from submission to peer review, to production and to final hosting,

giving full control to publishers, with full transparency of data.

The **Silverchair** platform is home to innovative digital products in research, reference and education. With flexible technology and a suite of powerful DIY tools, the platform enables scholarly and professional publishers to unite their journals, books, meetings, education, news, multimedia and other material.

Springer Nature's publishing platform is designed to deliver fast, accurate access to the depth and breadth of its online collection of science, technology, medicine, humanities and social sciences journals, ebooks, reference works and databases.

This is not an exhaustive list. If you provide publishing platforms and would like your company to be included, please let us know. **Ri**



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Introducing the OpenUP initiative

Six university presses join forces to support early career researchers from 2022 to 2025



University presses are different. Their difference can be traced back to their beginnings as mission-orientated publishers and an extension of their parent institutions, the university. The Association of University Presses' definition of a university press is a good starting point to understanding its heritage: 'While commercial publishers focus on making money by publishing for popular audiences, the university press' mission is to publish work of scholarly, intellectual or creative merit, often for a small audience of specialists or a regional community of interest.'

University presses aren't free from economic pressures, but to remain relevant and true to their identity, the university press seeks to balance budgetary requirements alongside other priorities, such as representing an increasingly diversified author pool, serving the public good by generating and disseminating knowledge and, most importantly, remaining connected to the communities it serves. One of these communities includes early-career researchers (ECRs). ECRs face

significant barriers. They must compete with established scholars while they build a successful track record of publication, their employment contracts may be short-term, or otherwise less secure than those of their more senior scholars, and they are more likely to have heavy teaching commitments.

At the same time, they are unlikely to have been eligible for research leave and are engaged in learning a new career. As Emma Brennan, Editorial Director at Manchester University Press, explains, 'ECRs face so many challenges, and publishing is critical to their career prospects and disseminating their research globally. Helping to carve out a space where others can acknowledge the contribution of ECRs is a service that university presses can, and should, provide, and one that aligns with wider sustainability goals, such as equality and inclusivity.'

To demonstrate support for ECRs, six well established university presses from the UK are proposing a collaborative project to secure funding for a number of first books by UK-based ECRs. This project is named OpenUP. Central to the success of OpenUP are institutional libraries, who can subscribe to OpenUP on a banded basis and their

'This three-year pilot project aims to raise £96,000 per year to fund open-access publication for 12 books in each period'

participation will fund the cost of Diamond open access for a list of eligible books.

This three-year pilot project aims to raise £96,000 per year to fund open-access publication for 12 books in each period. The first batch of books will publish in 2023, and the books will have undergone extensive peer review at various submission stages. If the threshold is not met within the pledging period, either a smaller number of books will be published open access in the following year, or the amount will be combined with that for future years.

OpenUP has been approved as a participant in Jisc's new Open Access Community Framework (OACF), which is supporting mission-driven, diamond open access initiatives. Anna Vernon, head of content licensing at Jisc, says that OpenUP is 'an innovative and inclusive model for open access books that aligns with our goal of supporting bibliodiversity in open access monographs and levels the playing field for ECRs.'

Institutions wishing to support OpenUP can find more information and pledge funding via Jisc's Licence subscriptions manager.

Tom Dark, Head of Editorial at Edinburgh University Press, sums up the OpenUp initiative: 'Edinburgh University Press shares many values with the other participating university presses in terms of being quality-led and mission-oriented, and this collaboration demonstrates our shared goal of supporting early career researchers, both as our valued authors of today and tomorrow. Recognising the many challenges being faced by ECRs, I'm sure this is just one area where we are able to work together to benefit the wider scholarly community.' **Ri**



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Debunking digital myths

Sabine Louët uncovers three myths about digital research dissemination and shares lessons she has learned



Digital transformation is on everyone's lips. It governs how professionals operate in the digital world, so their work has better reach and impact. For scientists, this can mean sharing their findings more widely with the scientific community for better cross-fertilisation of ideas across the knowledge economy. However, very few scientists today use the full spectrum of available digital methods to communicate and share their latest findings. This is particularly true in the highly competitive world of open access (OA), as funders increasingly require mandatory dissemination of results. I have learned precious lessons from our vast experience in helping STM publishers to support scientists in navigating changes in the digital world.

Myth No. 1: I need to share my full research paper online to attract a wider audience

Lesson: Shortening your message is key to reaching wider or targeted audiences and piquing their interest in the full research paper

Scientists are always looking for quick and easy ways to stay updated. Most audiences now consume content digitally and in slots of 5-15 minutes throughout the day. This is why easy-to-digest formats that match rapidly evolving content consumption habits are needed. Developing quick-to-read summaries or highlights of research papers can drive attention to published work. These types of content are not the same as an abstract. Their value lies in that they read more like stories, offering relevant scientific information in a language that draws the reader in. Creating this type of content is not necessarily the responsibility of scientists, however. For best effect, it is advisable to turn to professional science writers. Reportedly, these professionally crafted summaries can contribute to a three-fold increase in the number of research paper downloads and a two-fold increase in citations. They are also ideal for distribution via science news brokers, such as AlphaGalileo, capable of reaching 7,000 journalists worldwide, which can result in a five-fold increase in research paper downloads.



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'Summaries are the key to effective engagement with scientists' research discoveries'

Myth No. 2: I can improvise my digital dissemination activities as I go along

Lesson: Planning early facilitates effective dissemination

They may be worlds apart, but there are a few tips scientists can pick up from professional content marketers to communicate their achievements with greater impact. One important tip is establishing a digital presence. This means adopting a strategic approach that involves regular sharing of summarised content related to researchers' latest published work. Scholarly publishers who are keen to support their authors know this too. Some publishers are now exploring how they can attract more readers to their journals and increase authors' submissions by using digital technology, such as automated AI summarisation, to create trusted content on a larger scale.

Myth No. 3: The best way to communicate published research summaries is in writing

Lesson: Digital fatigue is a real phenomenon and scientists have varied content preferences

Some people prefer the written word, others prefer visual content. In particular, digital natives have a clear preference for visual and mobile-friendly content. Although text summaries have been proven to enhance engagement, experimenting with multiple formats can mean greater reach and more opportunities for communication via social media networks, for example. Video and audio interviews with research authors are among the most popular content formats, as are infographics – suitable to be used as multimedia and visual abstracts.

Multiple formats also allow an 'omnichannel' approach to dissemination. Varied content formats can reach scientists, however, they prefer to get their information – across text-based, audio and video channels. Yet, researchers' time is precious and is best devoted to their work. The implementation of an omnichannel approach to disseminate research findings is the role of digital communication professionals at academic and research institutions, learned societies and publishers.

Building on lessons learned

Better planning and creating a variety of story formats used for summarised research dissemination are simple steps researchers and publishers can take in their digital transformation. This is a proven approach to increasing published research discoverability. Ultimately, this approach delivers greater value to the scientific community and other important audiences, such as policymakers. Moreover, scientists sharing their published work more widely – through summarised highlights of their research – make it easier for conference organisers to notice them. It may even help researchers be better prepared for their next funding application. **Ri**

Sabine Louët is the Chief Executive Officer of specialist content creation company, SciencePOD



'We're prioritising the in-person event to the highest degree'

Leah Hinds, executive director, Charleston Hub, gives us the details of the new and improved conference taking place in November, including session and speaker information, as well as insights into what's new this year

Tell us a little about your background and qualifications...

Well, this made me chuckle a little bit, because I don't have a background or formal qualifications that would generally lead to my current career. I attended the College of Charleston for a BSc in Biology. I took a year off after graduation, with plans to enrol on the Physician Assistant programme at the Medical University of South Carolina. I was working at the College of Charleston in the Graduate School Admissions Office at the time and, as often happens, plans changed. During my time working at the college, a friend introduced me to Katina Strauch, the

founder and convener of the Charleston Conference. I started working part-time to help out at the conference and do some behind-the-scenes work – my first job was compiling attendee evaluation results. I left my job at the College of Charleston to move closer to family in 2007, about four hours away from Charleston, and I remember writing a letter of resignation to Katina. She called me not five minutes after I sent the email and said that just because I was moving didn't mean I had to quit, I could work remotely. She jokingly said I couldn't get away that easily. My job grew over time – I was assistant director of the conference for many years,

then I was named executive director of the conference in 2017, and executive director of the newly formed Charleston Hub in 2020. Katina has been a wonderful mentor and I've learned so much from working with her over the years.

You've been involved with the wonderful Charleston Conference for 18 years now – could you give us a potted history of the event, and how it's developed over the years?

The Charleston Conference was founded by Katina, who was a librarian at the College of Charleston at the time. The first conference was held in 1980, and it accompanied the College of Charleston's Antiquarian Book Fair. There were 20 people there. It was hard getting attendees since both the college and Katina were unknown. Katrina told me later that she remembers getting excited when we got someone who called to register, but he was from Charleston, West Virginia, and had to cancel.

The conference has earned a good reputation over the years as a collegial gathering where librarians, publishers and vendors can discuss the same issues in a non-threatening, friendly and highly informal environment. It was the first of its kind to talk to grassroots acquisitions

'We're also planning more networking opportunities and social activities for the virtual attendees'

librarians about acquisitions issues, pricing structures and international publishing. And it doesn't hurt that it's held in gorgeous, historic downtown Charleston, SC, each year!

The event has grown over the years from being held in a classroom at the college, to the Lightsey Conference Center on campus, to the Francis Marion Hotel in the early 2000s. Also, 2005 was the first year it was held in more than one venue, and now we're in three venues: the Francis Marion Hotel, the Courtyard by Marriott Historic Charleston and the Charleston Gaillard Center. It was a significant step forward for the event when we moved into the newly renovated Charleston Gaillard Center in 2015. The venue's beautiful performance hall seats 1,800 people; where we were previously split into a ballroom in the Francis Marion that sat around 350 people, with overflow seating in two additional ballrooms. The

new facility also allowed us to have all of our vendors for the popular Charleston Vendor Showcase in one large area, instead of crammed into the nooks and crannies and hallways in the Francis Marion. Our attendees and vendors love the larger space. Attendance has expanded from that initial group of 20 people to almost 3,000 in 2021.

What are your hopes (and fears) for the future of libraries over the coming decade?

I don't have a crystal ball, but I surely don't see libraries going away! Their functions have changed over the years from a physical repository to a digital one, and from providing print materials to providing access and services. I like how Lisa Hinchliffe (University of Illinois Urbana Champaign) puts it when she says the library isn't so much an ecosystem, or living organism, as it is a built environment; more like a cityscape, crafted and shaped by policies, politics and finances, than a marsh or field of flowers that grow on their own. These built environments will continue to shape themselves to the needs of their users in the future, as they have evolved in the past.

What can we expect at this year's Charleston Conference?

We're so excited for this year's conference and, based on experience and feedback from the 2021 event, we're trying something new with the schedule, as you may have heard by now. We're calling it a Parallel Event – one that optimises the in-person event during the first week of November for those who can join us in Charleston, then two weeks later from 14–18 November, focuses on those who prefer to join virtually.

On site in Charleston, we're prioritising the in-person event to the highest degree possible, so attendees won't have to worry about technical difficulties delaying or interfering with their experience. We have an amazing slate of top-notch presenters and topics on the schedule, along with many opportunities for networking at the Vendor Showcase, conference receptions and other fun social events.

Our keynote and plenary sessions will be offered as a livestream to virtual registrants, and we'll capture recordings of everything else offered during the event. Our confirmed plenary speakers include:

- **Dr Buhle Mbambo-Thata**, University Librarian, National University of Lesotho
- **Caroline Sutton**, CEO, STM

'I don't have a crystal ball, but I surely don't see libraries going away!'

- Data-Driven DEI Panel: **Gwen Evans** (Elsevier), **Beth Blanton** (University of Virginia Libraries), **Robyn Price** (Imperial College London), and **Lori Carlin** (Delta Think)
- Charleston Premiers, moderated by **Darrell Gunter**, CEO, Gunter Media Group
- Long Arm of the Law panel, moderated by **Ann Okerson**, Senior Advisor, CRL; **Gary Price**, InfoDocket; and others (to be announced)
- Closing summary by **Derek Law**, Professor Emeritus, University of Strathclyde

Two weeks later, we'll run the parallel virtual event. Monday and Tuesday, 14 and 15 November, will feature exclusive, virtual-only content with interactive Zoom Q&A and discussion sessions with speakers. Then, once we hit Wednesday, 16 November, the in-person conference schedule will run again, playing the sessions recorded in Charleston followed by a live Q&A session. So virtual attendees will have access to all the great content from the in-person week. And if you attended in-person but missed a session you wanted to attend due to a schedule conflict, you have a chance to attend online.

Since all the sessions will have been pre-recorded, we expect them to run smoothly without delays or glitches. We're also planning more networking opportunities and social activities for the virtual attendees, which is something we weren't able to do as much last year.

Lastly, do you have any fascinating facts, hobbies or pastimes you'd like to tell us about?

My husband and I live on a small farm outside of Lexington, SC, which is about two hours from Charleston. We have horses, goats, mini pigs, chickens, rabbits and two farm dogs that help us keep everything in line. I love spending time with the animals, and this year I plan to add a pollinator garden and bird habitats using native plants. I'm new to gardening and have been reading up on how to get the planting beds started this fall to get ready for the spring. I've never had time for a garden before, but both of our kids are in college now so hopefully I'll be able to keep the plants alive! **Ri**

'Fast publication can save lives!'

River Valley Technologies director Maryam Bazargan describes her early career, 10 years of working with her brother Kaveh, and her love of languages and cultures

Tell us a little about your background and qualifications...

I spent my early days in the family home in Notting Hill Gate, London, but was born in Bethnal Green Hospital – so I suppose I could be considered a genuine Cockney!

Shortly after, my parents decided to move back to Iran and, for a few years, lived between the two countries. I was there during the revolution in 1979, when schools were closed for six months, and then the Iran/Iraq war. I moved back to London in 1983 – it was tough as I hardly spoke any English, but thankfully there was another Persian girl in my class who translated things for me in the first six months.

I completed my GCSEs and A-Levels at Putney High School. I loved business and learning languages; I guess having been thrown in the deep end with no English helped. I studied marketing with French and German in Newcastle, which I loved.

After my degree, I moved back to London and, while working in marketing for an international technology company, I got involved with an internet-based project in 1997; the project entailed setting up an internet TV guide.

I realised the internet was the future and in 1998 moved to the world of media agencies (joining one of the largest media agencies, Carat/Aegis Media, and was later headhunted to set up the digital media arm for Publicis in 2000), devising digital strategies for clients including Diageo, Hewlett-Packard, Yahoo!, Apple and L'Oréal. I helped launch The new VW Beetle and Apple Mac in the late 90s.

The digital media industry was tiny in the 1990s and it felt like there was a new

dotcom company launching every day – there was never a shortage of social events. It was an exciting time!

In around 2003, I became aware of the video game industry's market size and the untapped 'media' within the games. So I set-up possibly the first marketing company that was specialising in in-game advertising – essentially setting up partnerships between video games and brands that wanted to engage with that growing audience.

We delivered some of the largest campaigns, including Reebok partnership with Pro Evolution Soccer (one of the largest football games). We then realised that the concept applied to many other sectors, and so we extended to brand and TV, music and sports partnership. One of the most extraordinary experiences then was working directly with Don King delivering partnership and sponsorship strategy for fights at Madison Square Garden – quite a character!

I love anything and everything about business – I joke about having set-up

'We want to allow anyone to publish anything as easily as possible'

my first business with my neighbour when I was six years old, selling paper fans in our street in Iran! What I enjoy is coming up with new ways of doing things and new business ideas – being an outsider to an industry helps with that – challenging the norm, and creating new opportunities.

You've been working with your brother Kaveh at River Valley Technologies for nearly 10 years now. What does the company do, and what is your role?

River Valley, now in its 34th year, has specialised in composition services for the STM market, in particular complex maths and LaTeX, and today delivers full end-to-end publishing platforms.

Around 10 years ago, we started moving from a pure outsourcing company

to a technology provider. Before joining, I didn't have much knowledge of the STM marketing but, when Kaveh and I started talking about the industry and its stakeholders, we realised that, in fact, there were a lot of similarities with other sectors that had been early digital adopters.

Over the past eight years I have been putting systems in place to deliver technology products to publishers. Our vision was to deliver an end-to-end publishing system in the cloud, so we began by dividing the workflow and developing cloud-based platforms for each stage of the workflow.

Today, we have a full suite of publishing solutions for clients who can use one or all: from submission and peer review to production, tracking, proofing, publishing, discoverability and reporting.

Today, I oversee all business operations at River Valley, from business strategy to product delivery to clients. Our mission is to accelerate the communication of research and my job is to ensure we deliver this through thoroughly understanding industry requirements.

What have been the biggest developments in scholarly communications since then?

From a market point of view, the move from subscription to open access (OA) has been the most notable change in the past 10 years. Related to OA are the commendable moves to openness in other areas, such as open data and open peer review. Publishing systems and platforms have had to adapt accordingly, to ensure that various new business models are catered for.

In the past two and a half years, during the Covid era, faster publication of research has become paramount – so the days of research being published months or even years after submission of an article might be over!

Consumers of research publications no longer want to be limited to downloading PDFs of papers. The TikTok generation wants to be able to have instant access on any device, including mobile phones. This means publishers need to produce



multiple formats and, crucially, must guarantee that all formats match.

Are there any areas of scholarly communications that you are particularly passionate about?

Speed of publication is probably what I am most passionate about. We have managed to perfect a system that allows full publication of all formats within 24 hours of completion of peer review. We are working on making the publication process even more streamlined. Fast publication can save lives!

Accessibility is another passion of ours. We want everyone to be able to access research with the minimum impediments. An example of a small enhancement that we have made to our sites is to allow readers to view the content, as well as the interface, in a dyslexic-friendly typeface. We have also given our clients the tools to translate the interface on their publication pages into any language they desire.

Removing barriers at both ends of the scholarly communication process is another passion of mine. In the most general sense, we want to allow anyone to publish anything as easily as possible, and for anyone to consume that publication easily and painlessly.

What are your wider hopes for the industry over the next 10 years?

We want to help increase automation in all stages of publishing, to bring down the cost of publishing, thus removing further the barriers to scholarly communication. A dream of ours is to allow 'citizen scientists', not only established scientists and researchers, to contribute to research communication. We have this in the back of our minds when building our platforms.

It would be good to see the cost of textbooks go down, thus alleviating the pressure on students. In addition, we want to see 'live' textbooks that are continually updated, ensuring that researchers always have the very latest research at their fingertips.

Lastly, do you have any fascinating hobbies or pastimes you want to share?

I love entertaining friends, whether it's a dinner party at home or putting on a party. I have been known for my parties and have thrown a few with 400+ guests in the past – I just love meeting new people and connecting people with others.

I also love to dabble in art and interior design, and have designed and renovated a few homes over the years, but sadly none of my paintings

'One of the most extraordinary experiences was working directly with Don King – he's quite a character!'

have made it to Sotheby's yet!

Languages have remained really important to me – they say you live as many lives as the languages you speak and that is so true. I feel so frustrated when I go to a country and I don't speak their language; over the years I've continued to study languages, including Japanese and Spanish. I love travelling and exploring new places, understanding cultures; my favourite has to be Marrakech; a riot of colour, fragrance, design and, of course, souk treasure!

I am always fascinated to hear about other people's businesses and their strategies – I don't mind sticking my oar in! On a more serious level, I like listening to people's business issues and love to help come up with solutions. I also mentor a few people; it gives me great joy seeing them and their businesses flourish. **Ri**



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R Discovery partners with Springer Nature

R Discovery, a Cactus Communications (CACTUS) brand, has partnered with Springer Nature, the global academic publisher, to help broaden the reach of open access (OA) content to the global researcher community. The inclusion of Springer Nature's OA portfolio into R Discovery means the platform offers its more than 1.4 million researchers access to high-quality OA content in more than 32,000 journals worldwide across a breadth of subject areas.

Commenting on the partnership, Abhishek Goel, CEO and co-founder, CACTUS, said: 'Helping the scientific community with access to a vast bank of content is one of our top priorities. Our aim is to bring the most relevant and recently published scientific literature to the fingertips of researchers across the globe. By providing access to full-text open-access papers, we can facilitate content discovery and help save reading time. With this association, researchers will now have access to some of the

most valuable OA research published in Springer Nature via the R Discovery app.'

Till Moepert, vice president, Indirect Channels, Springer Nature, said: 'Researchers are at the heart of what we do and ensuring access and engagement with high-quality content is central to the advancement of knowledge and discovery. With a long history in OA, we are committed to supporting researchers with streamlined routes to high-quality content in the fields of science, technology, medicine and the humanities and social sciences, alongside our wider commitment to supporting open data and open research, for example, by creating the largest linked open data set in SciGraph and supporting FAIR data projects through our Text and Data Mining API's. Partnering with the Cactus Communications R Discovery App enables us to continue this rich tradition of making open research accessible through new platforms and avenues and supporting the research community with

access to the widest possible content, tools and services.'

Among a host of CACTUS products, R Discovery is used by researchers regularly for literature search via the app or the web version. It currently has more than 32,000 journals covering more than 9.5 million research topics across subject areas such as life sciences, biology, medicine, philosophy, political science, environmental science and psychology. With more than 30 million open-access articles available and access to paywalled articles with one's university credentials, R Discovery is one of the largest repositories of research that is accessible on the go.

Springer Nature is one of the first major publishers to make their content available to R Discovery. By combining Springer Nature's expertise in publishing high-quality research with R Discovery's online platform for millions of researchers, both organisations aim to deliver an upgraded and seamless experience for the communities they serve.

Declaration on Research Assessment signed by IGI Global

IGI Global, a medium-sized independent academic publisher based in Hershey, Pennsylvania, USA, has signed the Declaration on Research Assessment (DORA). The worldwide initiative aims to implement practical and robust approaches to research assessment globally and across all scholarly disciplines.

IGI Global has always been a strong advocate for assessing research on its own merit, rather than the merit of the journal in which the research is published. Additionally, IGI Global does not have caps on the number of words, figures and references that can be included in articles. 'Signing the DORA initiative aligns neatly with our values,' says Melissa Wagner, Vice President of Editorial at IGI Global. 'It has always been our priority to measure research based on its own merit and we are always striving to innovate our products to be accessible to all. This initiative has only confirmed

to us that our mission of inclusivity and drive to implement new and exciting attributes to our e-books is just what researchers need.'

Through its alignment with DORA, IGI Global is leading the academic publishing industry in shaping the new standard approach to research evaluation.

'It has always been our priority to measure research based on its own merit and we are always striving to innovate our products to be accessible to all'



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MIT Press announces new support for Fund for Diverse Voices

The MIT Press has received significant funding from the Heising-Simons Foundation, the Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation and individual donors to support the MIT Press Fund for Diverse Voices. The Fund was established in 2019 to grow and sustain the publication of books by and about women in male-dominated fields and other authors whose voices have been chronically excluded across the sciences, arts and humanities.

The new gifts will aid the publication of 10 or more new works annually over the next three years. The funding will support the production and global promotion of titles in the Fund for Diverse Voices programme and contribute to the companion Grant Program for Diverse Voices, a giving initiative that offers grants to MIT Press authors around the

world who are underrepresented in their chosen fields. The new funding will enable the Press to offer Grant Program awards of up to \$15,000. The Grant Program provides eligible authors with support for research and writing, as well as an opportunity to publish with the MIT Press.

'These grants and gifts will allow us to advance knowledge in STEAM fields and actively contribute to the creation of works that promote a more just, equitable and open society,' said Amy Brand, director and publisher, the MIT Press. 'We are so grateful to both the Heising-Simons Foundation and the Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation, as well as the individual donors, for their generous sponsorship.'

One of the first programmes of its kind, the Fund for Diverse



Andrey_Popov/Shutterstock.com

Voices has already supported titles and initiatives such as *Reimaging Design: Unlocking Strategic Innovation* by Kevin Bethune, *Power On!* by Jean J. Ryoo and Jane Margolis, *Carbon Queen: The Remarkable Life of Nanoscience Pioneer Mildred Dresselhaus* by Maia Weinstock, and the On Seeing visual culture series.

The Heising-Simons

Foundation works with its many partners to advance sustainable solutions in climate and clean energy, enable groundbreaking research in science, enhance the education of our youngest learners, and support human rights for all people. Gordon and Betty Moore established their foundation to create positive outcomes for future generations.

Springer Nature becomes first publisher to partner with CiteAb

Reagents – core components in chemical, biochemical and related lab work – are essential for researchers and academics to plan their experiments and develop their research. However, many experiment reproducibility problems can be tied directly to reagents.

It is estimated that up to \$28bn annually is wasted on irreproducibility in pre-clinical research – which has a large global impact on the development of high-quality research to tackle medical and environmental problems, because of the time wasted in having to correct the reagents the work is based on.

The partnership between Springer Nature and CiteAb, the first with a publisher for the data company, will see selected journal and book citation data from the publisher integrated into CiteAb's search engine, helping researchers make more informed decisions when identifying the best reagent for their experiments. With

more than three million citations and 10 million+ reagents now included on the platform, researchers are provided with a more comprehensive view of the most commonly used products in their research field, enabling them to: see how and where they are used and to what effect; search for what they need in one place; and have access to information on the suppliers of reagents, all of which helps to save them time and money when identifying the products that are most appropriate for their own experiments.

Commenting on the recently-announced partnership, Robin Padilla, PhD, director of product management, Digital Life Science Solutions at Springer Nature, said: 'We are delighted to be the first publisher to partner with CiteAb, as we look to utilise the expertise of the Springer Nature Data Solutions team alongside CiteAb's fresh approach to the market, to help find solutions to some of the data and resource challenges that face researchers

when conducting experiments. We know it is incredibly time intensive for researchers to find not only high-quality content, but also the most suitable resources – data and products – that they need for their lab, experiment and research work.

'This partnership seeks to address that challenge by combining our high quality data and content with CiteAb's innovative platform and search functionality, using state of the art text and data mining APIs to streamline that search process.'

CiteAb's Chief Executive Officer, Dr Andrew Chalmers, added to the statement: 'We are extremely excited to be partnering with Springer Nature.

'Their commitment to publishing research of the highest quality aligns with our commitment to generating the highest quality data. Accessing their content will allow us to generate unique data and use it to inform researchers and suppliers, ultimately helping them to advance science more quickly.'





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Conference
Registration



Vendor Showcase
Registration

In Person: November 1-4
Online: November 14-18

**2022
CHARLESTON
CONFERENCE**





IEEE and CRUI to accelerate open-access publishing in Italy

IEEE, the world's largest technical professional organisation dedicated to advancing technology for humanity, announced today that it has reached an unlimited read and publish open access agreement with the Conferenza dei Rettori delle Università Italiane (CRUI), the association of state and non-state Italian universities, to support authors who choose to publish open access.

Under this new three-year agreement, all researchers from the participating 54 Italian institutions are now able to publish open access articles in approximately 200 leading journals and magazines published by IEEE, making them instantly available and free to read and helping support CRUI's mission to make their authors' publications open to the world. Under the terms of the agreement, the costs of both accessing subscription content and the article processing charges (APCs) required to publish open access are covered by the license fees paid by consortium members, making the process easier and more convenient for authors.

The advantage for participating members of the CRUI will be to have:

- Open-access publishing rights in

all of IEEE's hybrid journals and fully open access journals, making articles instantly available and free to read by the general public

- Publication of all open access IEEE journal articles with a Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY) license unless otherwise requested by the author
- Read access rights to peer-reviewed journals, access to approximately 200,000 new conference papers added each year, as well as IEEE standards (totalling more than five million articles overall, including more than 250,000 new articles added each year)

'In recent years, the Conferenza dei Rettori delle Università Italiane has signed various agreements fostering open access publication by affiliated members. Nevertheless, what makes the collaboration with IEEE significant is the possibility for authors to publish both in hybrid and gold journals at no additional cost and in an unlimited number. This is an

extraordinary opportunity for the 54 Italian universities and research institutions reached by this contract, which also grants access to the IEL database,' says Ferruccio Resta, president of the CRUI. 'In recent years, IEEE journals have been particularly appreciated by local scholars, with more than 1,300 articles published in 2021 by the agreeing institutions. Expectations are high, and the CRUI is extremely happy to announce this cooperation that contributes to boosting the competitiveness of the Italian educational and research system.'

'IEEE is very pleased to have reached this agreement with the research community at the CRUI, which will provide Italian scholars with a wide array of open-access publishing options across our highly-cited portfolio of journals,' says Karen Hawkins, the chief marketing officer at IEEE.

'This agreement reinforces IEEE's commitment to expanding our open science offerings and allows IEEE to share the work of leading researchers with more of the global research community to further scientific and engineering progress.'

Suppliers' Directory

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Digital Science



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